



Sustainable community based tourism as a practice to safeguard intangible heritage

A quadruple helix cooperation - by Sybrèn Dijkhoff

Background

Cultural heritage contributes to local and national identity and belonging, while it is an essential source of memory, inspiration, and social and economic creativity. It is essential for a sense of place, social cohesion, and the preservation of diversity and creativity.

The fragility of **intangible heritage and the ability of communities to distinguish themselves are becoming more critical** in the face of globalization, economic growth, and social transformation. It is an important way for communities to maintain diversity, identity, and belonging and its importance originates from the wealth, knowledge, and skills derived from it and passed on to future generations.

Objective

If implemented successfully, **sustainable community based tourism (SCBT) can play an important role in intangible cultural heritage preservation**. Therefore, this research studied the following research question: how can SCBT be implemented as a practice to safeguard intangible heritage?

Literature

Tourism can also have negative effects that can threaten the survival of intangible heritage communities, such as the 'oversimplification' of heritage interpretation and de-contextualization of the heritage. This occurs when the social fabric and essence of everyday life within a community are converted into exchange value objects for touristic consumption.

Sustainable Community-based tourism (SCBT) has been praised for addressing these negative impacts and maintaining long-term viability, by combining the fundamental principles of sustainable development while supporting and encouraging local communities participation. If well performed and strategically implemented, SCBT can aid a communities future survival and thereby safeguard the intangible heritage.

The 7Es Management + Planning Model for Sustainable Tourism

The 7Es Model (environment, engagement, economics, enforcement, enquiry (inquiry), experience, and education) for SCBT Planning and Management by Catibag-Sinha and Wen (2008) is management and planning tool created for nature-based tourism development that supports the preservation of cultural heritage, promotes economic development, and emphasizes integrating social, economic, and environmental goals for effective tourism development.

the 7Es model was used as a tool for the assessment of a SCBT destination current state, in order to point out focus areas to realize the full potential of SCBT to preserve intangible heritage.

Intergrated model 7E and SCBT

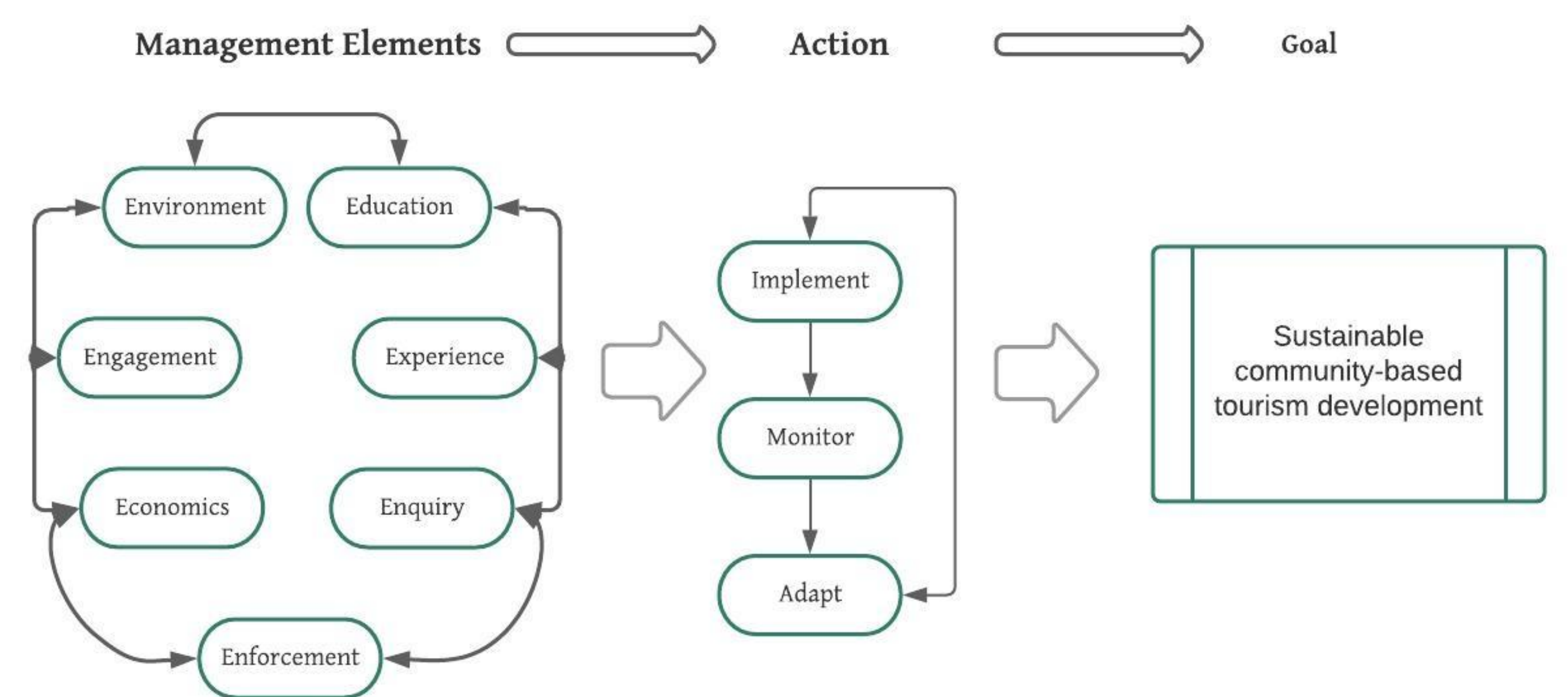


Figure 1: The 7E Model for SCBT Planning and Management

Methods

This research applied the 7Es Management and Planning Model for Sustainable Tourism to assess the SCBT's destinations current state to generate specific recommendations based on SCBT criteria. A qualitative approach was adopted, using semi-structured interviews with the quadruple helix in the Dutch province of Groningen.

Results

All representatives recognized the opportunities of SCBT as a practice to preserve intangible heritage by raising awareness, generating employment opportunities, creating value, and providing financial stability. Furthermore, it can positively influence local communities by advancing regional economic growth, cross-cultural communication, and creating awareness and enthusiasm to bring about long-term sustainable endurance of the intangible heritage.

Collaboration is essential for the successful implementation of SCBT and supporting the preservation of the natural environment and intangible heritage while simultaneously promoting economic development. All related stakeholders need to be involved, including the community, the intangible heritage communities, the government, the tourism sector, and academia, to implement SCBT as a practice to safeguard intangible heritage. Therefore, the representatives endorse the need for collaboration within the ecosystem.

Conclusions

For implementing the SCBT criteria as a practice to safeguard intangible heritage, cooperation is needed between the host community, the intangible heritage communities, academia, the tourism sector, and the government. Although the importance of quadruple helix cooperation is realized, it does not come automatically, so rules and regulations are needed to implement it successfully and define the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved.