

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY LEARNING FOR ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF BUNAKEN NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of ecotourism in North Sulawesi has created an improved relationship between local people and protected areas by providing alternative development for local people. As a result, entrepreneurship within communities of Bunaken Island is evidence that ecotourism appears to have the capacity to make local economic contribution in North Sulawesi. However, the element of ecotourism that has potential to introduce the economic benefits both for the region and the local communities in BNP remain uncertain. Local government has perceived BNP as a centre for tourism development and has tended to concentrate on this, without adequately considering conservation and livelihoods of local communities. It is also apparent that the majority of host communities in Bunaken Island have not been able to access the benefits of ecotourism development in BNP equitably, even though it has contributed to both the regional economy and local communities. Community involvement in tourism activities is at the best seasonal labour only and the distribution of tourism revenues in the area primarily flows to certain groups such as dive operators and/or accommodation providers. However, one initiative, homestays that surround BNP are generally family operated and the benefits are thus spread throughout the extended family. There has been limited research on practical ways of empowering the local communities of Bunaken Island to equip and enable them to directly build confidence and capability through ecotourism projects. This research examines ecotourism development by host communities and provides a model that will ensure the outcomes from tourism will be returned to strengthen the local economy as well the quality of life of local communities.

Keywords: Ecotourism development, community involvement, community-based ecotourism, development.

INTRODUCTION

From development perspectives, ecotourism ventures should only be considered successful if local communities have some measure of control over its development and share equitably in the benefits emerging from

ecotourism activities (Scheyvens, 1999). Therefore, one of the main principles of ecotourism is that the primary benefits should be returned to the local community and become an integral part of the development activity. The ecotourism activities of the Monarch Butterfly in West Central Mexico do not preserve and enhance the special qualities of the site and its flora and fauna may be irreparably damaged unless it actively incorporates the local society into service planning and implementation, including programs to meet the fundamental needs for income and employment for all people in the region (Barkin, 1997). Participation in this case is a process of empowerment that helps to involve local people in problem identification, decision making and implementation processes, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Indonesia is a very large country with many climatic regions and natural resources. Throughout history it has been a place of meeting of many cultures and religions, giving it a very rich cultural and archaeological inheritance that makes it possible for the country to make tourism investments in such fields as urban tourism and marine-based tourism. Wall (2006) asserted that Indonesia is one of the largest countries in the world and is a place of great biological and cultural diversity which create both challenges and opportunities for Indonesia as a country and as a tourist destination.

At the national level, the tourism development campaign has been focused on growth and poverty reduction. In 2006, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced 5 main tourist destinations: North Sulawesi (Manado), South Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, and South Sumatra. In selecting these regions, the country has been taken as a whole with its natural, historical, archaeological, and socio-cultural and tourism values as well as marine tourism and water-based sports tourism potential. Combining these different types of tourism and providing cooperation between regions will create a synergy in the tourism sector in less developed areas. As the country is very large, the attractive points with a high tourism potential, such as cities and their tourism facilities, should be determined. Besides, spatial distribution points for tourism should be established in an effort to increase productivity.

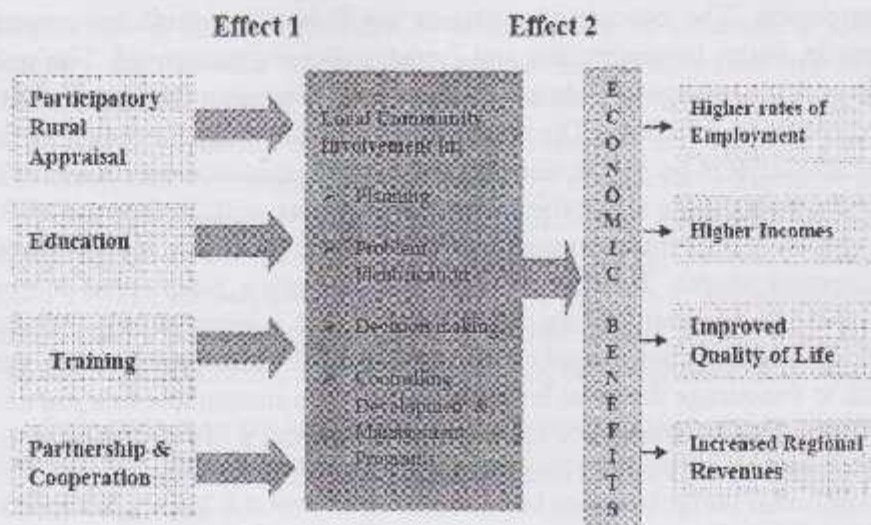
Bunaken National Park (BNP) in Indonesia was officially established in 1991 as a National Park and is among the first of Indonesia's growing system of marine parks. It is a home for diverse marine biota with drop-offs and beautiful coral reefs that are recognized by divers' worldwide (Volkman, Caldwell & Oey, 1995). Therefore, BNP could potentially be an ecotourism resource to generate and develop the economic growth in the region. The total population

around BNP is 20,000 people and 9,595 are living in the small islands throughout the region. The economic activities are fishing, agriculture, carpentry, handicrafts, water transportation and forestry sector (mangrove). The people of Nain and Mantchage islands are progressively changing from agriculture to seaweed farming practices. The recent growth of seaweed farming may have far reaching effects on social, economic and environmental conditions within BNP and consequently affect the tourism industry as well. In the case of BNP, its development model requires new ways to encourage the direct participation of indigenous people. This can be achieved through a program of job creation in their region that will increase incomes and improve living standards. This study is attempting to apply the concept of PRA as a participatory action research to encourage the local level involvement in sustainable tourism development which aims to enhance the quality of the local's life particularly in the less developed society whilst maintaining the natural resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept Map

Participatory approach through a PRA workshop represents the community-based participatory learning to develop ecotourism. The scheme is designed for practical application to an ecotourism development program in the context of BNP. The general conceptual framework of the project considers the empowerment of the local community in ecotourism development through planning, involvement in problem identification, decision making, and controlling the development and management programs through a Participatory Rural Appraisal Workshop. This has been carefully and successfully done and as a result the economic benefits of ecotourism have increased and direct benefits have been returned to the host communities, manifested in higher rates of local employment, higher incomes, improved quality of life and increased regional revenue. Figure 1 illustrates the concept map of the overall cause-effect performance of host community empowerment in ecotourism project.



Source: Lagarenc (2010)

Figure 1
Concept Map for PRA in Ecotourism Development

What Do Host Communities Seek To Gain From Ecotourism?

Many believe that residents' attitudes towards the environmental effects of tourism are important as revealed in many studies of residents' attitudes (Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Kuvan and Perran, 2005). Andereck *et al* (2005:1057) identified economic issues such as tax revenue, increased jobs, additional income, tax burdens, inflation, and local government debt and environmental issues such as protection of parks and wildlife, crowding, air, water and noise pollution, wildlife destruction, vandalism, and litter as being of concern. Ecotourism incorporates natural and social dimensions, whereby the latter visitors interact with local residents. To make ecotourism a viable economic alternative for the local population, the cooperation of residents is needed, especially in the long term (Mieczkowski, 1995). It appears that the arrival and presence of tourists can affect local residents as individuals, families and as a community. Having access to their villages and remotes areas, the local residents have an expectation to gain benefits from ecotourism projects in their area. Therefore, to develop ecotourism projects, it is critical to have a good understanding on how to potentially benefit the host communities.

Ecotourism should be able to diversify and increase the 'rate base' of a community by encouraging new businesses to establish and by bringing tourists into the area (Beeton, 1998). This will inject foreign exchange into the local economy that flows through to the residents in terms of increased employment, new business opportunities, better educational and recreational facilities, residential development and cultural opportunities.

Ziffer (1989); Boo (1990); Lindberg (1991) underlined that the benefits gained from ecotourism include:

1. Economic diversification particularly in rural, peripheral and non-industrial regions.
2. Long-term economic stability.
3. The tendency for higher dollar expenditures and length of stay by ecotourists.
4. Demand for local goods and services that benefit local economy.
5. Infrastructure development.
6. Increase foreign exchange earnings.

Ecotourism in rural communities has the potential to diversify the local economy particularly in rural areas where employment in agricultural industry may be insufficient. The local population growth exceeds the capacity of the supply of local agricultural products. As such, ecotourism becomes a promising alternative economic activity to supplement the current agricultural industry. It is perceived to require less investment as it is based on the existing natural resources and native culture of the host community. The local economy base (agriculture and fishing) in Bunaken Island has been diversified. As a result of this diversification, local people could be motivated to focus on ecotourism activities. But this shift need not invalidate their interests and traditions. The local residents of the islands can be trained and ideally be suited to employment opportunities as interpretative tour guides in tourist activities such as bird watching and flora and fauna exploration due to their knowledge and experience in mangrove forests. Those who are active in fishing could be tour guides in diving, sightseeing and sailing in the marine park.

In line with changing the public interest, it is also necessary to change the environment in which BNP operates to make it more supportive of the

efforts of development. Changing the public interest from agriculture and fishing to ecotourism development is required to support the local business and encourage development of industries which cater for the tourist market. Furthermore, to develop and enhance ecotourism activities and strengthen the tourist flow to BNP, camping, exploring flora and fauna, bird watching, local cultural adventure tours and mountain climbing are identified as good alternative tourist activities in the area. Extending the focus of the park visitors to such activities will help to sustain the marine resources that have currently been over-exploited and at the same time widen job opportunities throughout the region. The design of an ecotourism development plan for BNP therefore should be based on the ideal that tourism will stimulate and be able to integrate into existing local economies to improve the quality of life of the local people.

From social perspectives, ecotourism is ultimately expected to be able to stimulate the growth of community development. Therefore, the community aspect in any ecotourism project is crucial. The host communities are the first to recognize the benefits of conserving their natural resources, as well as ecotourism developer efforts to help them to effectively utilize these resources. This will lead to the end product of a community-based ecotourism development that has improved the quality of life and welfare of the communities. The social benefits to host communities are the improved standards of living resulting from increased economic prosperity. Most importantly, a host community orientation in developing ecotourism enhances the host community's quality of life, whilst at the same time sustainably managing the natural resources (Ceballos- Lascurain, 1992).

Community-based ecotourism is also a growing prominence of heritage resources as an opportunity for indigenous people to benefit from ecotourism by being directly involved in the management of those resources. Host community involvement can improve the quality and genuineness of the visitor experience. In this sense, ecotourism experience is also enriched when the indigenous people share their cultural knowledge of the environment with the visitors. In addition, to boost the local economic benefits of ecotourism, the host communities should be fully empowered in managing their ecotourism resources (Ayala, 1996). Increasing recruitment of the local staff at all levels ecotourism industry and greater local ownership strengthens economic benefits that accrue to local communities (Wearing & Neil, 1998).

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment in developing ecotourism involves community consultation, which constitutes one of the key elements in the planning, development and operational stages of an ecotourism project. During the planning process it could be possible for the community to realize the potential benefits of such tourism without disadvantaging some sectors of the community (Wearing & McLean, 1998). The Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism Project (SBEP) of Khangchendzonga National Park, India has significantly involved local communities through participatory approaches to increase awareness of resource conservation and economic returns from ecotourism services and enterprises and contribute to policies that meet ecotourism and conservation goals. This is very important as the local people should be compensated for the loss of access to resources they suffer when ecotourism attractions are created. In Africa for example, the Narok Country Council - which has jurisdiction over the Masai Mara Park - puts money into a trust fund which is used to fund schools, cattle dips and health services which benefit the entire community (Sindiga, 1995). New Zealand's Maori communities are using ecotourism as a means of sustainability by utilising the physical resources at their disposal in ways that provide local employment (Scheyvens, 1999). The community involvement in Koroyanitu National Park in Fiji has contributed to the protection and conservation of the community's natural and cultural heritage whilst at the same time developed the communities and their way of life (Baba, 1997). It is worthy of note that full support from the whole local society in tourism development is essential. Communities surrounding BNP, who are currently involved in tourism activities such as in water transportation, diving operators, accommodation and souvenirs providers have generally realized the importance of tourism.

With regard to community control of ecotourism, the locals have accumulated on-site knowledge over the years to attract tourists who are tolerant and interested in experiencing small scale, locally operated accommodation built from local materials, by the local people who also function as managers and interpreters. The efforts to empower the local community in tourism initiatives link the resources management and conservation to both tourism and community development. Failure to do this will lead to difficulties to obtain support from the host communities.

Given this scenario, this research seeks to examine and develop a conceptual framework of a community-based approach for developing ecotourism. It allows ecotourism development by host communities to ensure specific outcomes that will be channeled back to strengthen the quality of life of the host community. It highlights local community empowerment from the planning process to program implementation. A Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) training workshop that involves local community, trainers and local authorities is designed to assess local conditions, problems and opportunities for ecotourism development. Education and training for local community is suggested to provide adequate skills and knowledge of tourism in order to equip them to directly participate in tourism development. Additionally, partnership, coordination and strong alliances with other parties, such as public and private sectors, travel agents, tour operators and park management is also regarded as essential.

PRA Approach To Implement The Concepts

Given the importance of greater host community empowerment in developing ecotourism, a community-based approach should be accompanied by strategies to achieve the concept. Here, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is highly applicable in order to seek the views of the host communities on their natural resources and what they expect to gain. As a result of that, education and training programs for the host communities are proposed. PRA parallels and resonates with paradigm shifts in the social and natural sciences, business management and development of thinking, supporting decentralization, local diversity and personal responsibility. PRA is currently used in a range of literature and case studies of agriculture, health management, poverty and social programs (Chambers, 1994; Townsley, 1996; Mukherjee, 1997; White & Taket, 1997).

It is suggested in this study that PRA can also effectively be applied in developing a conceptual scheme for community-based ecotourism. A number of participatory approaches can be used to assess local community condition, problems and opportunities, which is needed in the framework of local community empowerment. To ensure that the benefits of ecotourism are realized planning should involve community elders and existing community organizations including women, youth and church associations.

Through the participatory approach, a management plan for developing ecotourism in BNP can be designed according to what the local communi-

ties think the development should and should not be. This method allows them to understand what kind of ecotourism development they want and how it will be done. This will enable local people to obtain, share, enhance and analyses knowledge of their life and conditions, then to plan and to act according to that knowledge (White & Taket 1997).

The power and popularity of PRA are partly explained by the unexpected analytical abilities of local people when expressed through sequences of participatory and especially visual methods. So, it can be said that the validity and reliability of information shared by local people through PRA is considered high. The results can be used as guidelines to design management plans and development programs that are compatible with the local community. Once this is achieved, a plan of action is made jointly with the representatives of the responsible government agencies.

PRA Workshop Model

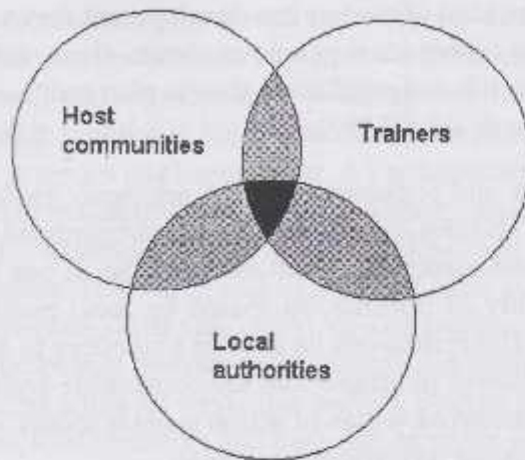
This workshop is suggested to be a model of participatory research in developing a community-based ecotourism project that not only requires further assessment but also further action. In other words, PRA in this context is a participatory appraisal not only of needs but also the development of action.

Purposes

1. To integrate and mobilize the three parties (host communities, local authorities and trainers) involved in an ecotourism project in which each has different potentials and plays different roles.
2. To exchange experiences and share lessons learned among the three parties for future ecotourism development.
3. To encourage local communities to reflect on and discuss various aspects of their own conditions that have the potential to be affected by ecotourism development in their area.

Roles and Relationship

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship among the three parties involved PRA training workshop. They work together and each plays certain role.



Source: Lagarese (2009)

Figure 2

Relationships Between The Three Parties

1. **Host communities:** Have detailed knowledge and understanding of their current conditions as well as the natural resources in their area.
2. **Trainers:** Know how to put local conditions into ecotourism perspectives using their information processing, explaining, analysing and prioritising skills.
3. **Local authorities:** Have some technical knowledge and are in the position to provide needed support for developing ecotourism.

PRA Principles Applied To Tourism

There is limited academic literature discuss and examine the application of PRA to tourism development. This study is aimed at designing a model of PRA as a participatory action research to strengthen the empowerment of local community in developing ecotourism within their areas. This participatory action mobilises the parties involved in such as the local communities, conservationists and the local authorities. These actors work to identify local conditions and encourage the cooperative actions that conserve the environment

and improve the welfare of local people. They have to focus on data reflection, mobilisation and state of actions that represents the problem identification and proposes directions to find out appropriate and sustainable solutions for environmental problems as a result of tourism development. However, the team still has to continue to implement, monitor and evaluate and review the proposal.

It is important to note that the use of PRA principles in the training workshop is crucial as an approach or a paradigm. Chambers (1994) contends that evidence to date shows high validity and reliability of information shared by local people through PRA compared with data from more traditional methods. The entire PRA process incorporates the trainers and trainees, official and local people, outsiders and insiders, helping to identify members of the local community who are highly committed, more aware and more prepared to act than other members. These people can be local volunteers who serve in the front line of the ecotourism project and help to coordinate between local officials and local communities in the future.

An ideal workshop should be organized in the field, with local people as the majority (approximately 20-25 participants). In addition, the training and the fieldwork are not separated but integrated. It is also worthy of note that to efficiently and effectively conduct the workshop, trainers and facilitators need to be sensitive, flexible and ready to adjust the activities according to the realities they faced in the community (Duangsa, 1996). However, there is no definite requirement as to how long a PRA workshop should last. It will depend on the needs and available resources of the local community.

The community-based approach highlights local community participation in development programs ranging from planning to decision making. Therefore, it is essential that to genuinely and effectively involve the host community, they should not only be empowered but also well equipped. This is especially important in a rural community where local people are lacking creativity and competence to determine their well being. There are several issues that confront the community-based approach in any development programs for several reasons. The local communities: (1) mostly live in poverty, in a below average standard of living; (2) cannot afford education; (3) lack knowledge and skills; (4) lack experience to effectively manage their resources; (5) Limited financial and technical assistance provided by government As such, they are deprived of opportunities to improve their quality of life and remained deprived of the benefits of development.

To overcome these problems, the following steps are suggested as keys to effectively apply the community-based approach specifically to rural communities.

1. Identify the problems through PRA.
2. When the problems are identified, education and training programs that suit the needs of that community are planned.
3. Promoting the programs to have support and assistance both from the NGOs and the government at the local, national and international levels.

PRA is a way of learning from and with villagers to investigate, analyse and evaluate constraints and opportunities for development projects (Mukherjee (1993). Participation is a key element used in PRA for rural community development. PRA focuses on the stimulation of participation by local people. Specific techniques are used to encourage greater involvement among people and to enable them to take the leading role in appraising conditions and identifying solutions (Townesley, 1996).

However, it is important to note that PRA is not only a tool that enables development planners to learn about rural conditions and consult with local people so that development planners can come up with more appropriate and better development plans. It is also a transfer of the planning role and decision making responsibilities that are traditionally taken by government institutions and development agencies. This is crucial as the absence of a participatory framework in community development will hinder a basic understanding at the grassroots level. Consequently, such a development project will be ill informed, ill conceived and show little capability of generating the benefits that the programs envisage.

In addition, PRA has been widely acknowledged as a method that replaces the conventional models of rural development in which the beliefs, attitudes and values of the rural people involved remain under-estimated, under-perceived and simplified (Chambers, 1994; Townesley, 1996; Mukherjee, 1997; White & Taket, 1997). PRA helps the host community to perform their own analysis through interaction with the villagers, understanding them and learning from them. Several questions that might be answered in the process of PRA are:

1. What information is already available?
2. What don't we know about the area where development program has been planned?
3. How can we investigate what we don't know?
4. How much will it cost?
5. How long is it going to take?

Further, PRA training workshop for community development workers and community members enables the PRA practitioners to provide guidelines for a community development project ((Townesley, 1996; Theis & Grady, 1991). This leads the PRA practitioners to come together and share their experiences. The objectives of the PRA workshop are to (1) share the experiences of training; (2) share details of experiences of the process of participatory planning, analysis, implementation and evaluation; (3) take stock of common constraints and problems; (4) learning from each other where some have been solved; (5) produce an inventory of what has worked (Mascarenhas, 1991).

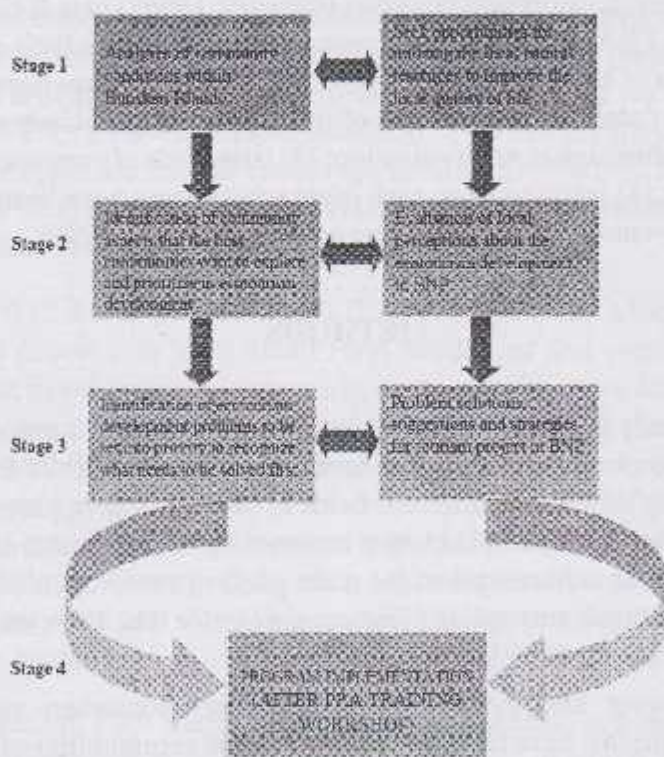
METHODS

This study has adopted PRA training workshops into ecotourism development through a community-based approach in the context of BNP. Given the applicability of PRA to different fields of studies, it is apparent that PRA is also highly applicable in planning a community-based ecotourism development. This aims to achieve one of the main goals of ecotourism that is to benefit the host communities socially and economically. The PRA workshop that will be conducted for BNP has the purpose of:

1. Monitoring and evaluating the existing ecotourism projects and programs that have failed to benefit the local communities of the islands.
2. Designing the ecotourism development programs and implementing them.

These objectives should be taken into account to make the projects more adaptable to local needs and involve Bunaken island communities or groups from the initiation of the project. In turn, this will increase the chances of project sustainability. The workshop style aims to involve all the participants

(Bunaken community representatives), promote active sharing of experiences and be flexible enough to influence the ecotourism development in the area. After each session of the workshop, the views and comments of participants should be compiled to the running of the workshop. Trainers at this stage will have many illustrations from different parts of the islands and as such, should exchange these experiences with the participants. Figure 3 represents a suggested PRA training workshop processes that can be applied to BNP communities.



Source: Adapted from Duangsa, 1996

Figure 3

Process of PRA Training Workshop for Communities in Bunaken Island

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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The suggested workshop processes above will hopefully enhance the involvement and empowerment of Bunaken Island communities. Ideally, the resulting of the ecotourism project will be returned to the host communities.

The parties that will be involved in the workshop are:

Participants. Community representatives from all level of society on Bunaken Island including women, youths, peasants, fishermen, business owners, teachers, community leaders, local students. They should be the representatives of the people from 5 islands: Bunaken, Manado Tua, Mantehage, Siladen, and Nain.

Trainers/Facilitator. Integrated and representative volunteers from study clubs, tourism associations, business associations and universities within the province who are professionals and have capabilities to deliver the PRA training workshop.

Local Authorities: The local authorities of Bunaken National Park Management.

The methods used are primary and secondary data review and two way-communications for gaining knowledge of rural situation surrounding BNP through direct participation of the local communities. At this stage the villagers are involved right from the beginning and they perform their own analysis and generate data.

Based on the above principles, the following is suggested a step by step guidelines for PRA training workshop of community-based ecotourism in BNP.

Table 1
PRA and Its Implications in Practice

PRA ACTIVITIES	IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE
Self-introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of trainers and participants. ○ Each participant adds some details about his/her personal side such as likes, dislikes, fears, perceptions and aspirations about a current ecotourism development in their areas.
Identification of expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each participant writes down their expectations of ecotourism development on a small piece of paper. ○ Divide them into small groups to exchange and discuss their expectations to produce a group expectation. ○ These expectations should be put on the wall for all to see. ○ Everybody gets involved to discuss these expectations. ○ Trainers/facilitators let the participants know which expectations will possibly be met and which will not. ○ Trainers/facilitators review the agenda to adjust and accommodate these expectations.
Start working together in participatory and cooperative manners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Games/activities are used to break the ice, make participants relax, alleviate sleepiness, relieve stress and tension. ○ Adapt the games and activities to suit particular groups of participants, needs and culture.
Set a conceptual Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss with the participants about differences in views through simple activities such as showing a large poster. ○ Trainers guide the discussion to a conclusion that different people see different things, have different viewpoints & imaginations as they are in a different situation, have different background and different context of life.
Empowering participants and strengthen teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants work in groups to make suggestions or decisions, to plan strategies for the ecotourism project in their area guided by trainers.
Use of mapping Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants experiment with doing several types of ecotourism mapping exercises and discover what kinds of data and information can be learned. ○ Mapping such as physical, social and economic impacts of current ecotourism development. ○ Comparing the community conditions between the past, the present and the potential future affected by ED
Use of ranking Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage the participants to identify the themes or community aspects that they want to explore and prioritise in the process of ecotourism development. ○ Participants share their learning and observation with the trainers.
Reflection of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflect on what the participants have found and learned. ○ Narrow and sharpen the focus on selected ecotourism development issues that are particularly important to local communities. ○ Trainers need to guide participants through the reflection process in a systematic way to enable them to replicate the ecotourism development process in the future.
Cause and effect Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After in-depth data and information are obtained on specific issues, participants discuss and do analysis. ○ After data analysis takes place, trainers assist to connect the pieces of data together in a meaningful way

Reflection on Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have the collected data and information more advanced and detailed than in the earlier stage. o Participants need to look back and review how they arrive at the stage they are now,
Priority Setting (Matrix ranking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A number of ecotourism development problems identified have to be set into priority. o Create consensus and a sense of ownership for long-term cooperation and action in ecotourism development. o Participants are encouraged to identify their own criteria and initiate their own matrix for prioritising the problems.
Exploration of Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o After a priority need is identified, participants should explore how best to tackle and solve the problems. o Identify as many alternatives as possible (simple ranking technique). o To weigh the identified alternatives against one to another.
Development Programs Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Everybody gets involved in this culmination of the entire process of community assessment, prioritisation and alternative exploration. o Integrates and put together a number of PRA principles. o Participants plan how to solve the identified and prioritised problems by working out all possible details. o Trainers should remind the participant that while planning these details, the plan will have to lead to concrete action.

Source: Adapted from Duangsa, 1996

CONCLUSION

In light of the development of ecotourism in BNP over past years, the study has revealed that ecotourism is yet to fully support the ultimate goals of conservation and local development. The community-based paradigm presented in this study has been used as a framework to illustrate the causes and effects of host community empowerment in community-based ecotourism which presents a PRA training workshop model and its guidelines as well as a step by step process for communities surrounding BNP. Despite the enthusiasm for the development of community-based ecotourism in BNP, it is important to be aware of the challenges that confront local participation in ecotourism development in the area. The most critical problem refers to the lack of knowledge, skills and experiences of local community members in Bunaken and the surrounding islands to directly participate in ecotourism projects. This is considered as the major constraint to host community involvement in ecotourism activities. In light of these challenges, this study has developed a conceptual framework of a community-based ecotourism in the context of BNP that provides (1) A PRA training workshop model for the community members of Bunaken and its surrounding areas; (2) Guidelines for designing the PRA activities of the training workshop and the implications for implementation; (3) Processes of the PRA training workshop ranging from an

analysis of community conditions to the program implementation or the follow up of the conducted PRA training workshop.

It important of note that the ongoing training and upgrading the skills of community members are required to meet international ecotourism standards. Transferring skills and knowledge to communities is essential to enable them to manage high quality ecotourism businesses on their own. In addition, community ownership of tourism related products and facilities in BNP should be encouraged and handed over to local actors to provide equitable distribution of tourist incomes. In the long run, community owned facilities such as campsites, lodges and homestays will become assets for generating income and employment in the region if they are properly managed. Further, the community ownership will help maintain a collective and cohesive outlook in the community rather than degenerating into competition amongst individuals. Therefore, education and training for the local people of Bunaken and the surrounding islands are important factors that can impede the success of community managed ecotourism.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

PRA training workshop model presented in this project is recommended to the future instances such as (1) Community-based ecotourism of BNP, in particular those that aim to equip local communities with the practical knowledge that enables direct involvement in their ecotourism development. Local participation is required at all stages of ecotourism planning, implementation and monitoring. To continually promote active participation, support strategies from various stakeholders such as local government, local NGOs and local tourism industries are needed; (2) Community-based tourism development in Indonesia in general that will make a deliberate attempt to involve local people in the management of Indonesian tourism attractions and ecotourism activities throughout the regions. Local tourism potentials within the country should be seen in the greater context of local needs and expectations of their natural surroundings; (3) Tourism communities of other countries that promote local people's appreciation and awareness of the potential tourism values in their area. Therefore, all participants in the community-based tourism all over the world should improve capabilities at the local level to implement ecotourism ventures.

SUGGESTIONS/DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Community based participatory learning for ecotourism development requires further examination in order that the complexity of community involvement that influence ecotourism development can be better understood. Local community involvement is widely adopted to increase economic benefits gained from development such as higher income, wider job opportunity, improved quality of life, and increased regional income. Stronger local community involvement requires integrated planning and management for ecotourism development as well as integration with other activities within the area. As community empowerment achieves greater importance, ecotourism development will likely expand as one of the sustainable development tools. This means that there will be a stronger role for local community in planning and monitoring the development to maximize benefits gained from ecotourism activities.

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