COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS: ELABORATING A MODEL FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) shares many of the values and challenges of community-based tourism (CBT) but must also consider the interaction of local communities and the environment, often in areas of controlled or restricted use. Although CBT and CBET have been part of South Africa's economic strategy, governance, and social structures and hierarchies may constrain opportunities for entry. This article reviews the relevant literature with specific reference to South African CBT and CBET enterprises and uses the iSimangaliso Wetland Park as a case study to build a general framework for CBT around conservation areas. In particular, the framework describes a pathway for CBET ventures to move from an internal partnership model to an external model and ultimately complete self-sufficiency and independence if desired. We show that despite numerous challenges, CBET can be viable in conservation areas, provided all parties involved in the venture make a concerted effort to ensure that the main objectives of poverty alleviation and improved environmental management are met.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has grown significantly in South Africa since the dawn of democracy in 1994 and has become a central player in the economy

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(Rogerson, 2017). Recent data show that travel and tourism contributed ZAR402.2 billion (USD27.3 billion) to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016, representing 9.3%. This was projected to increase by 2.5% in 2017, and by 4.2% per annum to ZAR624.2 billion (USD42.4 billion), representing 11.5% of GDP, by 2027 (WTTC, 2017). The number of jobs directly supported by tourism reached 716,500, comprising 4.6% of total employment in 2017, and was expected to grow to 1,110,000 jobs, comprising 6% of total employment, by 2027. The number of international tourists increased by 12.8% between 2015 and 2016, from 8.9 million to 10 million. This far surpasses the 3.9% increase in global tourist arrivals. South Africa's income from international tourism increased by 10.8%, from USD 4.9 billion in 2015 to USD 5.4 billion in 2016 (South African Tourism, 2017).

Tourism and sustainability are intrinsically linked. Tourism is one of the world's largest economic sectors, creating employment, and generating prosperity across the world (Scowsill, 2017). However, it can also negatively affect local cultures and environments. To avoid these effects, tourism-linked activities must be sustainable (UN, 2013). Such sustainability is contingent on community participation in conservation and tourism (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). However, debate continues on the relationship between tourism, conservation and community development (Novelli & Scarth, 2007).

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a relatively new concept, likely derived from an alternative development philosophy that emerged in the 1970s (Giampiccoli, 2015). It has grown over the past three decades as a means to improve the prosperity of local communities in tourist destinations by directly involving them in tourism businesses and activities (Dewi et al., 2017). Community-based tourism is an alternative to mass tourism that facilitates community development, as it is seen as more 'grass-roots' and may empower people, promoting self-esteem, and the development of a more equitable society (Jugmohan & Steyn, 2015). It can be connected to ecotourism as community-based ecotourism (CBET) where CBET "represents the ecology and nature/the environment; while CBT represents the social and economic aspects of community well-being" (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2019, p. 30).

A particular focus of CBT has been community involvement in conserving World Heritage Sites (WHS) and the development of heritage tourism (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). This article contributes to contemporary debates by proposing a model that links community development, conservation and tourism development in the context of

national parks / WHS. This is relevant because community involvement "in WHS conservation and tourism development is essential to the sustainable development of future tourism destinations" and local communities play a significant role in the sustainability of WHS (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017, p. 1). Community involvement is a fundamental element in both developing and developed countries' planning processes (Deegan, 2012, p. 77). Local people's participation in WHS management and tourism development improves the quality of life of local residents and increases the sustainability of heritage site conservation programs (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017, p. 1). There is growing interest in community involvement in conservation across the world. However, the associated increase in protected areas may increase conflicts over resource use by local people and conservation (He et al., 2020, p .1). It is thus imperative to identify appropriate "approaches to balance the public need for sustaining biodiversity and natural heritage and private need for basic livelihood and culture maintenance" (He et al., 2020, p .1). However, as recently as 2012, Deegan (2012) noted that community participation in heritage management "remains immature in its development and accountability" (p. 77). Further research is thus required to identify strategies to enhance communities' role in, and benefits from WHS and National Parks.

This article is a conceptual work based on a review of academic literature, institutional documents and reports and manuals/handbooks. No primary data was collected. Conceptual articles "do not have data, because their focus is on integration and proposing new relationships among constructs. Thus, the onus is on developing logical and complete arguments for associations rather than testing them empirically" (Green, 2014, p. 35; Gilson & Goldberg, 2015, p. 127). Conceptual works attempt to bridge existing theories forge cross-disciplinary links provide diverse insights, and expand our thinking (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015, p. 128). Conceptual research and empirical research have both advantages and limitations.

Xin et al. (2013) notes that "conceptual research may progress without empirical data, while drawing upon existing concepts that are themselves generated from empirical data" (p. 70). Thus, this article draws on extant literature and documents to propose a new CBT model for community development, conservation and tourism development in the context of national parks / WHS. It aims to contribute to the debate on community participation in WHS and national parks.

This article draws on the concept of CBT to develop a model for community development, conservation and tourism development in the context of national parks / WHS where the community controls, owns, manages, and benefits from tourism development. The aim is to go beyond a 'trickle down' model where communities receive a share of the benefits generated by established ecotourism operations (Snyman, 2012).

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: The following section presents the methodology employed, followed by a review of the literature on sustainability, CBT, CBET and the case study, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. The proposed CBT model in the context of WHS/National Parks is then presented. The article concludes with a summary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development

Sustainable tourism originated, and remains, within the more general context of sustainable development. Emerging theories on conservation and development aim to enhance the capacity of protected areas to complement socio-economic development initiatives and address social inequality, particularly in less developed countries (Kade Sutawa, 2012, p. 414).

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) first adopted a definition of sustainable tourism at the 1992 Rio Summit (Dangi & Jamal, 2016, p. 4; UNWTO, 1994, p. 30). Increased awareness of issues relating to poverty that was evident at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 led the UNWTO to propose in 2005 that sustainable tourism is "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (Dangi & Jamal, 2016, p. 5; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005, p. 12). This definition can be related to what proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development viewing sustainable development "as combining two basic notions: economic development and ecological sustainability" (Braat & Steetskamp, 1991, p. 271). Thus, "ecologically sustainable economic development can then be thought of as changes to the economic structure, organisation and activity of an economic-ecological system that are directed towards maximum welfare and can be sustained by available resources" (Braat & Steetskamp, 1991, p. 271). The Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace (UNWTO, 2016, p. 5; see also Dluzewska & Rodzos, 2018, p. 253) is specifically linked to the 2030

Agenda for sustainable development, the sustainable development goals and to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Thus, over time, the concepts of sustainable tourism and sustainable development have increasingly recognized the host community and the need for inclusiveness and poverty reduction. This acknowledges that "sustainable tourism development relies upon the involvement of the local community" (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016, p. 9). The major goals of sustainable tourism development should include increased economic benefits to local communities (Theerapappisit, 2012).

However, while the focus of sustainable tourism is long-term sustainability, CBT focuses on local practices and community involvement in managing tourism (Dangi & Jamal, 2016). Narrowing this conceptual gap would facilitate improved governance, greater equity in access to tourism-related resources, community empowerment and the care of natural, cultural and social goods (Dangi & Jamal, 2016, p. 26). From a tourist / visitor perspective, CBT adds a new dimension to traveling where tourists can also contribute to conservation and poverty alleviation, thus supporting sustainable development of tourism in the area (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; RETOSA, n.d.).

Tourism can be useful to conservation and development by, for example, assisting to raise funds to protect natural areas and as a channel to reduce poverty (Borges et al., 2011, p. 7). However, if not properly planned and managed, it can have negative impacts on nature and the local community. It is thus "essential that tourism in protected areas is managed properly according to the tenets of sustainable development" (Borges et al., 2011, p. 7). The overall goal of conservation in a protected area should be retained. The protection and conservation of features of OUV [Outstanding Universal Value] are paramount in World Heritage Sites, in particular (Borges et al., 2011, p. 7).

Sustainable development and community participation are interlinked in WHS because the involvement "of local residents in WHS conservation and tourism development is critical to future sustainable development" (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016, p. 9). However, community involvement and control in WHS "is minimal … which contributes to limited socio-cultural, economic and environmental impacts of WHS which affect sustainability" (Lekaota, 2018, p. 4). Nonetheless, carefully conducted tourism development in natural WHS may be beneficial (Farid, 2015, p. 729).

Community-Based Tourism

Tourism can impact the local community in various ways, driving development in some local communities, but having negative effects in others (Nagarjuna, 2015). Community involvement is recognised as fundamental to enhance local benefits and counter tourism's negative effects (Burgos & Mertens, 2017; Nagarjuna, 2015; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016; Salleh et al., 2016). It should thus underpin change and development. In this context, it should be emphasized that reference to 'community' members relates to disadvantaged groups. Thus, increased involvement of indigenous communities implies low-income groups in rural and urban areas, who are largely excluded from government structures and processes (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007).

Various forms of community participation in tourism have been proposed, (e.g. Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Tosun, 2000, 2006), based on previous studies (e.g. Arnstein, 1969; Pretty, 1995) on the conceptualization of types of community participation. This article seeks to go beyond involvement and participation in tourism towards considerations of control and ownership, using the concept of CBT, which centres on local control of tourism development (Forstner, 2004).

Community-based tourism is aimed at disadvantaged sectors of society and considers various issues such as sustainability, social justice, empowerment and self-reliance (Giampiccoli, 2015). It is thus recognized here as a type of tourism development aimed at redistributive measures that is controlled and managed by disadvantaged community members (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Saayman & Giampoccoli, 2016). Community-based tourism is complex and constitutes a tourism category with its own features, difficulties and potential (Giampiccoli et al., 2014).

Community-based tourism principles indicate that is located within a community, one or more community members together can own and manage the CBT entities (Zapata et al., 2011, p. 727). These criteria allow for a variety of modes of organizing CBT, including rotation of infrastructure and organization or provision of services among families for limited periods of time (Zapata et al., 2011, p. 727). However, the principles of shared infrastructure, equity in receiving benefits and initiatives to protect the environment should be upheld.

Research (Giampiccoli et al., 2015, p. 1211; Saayman & Giampiccoli, 2016, p. 152) identifies several characteristics of CBT including; an indigenous effort but with possible partnerships whenever necessary, being

part of diverse livelihood strategies, and embracing a capacity building strategy that promotes skills/education in tourism with spin-offs in other community development matters. A number of preconditions must be met for CBT to be a feasible form of development in a specific setting. As outlined in the pre-condition evaluation and management model (Jugmohan & Steyn, 2015), these include availability of infrastructure, physical or natural resources, and availability of skilled project leaders and managers.

However, CBT initiatives by various government and non-governmental agencies have been characterised by 'top-down' development models which may be responsible for many of its perceived negative effects (Zapata et al., 2011). It is important that CBT remains a home-grown type of tourism that originates within the community and is not based (or dependent) on voluntarism on the part of conventional tourism (Giampiccoli et al., 2014).

There is no single organisational model for meeting the above conditions that will fit all circumstances or locations and the structure of each entity will govern the level of community control in CBT (Asker et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the type of involvement determines if it is a CBT entity, and a top-down approach based on external control can cause resentment within communities (Sakata & Prideaux, 2013). In "CBT the level of community involvement, awareness, complexities and advantages from the tourism need to be comprehended" (Naik, 2014, p. 42).

Numerous CBT trajectories and models (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009; Koster, 2007; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013, 2016; Rocharungsat, 2004) have been proposed, including 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' models (Zapata et al., 2011) and those based on the type and scope of community involvement (and who is involved), type of enterprise and partnership or joint venture, and the role played by government, NGOs or the private sector (see Baktygulov & Raeva, 2010; Calanog et al., 2012; Denman, 2001; Häusler & Strasdas, 2003; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013).

While the community may own and manage the tourism enterprise, external companies may form joint ventures with local communities; or the company may be privately owned, as long as it benefits the local community (Dewi et al., 2017). Community-based partnerships are one of the main trends in progression towards sustainability (Rocharungsat, 2004). Based on the presence or absence of a partnership, Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2012) proposed three models of CBT, namely, one where a community entirely holds and manages the venture; community-based partnership

tourism, where there is a community-private sector partnership; and community tourism where community assets are used by private investors.

Partnerships with external entities for marketing and market access (Forstner, 2004) can be very promising. Appropriate assistance is crucial to long-term CBT development as successful CBT generally requires multi-institutional support (Ramsa & Mohd, 2004, p. 584). Community-based tourism ventures can partner with four types of entities, namely, the tourism industry, universities, government agencies, and NGOs (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009). Although the private and NGO sectors may play important roles, contributing financially or to implementation, the role of government institutions is indispensable, given the amount of informal activity in the tourism and the vulnerability of poor communities (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013, 2016). The national tourism department or other parastatals facilitate the development of CBT products by providing market information, or facilitating capacity-building (Forstner, 2004; Ramsa & Mohd, 2004). Alternately, governments may support CBT indirectly, through umbrella bodies or other institutions (Forstner, 2004) such as facilitating the establishment of a CBT association/organisation.

While partnerships are particularly useful at the inception of an enterprise, they should be temporary and mainly for technical advice. The partnership model should empower the community so that any extension of the partnership is voluntary. This differs profoundly from a condition where the community is compelled to continue a partnership, although long-term partnerships may be favoured if they can encourage community-wide benefits (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013). This approach aligns with the notion that professional planners help communities to devise their own plans (Theerapappisit, 2012). This type of partnership, which primarily rests on facilitation can reduce conflict between the partners and prevent unsustainable use of resources (Ramsa & Mohd, 2004). At the same time, relationships between communities and private partners can be strengthened (Denman, 2001). Over time, the community's negotiating power will increase relative to the external partner (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013).

Partnerships can be external or internal. While external partnerships exclude the CBT venture, they may include other services connected to it, including marketing, quality control and skills development. Internal partnerships occur when the CBT entity itself is part of the partnership outside any specific agreement (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016). External partnerships should be the guiding rule in CBT. However, none of the

above points related to external facilitation and partnerships should detract from the fundamental issue of control and ownership of CBT.

'Shared management authority' in which responsibility is shared among all stakeholders, remains the preferred CBT management system (Rocharungsat, 2004). However, Rocharungsat's (2004) research established that all stakeholders were of the view that the local community should remain in control of CBT entities. It is thus necessary to develop a model in which owners, managers and controllers of CBT and other stakeholders can play various roles, while ensuring that disadvantaged community members remain the main protagonists.

Community-based tourism associations can assist their members and communities with product development and distribution (Forstner, 2004) and can "play a key role in supporting CBT, sustainable tourism, rural and eco-tourism" (Asker et al., 2010, p. 85). Such a collaborative approach to CBT increases the likelihood of sustainable tourism development (Tolkach & King, 2015). However, CBT associations may face constraints such as a lack of financial resources and stability (Forstner, 2004, p. 506).

Despite the proliferation of CBT development strategies and models, challenges such as a lack of financial resources, infrastructure, marketing and market access, low levels of local capacity and economic viability, and a lack of proper understanding of the term 'community' must be acknowledged (Saayman & Giampiccoli, 2016). Community-based tourism has been described as inefficient and not participative (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008, p. 1). For example, many CBT initiatives are unsuccessful in "reducing poverty at scale" and they require stronger links with mainstream tourism to increase the positive impact on the poor (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008, p. 2). Moreover, while CBT is aligned with matters such as social justice and community control, and aims to break structural barriers to community involvement and advance emancipatory strategies through community development, not all promoters of CBT adhere to these principles (Blackstock, 2005). Due to these and other challenges, the type of CBT implementation strategy is fundamental to its success (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2017). As Sakata and Prideaux (2013, pp. 882) assert, problems faced in the CBT approach are related to the methods and techniques used in its execution strategies. Community-based tourism can bring local benefits, but when not properly implemented can cause problems to communities and environment (Asker et al., 2010, p. 7).

In KwaZulu-Natal Province where the iSimangaliso Wetland Park is located, an overall framework for CBT was proposed as far back as 1999

(Naguran, 1999). It comprised four models: a community-owned venture, a partnership between the community and the state, a lease agreement between a community and a private investor, and a joint venture between the community and a private investor. More recently, the South African National Department of Tourism identified four CBT models: a community-owned tourism venture, a community tourism initiative in partnership with a private sector operator, CBT entrepreneurship, and community enterprise linkages with private sector-owned tourism business (National Department of Tourism, 2016).

In the South African context, the relationship between communities, traditional authorities and government authorities can confound attempts to establish CBT ventures. For example, Ivanovic (2015) concluded that the absolute authority that traditional leaders wield restricts the distribution of benefits to the community at large. The same author (Ivanovic, 2015) thus asserted that development led by such authorities cannot be called pro-poor or community-based, notwithstanding the fact that communities may gain some income from such ventures and may not have to resort to migrant labour. This hierarchical structure may also exacerbate divisions within the community, with those who feel politically marginalised expressing different interests to those in authority, although such divisions are dynamic, and may change over time (Boonzaier & Wilson, 2011). Traditional leaders may also impede the allocation of land for development, especially since their relationship with local government structures is often poor (Dubazane & Nel, 2016; Mnguni, 2014). For these reasons, it is necessary to work with all actors to establish successful CBT ventures in South Africa (Boonzaier & Wilson, 2011). More specifically, it is essential to avoid traditional leaders or other local elites and local or international actors controlling tourism and its benefits. Disadvantaged community members should consistently control tourism and all actors should work together to ensure that CBT works to the benefit of the community, and specifically serves to alleviate poverty and inequality.

Community-Based Ecotourism

A distinction needs to be drawn between CBT and CBET as, while both terms are used here, they are not synonymous. While some of the properties of CBT are inherent in ecotourism, CBT and CBET also have significant differences and there is a specific relationship between them.

A fundamental characteristic of CBET "is that the quality of the natural resources and cultural heritage of an area should not be damaged

and, if possible, should be enhanced by tourism" (Denman, 2001, p. 14). This characteristic of CBET makes it a crucial tool in the management of heritage sites such as WHS. In addition, CBET also has a prominent social dimension (see also Liu et al., 2014) as the local community is involved in and has considerable influence over development and management, and retains a large proportion of the benefits (Denman, 2001, p. 2). Sproule (1995, p. 235) notes that, CBET "refers to ecotourism enterprises that are owned and managed by the community". Tourism managed by the community is called CBT and if that CBT specifically adheres to ecological principles, then it is called CBET (Leksakundilok, 2004; see also Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2019, p. 30). The common denominator is community control and management of the tourism sector, whereas in CBET specific attention is paid to environmental issues.

This may be particularly pertinent in Africa, where most upmarket ecotourism camps are in isolated locations, with few prospects of economic development or employment for local community members. Rural livelihoods are also susceptible to climate change, implying an urgent need for alternative income-producing activities that may be supplied by high-end ecotourism (Snyman, 2012, p. 395).

While the benefits of CBET, whether to conservation or to communities are equivocal (Bennett & Deardon, 2014; Kiss, 2004; Mensah, 2017), there have been criticisms of nature based-tourism, including the assertion that recent conservation strategies have resorted to neoliberal, market-based mechanisms (Manyisa Ahebwaa et al., 2012). However, it has been demonstrated that where adequate social capital accrues through CBET, both economic benefits and environmentally favourable behaviour follow it (Liu et al., 2014).

Community involvement "in heritage management can settle conflicts between the needs and interests of residents - between the pursuit of a better quality of life and economic development - and WHS conservation" (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016, p. 2). Community participation in wildlife-based tourism in and around protected areas provides a link between biodiversity conservation and expansion of community livelihood opportunities (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018). However, guidelines are not always set for such involvement (Chiutsi & Saarinen, 2017).

iSimangaliso Wetland Park

In WHS, community engagement in tourism "should where appropriate facilitate the involvement of local communities and indigenous peoples in meaningful and beneficial tourism ventures; tourism should respect local community uses of the site; empower communities to make decisions about the conservation and use of their heritage; and promote the development of capacity to ensure effective community participation" (UNESCO, 2012, p. 68). If these conditions are met, tourism in WHS can contribute to community development (Borges et al., 2011). One of the issues to consider in the relationship between WHS and local communities (UNESCO, 2012, p. 31) is that state parties should be conscious of the training local people require to manage and operate the site.

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park in the far northeast of South Africa was declared the country's first World Heritage Site in 1999 in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act which explicitly requires the government to combine conservation with job-creating sustainable economic development (Porter et al., 2003; Scott et al., 2012). This ethos is embodied by the Park, whose mission statement includes "to deliver benefits to communities living in and adjacent to the Park by facilitating optimal tourism and related development…in order to ensure World Heritage values are not compromised, conservation objectives need to be foremost, with the emphasis on 'development for conservation'" (iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, n.d., p. 1). The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority thus seems very much directed towards a community development approach within its conservation prerogatives. To this end, co-management agreements have been concluded with land claimants, who are represented on the iSimangaliso Board and the park authority participates in municipal planning activities in the area (Scott et al., 2012).

In view of the large size of the park, the variety of habitats and attractions and the wealth of natural resources that led to its declaration as a WHS, iSimangaliso is well suited to eco-tourism. Indeed, a shift from mass tourism to eco-tourism was documented between 1999 and 2013 (Govender, 2013). There is also a strong case to be made for CBET within the park. The right of the former occupiers to be compensated has been recognized and compensation awarded in the form of remuneration or other benefits, which include "revenue sharing, mandatory partner status in tourism developments, access to natural resources, cultural heritage access, education and capacity building, and jobs through land care and infrastructure programmes" (iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, n.d., p.

24). The need for accommodation that reflects visitor trends and preferences and the potential to use accommodation development for transformation through inclusion of local communities as equity partners is further noted. As long ago as 2002, the Thonga Beach Lodge and the Mabibi community campsite were established as community run tourism enterprises (Hansen, 2013). Furthermore, tourism licenses are only issued to businesses if a 70% shareholding rests with the community. Training in tourism, hospitality and guiding as well as craft programmes has been undertaken to ensure that communities benefit from the park's WHS status (iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, n.d.).

Between 1999 when the iSimangaliso Wetland Park WHS was listed and 2010, 45,000 ha of land was rehabilitated through alien plant removal and a further 12,000 ha of commercial timber was removed. Almost 46,000 temporary jobs were created in the park, 60% of which were taken up by women, greatly improving livelihoods in the area (Scott et al., 2012). More recent achievements listed by the park authority towards social transformation goals include 431 full time job equivalents created, 5,795 training days in a number of fields related to tourism, arts, crafts, and firefighting among others, the increased numbers of bursaries awarded to locals for tertiary studies, more people participating in SMMEs and 45% of resource procurement from local businesses. Stakeholder engagements also increased (iSimangaliso Wetland Park Annual Report, 2019).

However, problems and challenges exist and success is far from guaranteed. Dube (2018) identifies the following challenges in iSimangaliso Wetland Park: the socio-economic environment is among the poorest in South Africa, meaning that many locals depend on natural resources for survival, slow resolution of land claims, and transformation of the tourism sector. In relation to the last issue, Black-owned tourism enterprises only constitute 5% of such businesses in the park. In terms of power relations, most Black residents that are involved in the local tourism sector operate in the informal sector, calling for "the transformation of the tourism sector" (Dube, 2018, p. 10).

Efforts to adopt a developmental and community capital approach to conservation in the Mkuzi area of the park were only partly successful (Dahlberg & Burlando, 2009), with some trade-offs not yielding adequate benefits, resulting in distrust of the programme among local communities. Nonetheless, reciprocal respect between the park and locals for different viewpoints and cultures increased. In the Bhanga Nek area of the park, perceived unequal sharing of benefits has led to illegal tourism enterprises

and gillnetting in the lakes, which in turn has resulted in conflict among communities as well as between communities and the park authority (Hansen, 2013). These conflicts may be exacerbated by the priority given to conservation over development in the park and the need to conform to international standards for world heritage sites (Hansen, 2013). A recent study (Chiutsi & Saarinen, 2017) on local participation in transfrontier tourism in an African transfrontier conservation area emphasizes the need for proper guidelines for CBT enterprises in such areas that clearly indicate partners' duties and obligations towards conservation, tourism development and community participation.

It is against this background that this article proposes a model for community development, tourism, and conservation to coexist and be reciprocally advantageous within a CBT and world heritage site context. In the case of iSimangaliso Wetland Park this model could serve to enhance the success already achieved and work towards advancing new strategies.

POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD FOR CBT DEVELOPMENT IN AND AROUND WORLD HERITAGE SITES

A model is proposed (Figure 1) as a general framework that sets out possible CBT options in and around nature conservation parks. In a context where environmental issues are also central, CBT should be read as CBET where community and environmental needs and benefits are considered concurrently and equally. Figure 1 shows that a wide range of actors / stakeholders may be involved, provides various CBET models, including SMMEs, CBT ventures, community lodges, and community lodges in partnership, and offers options of internal and external partnerships. Various issues such as capacity building and the use of natural resources are also considered. Capacity building is essential and the model (Figure 1) includes it in the general framework, in a context of partnerships with external entities and in relation to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority and the proposed CBET association. Lekaota (2018, p. 3) notes that limited environmental education or awareness negatively affects community participation and benefits and sustainability. Thus, in the model (Figure 1) capacity building is vital and is linked to one of the issues included in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park programme on transformation (social and economic development), namely, "Training and capacity building for people and community-based contractors employed by the Park" (iSimangaliso Wetland Park Annual Report, 2019, p. 24).
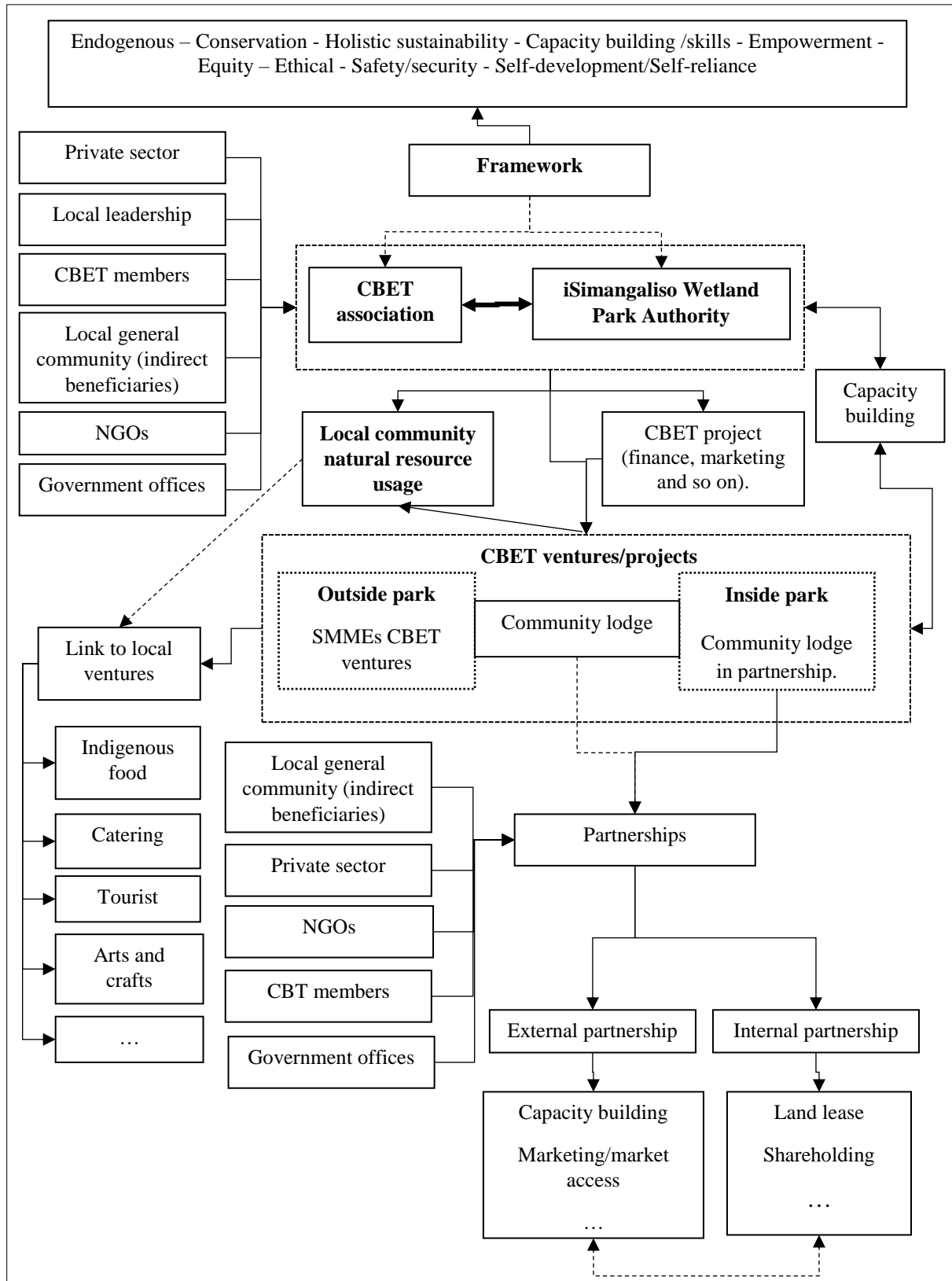
Figure 1. *General framework of CBET development possibilities in and around a natural park*

Most importantly, the model regards the establishment of the CBET association and the role of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority as fundamental. Working in unison, these entities should be the core structures that facilitate, implement and monitor the entire process. As Figure 1 shows, the CBT association will be linked to various entities such as the private sector and government. This is important, because networking and partnerships among various actors such as local communities, NGOs, government, academics and the private sector can serve "to build the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence of community members" (Tasci et al., 2013, p. 22). However, government remains "the key in local governance, which needs organizing and building partnerships within the community and between the community and external agencies with continuous communication" (Tasci et al., 2013, p. 33). Without government support, CBT endeavors can be a waste of resources; government has the responsibility to "provide continuous psychological, financial, technical and educational support in all steps of CBT development" (Tasci et al., 2013, p. 33).

The collaboration of community members in the 'management and tourism planning' of WHS is regarded as essential (Borges et al., 2011, p. 10). The CBT association – which is owned and managed by community members – is regarded as a channel and structure that can enhance community participation, serving to change the current situation in the iSimangaliso WHS where deficiency of local community members' involvement presented dangerous consequences for the sustainability of the locations (Lekaota, 2018, p. 4). However, as Dube (2018) indicates in reference to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Community Trust, organisations, including local representatives ought to be all-inclusive, and transparent and should strengthen community benefits. The CBT association should have the same characteristics.

The literature (Nugroho & Numata, 2020, p. 12) proposes that the inclusion of community member is strongly connected with the "perceived benefit and support of tourism development." The CBT association could have a major role in this relationship. The expansion of collaborations in tourism management to, for example, village-owned enterprises or other type of existing organizations can assist local community members to be comprehensively involved in development issues (Nugroho & Numata, 2020, p. 12). The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority "should attempt to improve the lack of community involvement' in Integrated Management Planning (IMP), for example, through the establishment "IMP-related tourism programmes" (Dube, 2018, p. 15).

Local entrepreneurship is also principal and could be enhanced by the various links and roles of the CBT association. Thus, in WHS, successful community involvement in tourism can be developed at small scale with local entrepreneurs who offer most of the services available to visitors (Borges et al., 2011). In this context, capacity building remains fundamental (Borges et al., 2011, p. 10). Figure 1 also proposes that entrepreneurship should link to local ventures. The iSimangaliso transformation programme points to the need to improve "procurement of goods and services from black owned businesses" (iSimangaliso Wetland Park Annual Report, 2019, p. 24). However, in 2018, it was reported that local people inclusion as service providers is negligible in these conservation areas (Dube, 2018, p. 16). New strategies and models, such as the one proposed, could be investigated and advanced.

Figure 2 presents a proposed model for CBT partnerships to enhance the shift from internal to external partnerships while retaining the possible benefits of the external partners. This should be properly managed to achieve sustainable CBT management by approaches appropriate to each phase of tourism development (Nugroho & Numata, 2020, p. 12). Joint ventures between the private sector and communities can work in various settings. While success depends on context-specific factors, overall principles such as robust community organisations with legal rights over land are generally applicable (Ashley & Jones, 2001, p. 422). The establishment of the CBT association should be seen in this context as a formal community entity for CBT development.

A partnership exploits a 'long-term but temporary' concept where an initial internal partnership – of the CBT venture itself – gradually shifts to an external one, and fully local (prioritizing the disadvantaged) community owned and managed CBT ventures. Specific timeframes should be set and written into the initial partnership agreement between the various stakeholders. Initially, the lodge can partner with the local community through lease/fee/shareholding and over time the shareholding is reversed – including regular and proper capacity building. The now external partner can continue to participate and make its own profit by, for example, acting as a travel agent for the CBT venture. Ideally, in the long term the CBT venture should have the capacity to, if desired, become fully independent in *all* aspects of CBT (tourism) management such as in marketing and market access. Thus, the partnership will become voluntary. While internal partners are likely to be private sector entities, external partners will likely include NGOs and government.
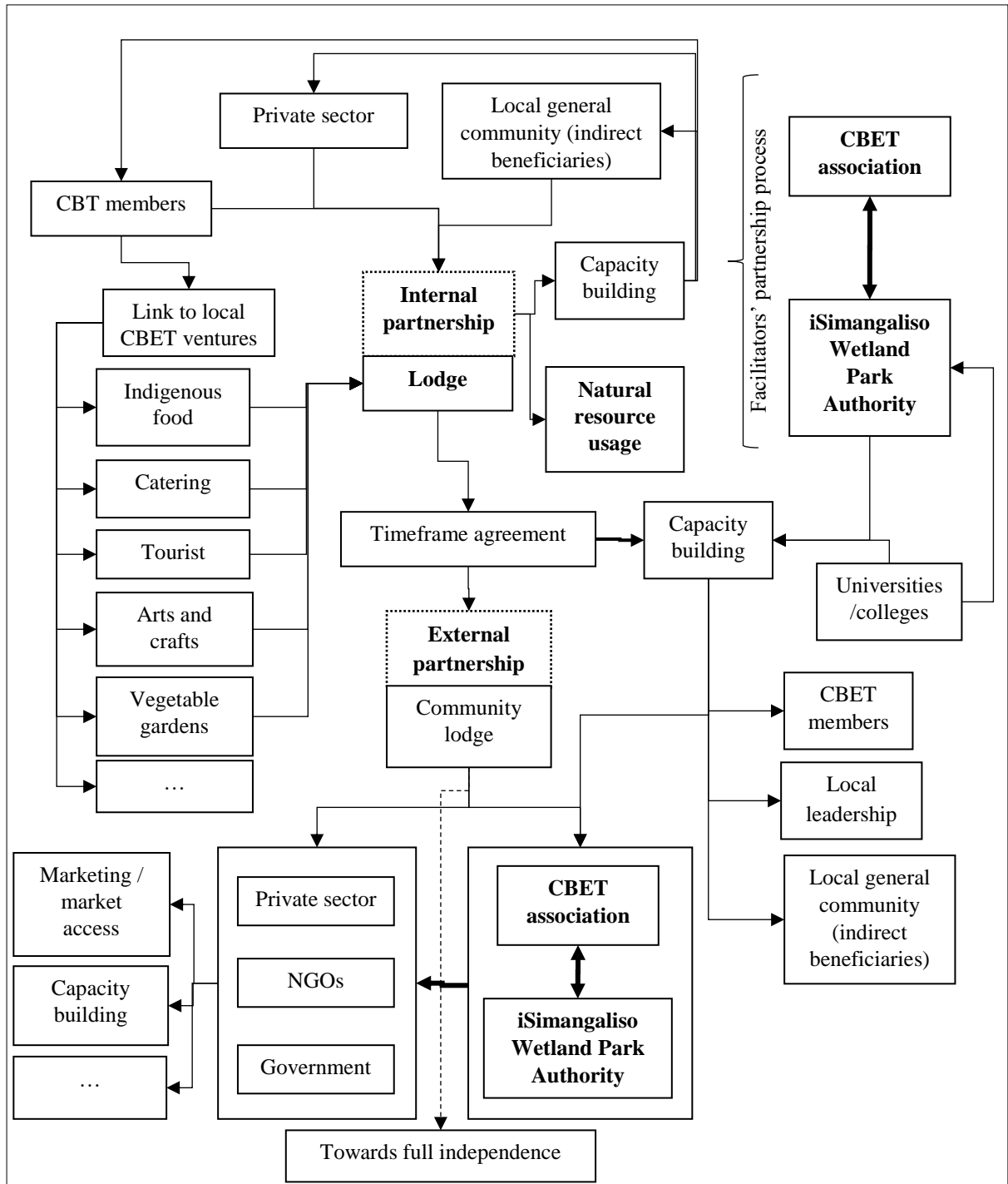
Figure 2. *Proposed partnership model for a lodge inside the park*

The partnership model strongly emphasizes capacity building, which is seen as an elemental precondition for CBT development (Asker et al., 2010; Suansri, 2003). It should not be restricted to CBT matters, but should embrace a more comprehensive approach, going beyond technical skills related to tourism to more generally empowering communities and individuals. In order to operate as a development tool, capacity building

should respect local culture and should consider both indigenous and exogenous knowledge (Giampiccoli et al., 2014). In nature based settings, including the iSimangaliso Wetland Park specific attention should also be directed to conservation.

From a business perspective, capacity building should facilitate the development of capabilities to run commercial enterprises, including in organisation and finance (Jealous, 1998). It should be facilitated by workshops on various topics (Dodds et al., 2016) and should include long-term formal training. This issue is particularly relevant to South Africa where tourism's potential for economic growth and community upliftment is impeded by skill shortages (Giampiccoli et al., 2014). Achieving such capacity building calls for long-term donor funding (Victurine, 2000). Government and higher education institutions with their expertise and local presence should be at the forefront of facilitating capacity buildings in CBT (Giampiccoli et al., 2014; Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009).

Finally, while this is not indicated in Figures 1 or 2, on-going monitoring and evaluation of projects is essential and a monitoring and evaluation system should be in place. This should be coordinated by the CBT association and the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority with the possible assistance of *ad hoc* specialists such as university personnel.

It is also crucial that in such a CBET scenario, community enterprises have access to conservation areas or assets to realise the full potential of their tourist enterprises. Community-based ecotourism not only gives local communities control of tourism enterprises, but a stake in conservation and the health of the ecosystem. The usage of natural resources in the park or restricted conservation areas (in bold in Figures 1 and 2) is fundamental. However, in general communities, seldom attain formal authority over land or the resources on it, despite changes in the discourse over land and resource management (Roe et al., 2009, p. VIII). In Africa, sustainable use of natural resources, which is largely governed through collective, local institutions, remains integral to many livelihoods, including through tourism. Conservation thus also depends on local stewardship (Roe et al., 2009). A recent document (World Bank, 2018, p. 26) states that:

> *Communities who live adjacent to protected areas often rely on these regions for forest products, firewood, thatching, and grazing, and they may have customary rights related to the natural resources. Studies have shown that community apathy, disengagement, or hostility can cause tourism initiatives to fail; conversely, where communities are engaged and benefiting, sustainable wildlife tourism can be a win-win.*

The success of the CBET enterprise depends on continued environmental integrity, as this is the main drawcard for this type of tourism. Since some ecotourism enterprises, such as Scuba diving, whale watching or game drives are capital intensive, alternatives must be found and reserved for CBT enterprises.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a key international economic sector and it is important that it works within a sustainable framework. However, over time the context of sustainable tourism and sustainable development has progressively acknowledged the need for inclusiveness and poverty reduction. Community-based tourism, and its more environmentally attentive 'twin', CBET aim to include local (especially disadvantaged) community members in tourism and community members should control, own and manage the tourism / CBT venture. However, CBET confronts various challenges. Together with its attention to environmental issues, the need to include local people is indispensable.

Using the South African iSimangaliso Wetland Park as an example, this article proposed a general framework for CBT in relation to conservation areas. The model emphasises the need for collaboration between a CBT organisation and the Park Authority and includes various possible types of tourism businesses in which the community can be involved.

Partnerships between a community and other entities such as the private sector remain important. However, the article suggests that there is a need to move from internal to external partnerships to ensure that CBT / tourism businesses are fully controlled, owned and managed by community members. While partnerships with external entities may remain valuable, they should be optional and not an obligatory requirement. The article advances that despite difficulties, such as the frequent need for adequate training, given united action by all parties and compliance with specific rules (such as partnership rules between various actors), CBET can be used to fight inequality and poverty and at the same time enhance environmental conservation.

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