



# A framework for facilitation of community participation in and beneficiation from CBT around the Save Valley Conservancy

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## Abstract

Numerous developing countries recognize the latent possibilities of their natural resources for tourism growth and sustainability. Community based tourism initiatives are essentially cooperative actions by clusters of people in a community through which some small to medium scale homegrown tourism industry can be developed. There is thus a popular view that for CBT to be sustainable, it has to be accepted and supported by local communities as the custodians of the natural resources in their vicinity. Local communities should be involved from the planning phase of CBT projects, which were meant to benefit them socio-economically, while also empowering them to participate actively in the conservation of local environmental assets. Various authors have raised concerns that the community benefits of CBT are exaggerated, irregular, modest, tokenistic, neo liberal and supportive of inequalities that it was meant to offset, as tourism growth does not necessary work towards poverty reduction and equality. Conservation efforts in protected areas impose doctrines that are foreign and hostile to local communities who use these resources so support their traditional forms of livelihoods with the promise of replacing them with CBT. This paper argues that local governments need to re-strategize, dismantle neo-colonial structures that perpetuate disparities and develop frameworks that will align CBT activities to their mission. The study was conducted in Wards 24, 25 and 26 of Bikita District within the Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe, due to their accessibility and close proximity to transport networks on the borders of Ward 27 (Save Valley Conservancy). The polycentric framework (Figure 1) was suggested to facilitate meaningful community participation in the development and growth of CBT, promote community beneficiation and deal with ongoing human-animal conflict along the border fence of the Save Valley Conservancy. For community participation to be meaningful and beneficial to local communities, multiple stakeholders have to be involved in furthering the objectives of CBT, especially in and around rural natural environments such as the Save Valley. External facilitation is crucial, but it has to be a temporary measure to phase in community ownership and management of CBT ventures.

**Keywords:** Facilitation, community participation, beneficiation, polycentric framework

## Introduction

The Africa Sun Limited (Biz Community, 2018) ranks Zimbabwe as 117<sup>th</sup> likely travel destination in the world compared to South Africa's 60<sup>th</sup> position. In Zimbabwe tourism including wider effects from investment, supply chain and induced income contributed over 8% to GDP in 2016 and 2017 (WTTC, 2018; Biz Community, 2018), and it is earmarked as a



growth sector expected to contribute 50% in the coming years (The Chronicle, 2019). Zibanai (2018) counts tourism as a 'bright light in Zimbabwe's depressed economic environment,' and one of the three sectors upon which Zimbabwean economy relies. Abel and Le Roux (2017) point to the apparent resilience of the tourism sector and its contribution when compared to other economic indicators in the country. However, tourism development is still heavily skewed towards traditional and already developed tourism destinations such as Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, Lake Kariba, Matapos National Park, Nyanga National Park, Great Zimbabwean Ruins and Chinhoyi Caves (Biz Community, 2018). Little effort has been directed towards community-based tourism (CBT) to achieve sustainable tourism development in remote rural areas where wildlife tourism as the main attraction, is threatened by conflict, tension and hostility due to the exclusion of local communities in tourism planning and development (Mutanga, Vengesayi, Gandiwa & Muboko, 2015:564), while Ervin *et al.* (2010) point out that protected areas, such as the Save Valley Conservancy, provide livelihoods for approximately 1.1 billion people worldwide.

The MTHI's 2013-2015 Strategic Plan scantily mentions development of CBT projects and promotion of homestays through introduction of village hotels and capacity building programmes. Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2017:2) and Giampiccoli and Saayman, (2018) argue that CBT, which has been growing in relevance and importance in natural areas should be promoted for purposes of environmental protection, poverty reduction and community development. CBT endorses strategies that favour greater benefits and control by local communities (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2014; Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2017).

However, Matseketsa *et al.* (2018), posit that local communities tend to suffer the costs of conservation through loss of livestock, vandalism of crops, loss of natural resources that used to sustain their livelihood, hatred and blame from the safari operators. This paper argues that community participation in and beneficiation from CBT around areas such as the Save Valley Conservancy will not be achieved without a facilitation framework developed to encourage participation and beneficiation while also promoting sustainable wildlife conservation.

## Literature

The role of local communities in tourism development is still questionable (Mudimba, 2017) resulting in them remaining in poverty amid thriving tourism economic activities in their areas (Mbatha, 2017; Hlengwa & Mazibuko, 2018). Goodwin (2017) argues that while the ideals are good, CBT lacks success in delivering community benefits, thus (CEN, 2019) no panacea for poverty as the local government and investors determine how they choose to involve local communities (Saayman & Giampiccoli, 2015). CBT development not easily decided upon by residents of an area because it generally always needs the support and "...recognition from powerful, multi-dimensional, and in many instances, anti-participatory stakeholders that dominate lives or local people" (Yanes *et al.*, 2019:2).

Tosun (2006) argues that many external stakeholders wish to share in the benefits of CBT and while they may listen to the inputs of the community, they also seek to keep any control to decide on how and what to share, and indeed how much to actually share with the local community. Saayman and Giampiccoli (2015:147) argue that if structural inequalities are not dismantled, attempts to use tourism as the 'rescue plan' are unlikely to yield significant and sustainable benefits to rural marginalized communities, a view supported by Hoogendoorn, Kelso and Sinthumule (2019:4) when arguing that tourism has proved to have limited potential to stimulate local incomes. Tourism generates much FDI but is also responsible for its role in several economic costs including augmented inflation, unequal distribution of economic benefits and low pay through mainly seasonal jobs. There is also an abuse of resources, and greatly increased cost of living for locals (Wall & Mathieson, 2006).



Moyo and Tichaawa (2017:4) view communities as the focal point and the most important components of tourism development, implying that CBT should naturally be an indigenous effort and partnership making external facilitation a temporary arrangement (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2017:7) aimed at providing the necessary methods and tools to facilitate the attainment CBT goals (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017:3). Tosun (2008) argues that participation is a key concept in CBT development and is basically a form of voluntary action in which people face some opportunities and respond to external choices that impact their lives while working collaboratively with others on a tourism project and it is in a sense liberating if achieved. Tasci and Denizci (2009) state that its productivity and value can be ascertained.

If CBT is aimed at ending the suppression of local communities (Mudimba & Tichaawa, 2017:1), capacity and willingness to participate meaningfully should be developed (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Zong, Cheng, Lee & Hsu, 2017:3). Mudimba (2017), Mbatha (2017), Hlengwa and Mazibuko (2018), argue that CBT benefits, originally meant for the local poor communities, still fall in the hands of the few vociferous and influential people, while the majority remain in dire poverty, with resources 'locked away' from them for the enjoyment of the affluent who 'exhibit anti-community development agenda' (Matseketsa, Mukamuri, Muboko & Gandiwa, 2019). This militates against the reasoning behind origins of CBT of favouring contact with the local community Lopez-Guzman, Sanchez and Pavon (2011), expanding economic opportunities for local communities (Jee, Ting & Alim 2019), poverty alleviation to enhance the livelihoods in marginalized regions (Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019), economic re-distribution, empowerment and self-reliance of rural communities (Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2017). The participation and re-distribution of power theory advanced by Arnstein as far back as 1969 and cited by many including Choguill (1996), Okazaki (2008), and Maruta (2020) suggested various levels of community participation from *non-participation* (manipulation and therapy); *tokenism* (informing, consultation and placation) to *citizen/community power* (partnership, delegated power and citizen/community control) as the ultimate mission of CBT.

Hlengwa and Mazibuko (2018) propose a systems and actor-network approach to community participation where all stakeholders are involved all along the process allowing information and rhythms to flow across to allow 'cross-pollination' of ideas and knowledge to take place. This would unlock community potential to control development and management and reap significant benefits generated by CBT (Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019). CBT is essentially an approach to tourism that efficiently and strongly supports sustainability at the community level, bringing diverse benefits (Han, Eom, Al-Ansi, Ryu & Kim, 2019). The Columbia Basin Trust (2019) states that a healthy environment is the foundation for a strong region, and Coppola (2015) adds that the health and vitality of the natural environment is a crucial base to CBT, due to people's genetic affinity towards (Chowdhury, 2019). CBT is tourism by the community, aimed at empowerment of local communities to manage development and growth of tourism to achieve community aspirations relating to their well-being, livelihoods and environmental sustainability (ASEAN, 2014). The usual benefits of CBT are focused mainly on the provision of rudimentary employment for locals (Li, 2006). The CBT Organisation (2019) highlights natural resources, culture, community organisations, management and learning as important elements of CBT.

Tourism development in rural areas is dependent on the ecological attractiveness, uniqueness of the landscape and anthropogenic factors as well as government policies, investors and the nature of visitors (Jaafar & Mohamad, 2014:1). The local communities own the rights to the land, which visitors see as ecologically, culturally and infrastructurally attractive (Sawee & Wisanuwong, 2014; Khadar et al., 2014:1). Hlengwa and Mazibuko (2018) and Hlengwa and Maruta (2019) observe that while resources such as dams, natural forests, mountains and valleys, oceans, etc. have the power to pull visitors from affluent urban areas to poverty-stricken rural areas for recreation purposes, minimal economic benefits permeating down to



the poor local community members. Local communities continue to be marginalized and live in dire poverty amid thriving local economic activities (Mbatha, 2017; Hlengwa & Mazibuko, 2018). Communities can however also certainly receive some benefits from participating in CBT without having direct control or ownership (Li, 2006).

Nyawo and Mubangizi (2015) and also Jaka and Shava (2018) argue that rural communities depend on biodiversity resources in their neighbourhoods for livelihoods through the production and sales of items such as agricultural produce, poultry, handicrafts, traditional mats, hand brooms, wood or stone carvings, marula beer and others. In cases where land is earmarked for conservation, alternative sources of livelihood including tourism have to be provided in order to prevent destitution and conflict. Matseketsa et al. (2019) and Higgins-Desbiolles (2019) point out that the resistance and 'tourismphobia' of local communities is caused by being excluded, being locked out (through fences and guards) and being alienated from their local resources thus taking away their custodianship, silencing and dispossessing them for imposed form of tourism.

Lo, Cheuk and Atang (2015) and Higgins-Desbiolles (2019) caution about widespread tourism development in a country, while the plight of locals is ignored and overlooked (Bednartz, 2018) to further the interests of the tourists without involving the locals, reorganising and redistributing the resources (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019) to provide sustainable alternative sources of livelihood. Gondiwa et al. (2013); Matseketsa et al. (2019) argue that human-wildlife conflict are a global problem occurring around the edges of protected areas because as Bednartz (2018) states, tourism continues to favour the privileged, while romanticising and depoliticising poverty. Goodwin and Santilli (2011) say that CBT is characterised by community ownership and management and ultimately community benefit in some form.

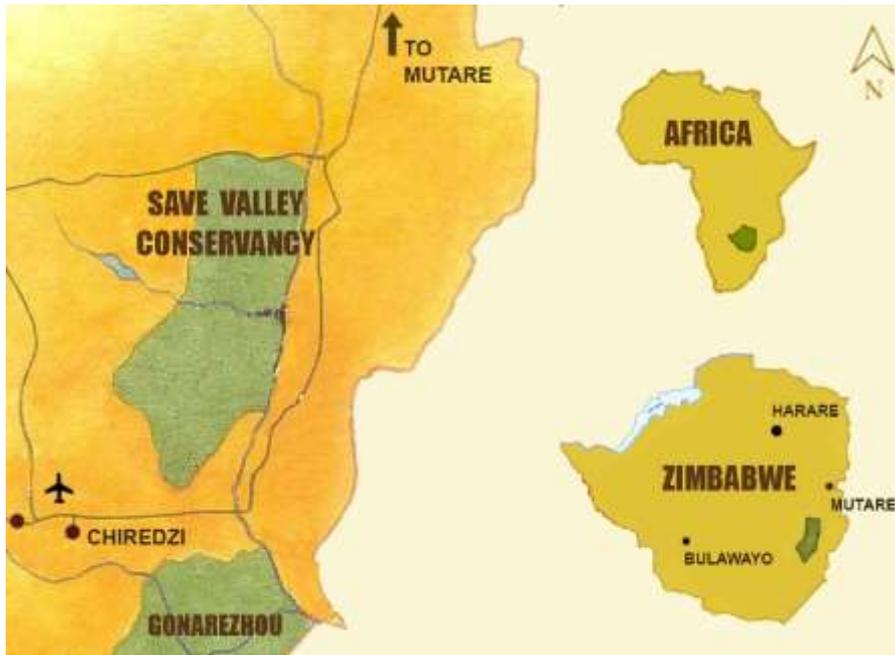
In Amboseli, Kenya, competing and conflicting land-uses as well as human-wildlife conflicts were causing biodiversity loss thereby necessitating adoption of community-based conservation through the Wildlife Act, 2014, in which local people derive economic benefits from lodges and campsites (Kipleu, Mwangi & Njogu, 2014:78). In Uganda, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, provides another interesting case study of CBT programmes facilitated by government where an incentive scheme of sharing revenue with adjacent communities was muted as an intervention strategy to improve the welfare of the local people and resolve resentment and conflicts (Mugenyi, Amumpiire & Namujuzi, 2014).

A framework to facilitate community participation in and beneficiation from CBT in and around SVC was developed by applying the research results and the participation and power redistribution theory. The facilitation framework has been termed a *poly-centric CBT facilitation framework for Save Valley* largely because it promotes the actor-network collaboration of various centres of power identified in the study area. A region such Save Valley can have an integrated facilitation framework that targets CBT development within a polycentric scenario as illustrated in Figure 1.

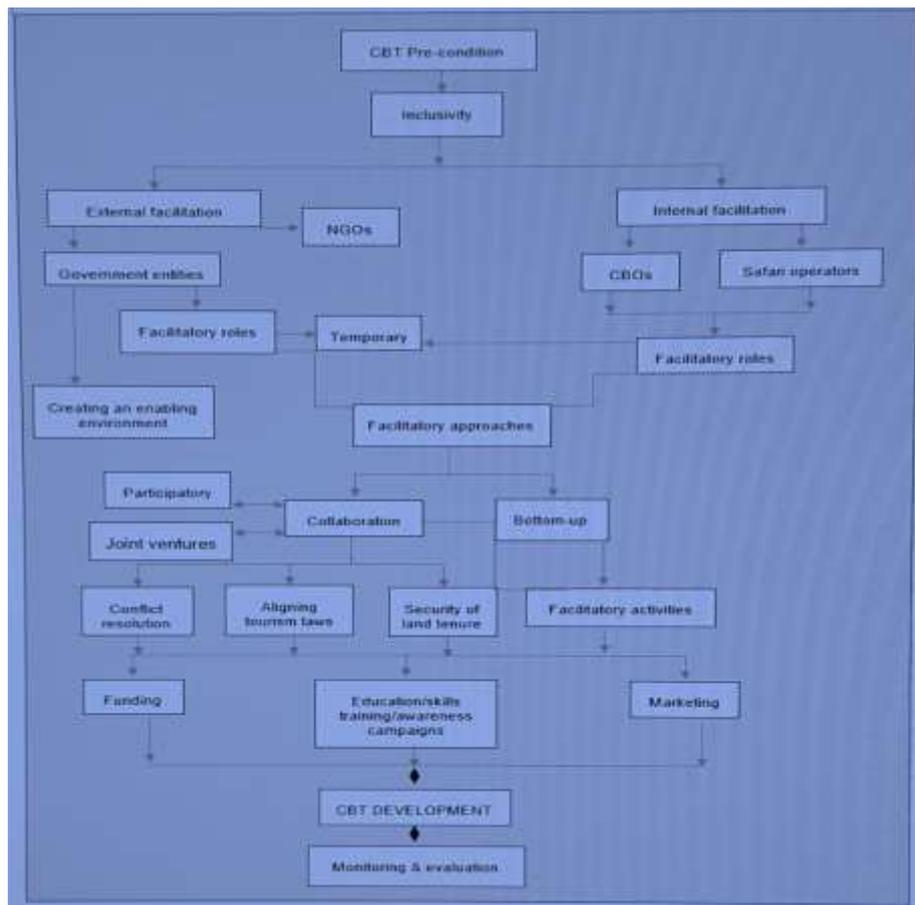
### **CBT facilitation framework for the Save Valley**

Matseketsa et al. (2019); Casson et al. (2016) argue that the effective plans for sustainability and long-term survival of protected areas is dependent on the support of many stakeholders essentially including people residing around it. The suggested facilitation framework represents a shift away from top-down approaches often used with disastrous results because of lack of support by the local communities.

This study has shown that a top-down tradition preferred by government officials leads mistrust and hostility between safari operators and local communities who have been displaced from their land and deprived of traditional forms of livelihood such as hunting.



**Image 1.** The Savé Valley Conservancy  
 Source: <https://savevalleyconservancy.org/information.html>



**Figure 1.** Poly-centric CBT facilitation framework for Save Valley in Zimbabwe

As illustrated on Figure 1, the pre-condition for CBT facilitation is inclusion of all stakeholders in the decision-making processes. Each of the stakeholders acts as a centre of decision-



making power, hence the poly-centricity concept. In essence, decision-making and associated LEDC in the form of CBT projects should involve all the stakeholders, namely local communities, the CBOs, safari operators (the private sector) and government entities. Emphasis is on local community participation in decision-making through a CBO which acts as a power broker for sustainable development of CBT. Casson et al. (2016) argue that true partnerships require that processes are redefined to determine priorities, strategic plans and stewardship practices to facilitate equitable sharing of benefits (Ervin et al., 2010). A solid CBT product requires strategic vision and unceasing investment by key stakeholders in an equitable way. There must thus be a matching of all the products and service with visitors' needs, wants and expectations. In addition, the product on offer must not be contrived but rather authentic and true to the local culture and heritage in situ.

Therefore, partnerships offer local communities legitimate bargain power during decision-making which is most effective when a CBO exists and acts as an organised power base in the community (Arnstein, 1969:221). Essentially, community participation shifts power from the bureaucrats to local communities. Abegunde (2009: 237) regards community participation as a mechanism for sustainable development as it enables the creation of a true sense of belonging and ownership among members of the community. In terms of the timeframe, facilitation should be a temporary process either short-term or long-term as suggested by Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2017). The facilitators are divided into external and internal facilitators. External facilitators comprise organisations, government entities such as MTHI, Bikita RDC, ZimParks, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), and NGOs. In terms of this framework, the government is a critical external facilitator because naturally it is expected to nurture and develop communities. In addition the government has the responsibility of creating an enabling environment for CBT development in communities, enacting appropriate laws, resolving the vastly reported conflicts, and providing the much needed guarantees of security of land tenure to safari operators to deal with their anxiety and aloofness. Theerappais (2012:290) argues that stakeholders such as government should also take interest in dealing with conflicts and disagreements as well as monitoring and evaluation of projects.

NGOs have always been important as development partners to government and local communities through proving education, funding and access to markets, hence their inclusion under external facilitators. In the *poly-centric framework* internal facilitation is a preserve for local stakeholders of the Save Valley themselves and the CBOs constituted of elected local officials, traditional leaders, and representatives of safari operators. This structure is also widely supported in the literature. For instance, Jamal & Getz (1995: 198) regard CBOs as the conveners in CBT because they have legitimacy and authority, and may also have expertise and resources. Hence, a CBO as the convener is important at the problem-setting stage of CBT projects, where it identifies and brings together all the key stakeholders to the negotiating table.

Furthermore, the involvement of CBOs in local CBT facilitation as local representatives reduces the tokenism associated with referendums and surveys often conducted by local development planners (Arnstein, 1969; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Jamal and Getz (1995:198) suggest that if local people feel that they can exercise control over their development process, resistance to tourism development in their area fizzles out. CBOs will also participate in monitoring and evaluation of CBT projects. The preferred facilitation approaches, are collaboration and bottom-up which are also identified as critical success factors for implementing sustainable tourism. The facilitation process contained in the framework, is consistent with *partnership* in the 6<sup>th</sup> rung of the Arnstein theory. It is regarded as a pre-condition for collaboration approach, which suggests that negotiation is carried out between the local residents of an area targeted for a programme or project, and the power-holders, usually local authorities or government, thereby redistributing the power and responsibility for planning and decision-making. The theory emphasises that a partnership offers people legitimate bargaining power and is most effective when a CBO exists and acting



as an organised power base in the community (Arnstein, 1969:221). *Delegated power*, the seventh rung on Arnstein theory, by implication means that the local residents of the Save Valley, through their CBOs as internal facilitators, will assume more substantial authority over decision-making and preside over CBT development programmes in their area with little external facilitation once initial successes have been achieved.

It has also been retorted that CBT destinations tend to face the threat of economic collapse even if their products and services were in demand due to poor marketing capability (Lucchetti & Font, 2013; Dodds, Ali & Galaski, 2016). Therefore, market knowledge is crucial for CBT enterprises to attain commercial viability such as market size, visitor's length of stay, visitor expenditure, and products and services (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen & Duangsaeng, 2014; Lucchetti & Font, 2013). Safari operators, as tourism experts, would participate in monitoring and evaluation of CBT projects.

## Conclusion

Policy makers, local governments and the private sector seem to be succeeding in ignoring the recommendations put forward by academics who spend time and resources investigating issues and challenges of CBT. As this study revealed through literature from various parts of the globe, CBT does not seem to deliver promised results to the local communities. This leads to resentment and hostility between local communities and the private sector that uses the rural resource base to benefit themselves amid evident destitution surrounding thriving natural resource-based tourism operations. This paper argues that local governments need to re-strategize, dismantle neo-colonial structures that perpetuate disparities and align CBT activities to their mission by reorganising and redistributing local resources and those derived from tourism activities. Casson et al. (2016) acknowledge the social, cultural and economic twine between people living near or within wilderness areas and such areas, which they view as integral parts of who they are, how they live and how they define themselves. The *poly-centric framework* addresses the issue of fragmentation, promotes their recognition and involvement in the conservation efforts around the Save Valley Conservancy and other areas facing similar challenges especially in other LEDC. Ervin et al. (2010) warn that protected areas that concern themselves solely with ecological conservation to the total disregard of other socio-economic and cultural benefits, cannot be sustainable.

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