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ABSTRACT

This study utilized a grounded, inductive framework to explore the relationship between tourism and the well-being of communities through the integration of three complimentary planning and strategy exercises. Attendees of a regional tourism development conference in Queensland, Australia participated in a "Futures Wheel, Appreciative Inquiry, and Make It Fail" exercise. This was part of a workshop hosted by researchers interested in understanding the current and future relationship between tourism and community well-being. In order to provide parameters for the three-step exercise, Flora's community capitals framework was applied as a means of identifying components of a community that contribute to its well-being. These exercises benefitted both practitioners and researchers seeking to understand how stakeholders perceive tourism's impacts on community well-being. This paper demonstrates how the exercises were applied in a workshop setting and presents limited findings based on the analysis of a portion of the data.

Keywords: *community well-being, planning and strategy exercises, community based tourism planning, community capitals, stakeholders.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this case study is to demonstrate how the merging of three different planning and strategy exercises into one may be utilized as a way to collect information about the relationship between tourism and the well-being of communities. Community well-being involves the social, cultural, and physical needs of people, families and institutions within a community (Wilkinson, 1991). Tourism has the potential to improve or damage community well-being; this study attempts to develop a method to identify those ways in which community well-

being can be impacted by tourism. Attendees of a regional tourism development conference in Queensland, Australia participated in a "Futures Wheel, Appreciative Inquiry, and Make It Fail" exercise as a part of a workshop hosted by researchers interested in understanding the current and future relationship between tourism and community well-being. In order to provide parameters for the three-step exercise, Flora's community capitals framework is applied as a means of identifying components of a community that contribute to its well-being. Flora's (2004) capitals include: cultural, social, human, political, natural, financial, and built.

This case study is designed to build upon current research on tourism's impact on community well-being. However, it is unique in that it utilizes a grounded, inductive framework to explore the relationship through the use of exercises that ask stakeholders to identify the relationship between tourism and community well-being, rather that simply asking them to rate their quality of life and perception of tourism according to a prescribed list of impacts that may or may not apply to their specific experiences. This presentation will provide insight into how the exercise is applied in a workshop setting and how tools are developed in order to help other communities engage in similar workshops. The benefits of using such exercises will also be discussed.

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

In August, 2011, researchers conducted a three-step exercise to help workshop participants identify the connections between tourism and community well-being. Participants were divided into small groups of 5-7 to facilitate discussion amongst the participants and allow for a broader coverage of topics. A description of each step of the exercise follows:

- Step 1, The Futures Wheel: A Futures Wheel usually begins with a "What if?" question or a statement about a desirable future. This is placed at the center, or "hub" of the wheel. A Futures Wheel is created for each of Flora's capitals; in other words, one Futures Wheel focuses on the role of culture in the community, the next, politics, and so on. A possible center statement for culture might read: In 10 years, tourism will make a positive contribution to cultural capital. Participants are then asked to identify the conditions that must be present in order for this future to exist. Each of these conditions is given its own circle in a first ring around the desirable future center and connected with spokes of the wheel. Participants are then asked to connect those conditions to tourism. The results provide a network of relationships that must exist for the community to achieve its desired future (Benckendorff, Edwards, Jurowski, Liburd, Miller, and Moscardo, 2009). Again using culture as an example, one condition could be the identification of important cultural landmarks.

- Step 2, Appreciative Inquiry: Developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Appreciative Inquiry consists of a four step process in which participants are asked to consider the past, present, and future tourism policies and programs that have had (or could have) a positive impact on the relationships identified in the Futures Wheel exercise and their community's well-being. This discussion is centered around actual activities that are taking place within the participants' community. By doing so, participants are given the opportunity to focus on what is working within their community. This is somewhat different from a SWOT analysis or other traditional forms

of thinking about the future of a community which often focuses on the negative. An example of an existing practice that supports the identification of important cultural landmarks could be the development of a map or cultural trail.

- Step 3, Make it Fail: In this hypothetical discussion, participants are asked to devise ways in which tourism could fail in their community and destroy the relationships needed to create the desired community well-being identified in the Futures Wheel exercise. This discussion is centered around hypothetical or distant threats to well-being that have nothing to do with the stakeholders' community. This allows for discussion of potential challenges to the ideal first described at the center of the Futures Wheel without being threatening to the members of the community who may be participating in the activity. An example of a "Make it Fail" challenge could be the refusal of various cultural organizations to cooperate.

Each component of the exercise is developed and depicted visually as the exercise progresses in order to provide an end product for participants and researchers that comprehensively depicts the discussion of the relationship between tourism and community well-being. Participants are also given a handbook describing how to conduct the exercise and initiate discussion in their home communities (or amongst smaller stakeholder groups) about how tourism impacts community well-being. The final products from the Queensland, Australia workshop will be presented at the conference, but space limitations prohibit inclusion of an example in this abstract.

CONCLUSIONS

This approach to examining the relationship between tourism and community well-being has implications for both practitioners and researchers. For practitioners these exercises represent a way in which they can facilitate a focused, structured, and interactive discussion about tourism and community well-being with a wide variety of stakeholders. This may be a more cost-effective and efficient means of gathering stakeholder input about tourism policies and programs. It also allows stakeholders to contribute their opinions in their own words, free from limitations.

Researchers interested in the relationship between community well-being and tourism can find value in these benefits as well. By allowing participants to respond in their own words and identify the relationships on their own, researchers can gather richer data than if they used pre-determined closed-ended responses in a questionnaire format. This structured format is also advantageous as it allows for key themes to be identified, which is one way to ensure that the data are trustworthy. Researchers with a desire to act as scholar-activists within communities may also find this positive, goal-oriented approach useful as it creates a safe, welcoming environment for participants to discuss and share their views on community well-being.

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