Capacity building seminar

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New strategies for Tourism and Local Development in the Mediterranean Region

Eco-responsible tourism and economic local development

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Picture 1: before “local development”...
Sceneries for (tourism) development

A. Mountains  B. Lakes and rivers  C. Grassland  D. Cities  E. Coasts
Options for development: tourism, but also..

- **Mountains**: skiing and mountaineering, but also water stock, watershed protection, soil erosion prevention;
- **Lakes**: peaceful recreation but also fish for food, water for irrigation, climate mitigation;
- **Rivers**: rafting, bathing, fishing but also energy/hydropower, waste washing by self-purification capacity;
- **Countryside/grassland**: trekking, horse-riding but also support to wild animals, livestock and food production, carbon sequestration;
- **Cities/urban areas**: sightseeing and culture, parks for citizen’s recreational services, but also science and technology, services and livelihood for citizens and workers..
- **Coastal areas**: sun&beach, snorkeling & diving, fishing, but also dunes and mangroves for inland protection, tidelands and coral reefs for biodiversity development, ports for yachting and for logistics..

- *Tourism development compete quite always with some other function!*
The concept of “tourism product” imply also a pattern of consumption..

and – as any type of consumption - this is not impact-free:
- natural and/or historical places – and cities in particular - when converted exclusively into tourism sites are no longer actually lived by citizens;
- sites tend to become only objects for consumption for tourists, for aestheticism, for events and spectacles and communities turn into opportunities for picturesque.

All this can become the grave of what we mean for “local development”, i.e. the development of the “quality of life” of a community, able to create and fairly distribute richness while preserving alive people’s history and culture.
Nevertheless, sustainable & responsible tourism can be effectively pursued..

• UNWTO guidelines for tourism sustainable development can be applied to all forms of tourism, incl. mass-tourism, by implementing principles like:
  ✓ Resource optimal management and biodiversity protection;
  ✓ Socio-cultural protection of communities and of their lifestyles;
  ✓ Long-term economic sustainability, incl. fairness in income distribution, job creation, etc.;
  ✓ Actual participation of stakeholders, ensuring political leadership;
  ✓ Impact monitoring;
  ✓ Customer satisfaction

But these may remain declarations of principles if not relying on a clear vision of what type of community future is “desirable”!
Some practical questions for policy makers (addressing tourism-based local development)

• From a *local development perspective*: how to assess trans-sectoral / territorial dimensions of local development?

• From a *territorial governance perspective* (local, regional, etc.): which stakeholders to involve and what their point of view on local development?

• From a *management perspective*: what type of tools can support sustainable/responsible management, also towards the demand side?
Some recent cultural evolutions help our point of view and prospect evaluation..

The first helps in addressing the perception of ourselves.

Following *Florence Convention on Landscape* (2000), landscapes – urban, rural, seaside – are not (anymore) only “natural” or “cultural assets”:

- in designing the future of our territories, no more distinction between “outstanding beauties” (to make best value) and “ordinary landscapes” (to be “consumed”);

- we should globally consider to deal with the issue of “quality” of all the places in which the population live;

- “quality” is as essential condition for individual and social well-being and development, for boosting the economy in general and also for tourism development.

- It is thus relevant for a territory to look at itself in relation to others, considering assets as well as practices for development!
Investing in “Territorial capital”..

The second one helps in addressing the way we look to our “assets”:

- **Territorial capital** includes geographic location, climate, production factors, traditions, natural resources, quality of life, agglomeration economies of urban systems, industrial districts, tourism districts..

- Other factors consist of behaviour codes and informal rules facilitating economic and social actors in working together, sharing ideas, their solidaristic acting also in conditions of uncertainty...

- There is also what we call “milieu”, a result of the combination of Institutions, practices, researchers, producers and policy makers, that make possible creativity and innovation capacity..

OECD, Territorial Outlook, 2001
“Territorial capital” is a relation-based vision on territory..

- the term “capital” recalls the idea of *a resource that can be used for best value*: of technical and human resources within enterprise economy; of social relationships within the social environment”; of “beauty” within and ecological and landscape dimension.

- When designing development programmes – also in the case of tourism – focus on its capacity to benefit the community, where also private resources can generate *common goods* (e.g. entrepreneurial development that generates jobs and income).

- More, Territorial Capital can’t be limited simply to the endowment of a territory, of material and non-material assets to be preserved: it is *THE RESOURCE* upon which the future of the community can be built.
To better understand relationships, different components of “territorial capital” can be considered...

- **“knowledge capital”**, as a capacity for innovation, attraction of knowledge and competencies in the territory, development of human resources of high quality;
- **“social capital”**, as fairness and capacity to reduce poverty, upgrade quality of life, share common values (“civicness”), capacity to integrate cultural diversity;
- **“ecosystem capital”**, as sustainability in using resources, integrity and security of natural cycles, biodiversity and continuity of the ecosystem, coherency and richness of landscapes;
- **“infrastructural capital”**, as endowments that ensure material and non-material accessibility, safety and quality of urban systems, reduced resource consumption.
The third deals with the concept of ecosystem services

*The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity* (see TEEB, 2010) provides new tools for assessing sceneries for development, evaluating opportunities, threats, bottlenecks.

The concept of “*ecosystem services*” recognize the role of functioning natural systems for local well-being, going beyond old-style strategies, purely focused on economic growth:

- nature provides more than one solution;

- landscapes and ecosystems are more than a nice sunset;

- also small changes can have a remarkable impact, on nature and on the social environment;

- “just because you don’t see it, it doesn’t mean it isn’t there”.
Provisioning food

Provisioning raw material

Provisioning freshwater

Provisioning medicinal res.

Regulating local climate

Regulating carbon sequestration

Regulating extreme events

Regulating soil erosion

Regulating waste water treatment

Regulating pollination

Regulating biological control

Habitat for species

Habitat for genetic diversity

Cultural service: recreation

Cultural service: tourism

Cultural service: spiritual experience

Cultural service: aesthetic appreciation

And, last but not least...

Much more than a “nice sunset”!!

Source: TEEB, 2010, modified
Story # 1: Vietnamese protecting coastline and its tourism sites

• Central Vietnam has a coastline rich in beautiful tourism sites (historical cities, beaches, reserves, etc.)

• Coastline is very often beaten by typhoons and tropical storms, *but mangroves and a system of sea dykes, protect inland from heavier damages*, by dissipating storms energy;

• By trapping sediments, mangroves also stabilize sea floor and protect shoreline from erosion, protecting this way also natural capital key for tourism business;

• To plan and realize the protection of 12.000 has of mangroves cost Vietnam 1.1 mln. $, while cost reduction for dyke maintenance is 7.3 mln. $/year. And reduces significantly casualties (incl. fatal casualties) due to storms.
A conceptual frame, from environmental sciences (developed from Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Source: adapted by Chapter 3 authors from Braat and ten Brink 2008
To decide for a “tourism future” of a site and its community is mostly matter of the priority you choose..

- but you need always to consider finiteness as well as profitability of your “capital”!
- “More and more, the complementary factor in short supply (limiting factor) is remaining natural capital, not manmade capital as it used to be.
- For example, populations of fish, not fishing boats, limit fish catch worldwide.”

Herman Daly, former chief economist with World Bank in 2005
Story # 2: the recreational value of coral reefs in Hawaii (USA)

• 200,000 divers and > 3 mln snorkellers per year pay to admire unique marine life;

• “Travel Cost Method” (TCM, correlating travel expenses and site value), assessing people willing to spend to travel and to use a given ecosystem service, reflects how much the service is considered worth;

• assessed type of visitors, how much they spend to get to the site and in the site, their motivation and the frequency;

• Result: $ 97 mln/year, a very huge amount benefitting all the community and its economy;

• Reefs are very fragile: also a very huge responsibility on the policy makers and park managers’ side!
“Territory” is thus starting point for tourism-based “local development”: qualifications like “sustainable” or “responsible” should be based upon a perspective more complex than the traditional one – limited – of environmental sustainability!
Which “tourist” should be the driver of our “local development”? Who should we attract?

Ancient traveller as modern tourists have always been vehicles of change..

- From the Phoenician to the Greeks, from Middle-Age pilgrims to Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo, from Gustave Flaubert to Freya Stark and Fosco Maraini many men made West and East keep in touch, know each other, sometimes clash..

- Questioning about “identity”, E. Said called the “western” way to look at the reality met (esp. in XIX and XX cent.) as “orientalism”, mix of exoticism, mystery and “elsewhere”, to which host communities progressively adapt and comply..

- Any new contact/interaction means change but.. what about ”identity”? What “intensity of change” can it stand? What about the “resilience” of communities towards this big driver of change?
Turning cities and countryside into Disneyland, a museum, a circus for (rich) tourist: is this change “sustainable”?

• Sustainability for whom? It’s plausible a gangster considers its business “sustainable”, if targets are realistic and sufficient and he foresees they will remain the same also in the future...the paradox, beside individualism, shows a key-issue: the purposes of a business.\(^{(1)}\)

• At individual/entrepreneurial level, business intents with selfish component are quite normal, but this carries a disregard or at least a systematic underestimation of the external effects of our actions;

• Under which scale of values are to be considered e.g. changes in local environments and community identity induced by tourism activities?

• e.g., should we consider “sustainable” the Indian Reserves, transforming Native Americans, expropriated of the culture and land that made their “identity”, in something picturesque to gaze at?

\(^{(1)}\) A. Corazza: personal communication, 2008
Tourism-based local development rely on the capacity to make the best value of natural and cultural services of the natural and man-made environment..

Beside traditional “beach, sun & sea” model, many other types of experience:

- **Recreation and mental/physical health**, derived from being in touch with nature and green spaces and/or with places rich in history, art, culture (e.g. Ferrara and its Po river Delta, Tulum, Mexico);

- **Aesthetic appreciation and inspiration for culture, art, design**: language, knowledge and the natural environment intimately related throughout history, where landscapes, natural beauties have been source of inspiration for art (e.g. Van Gogh’s Provence, Romantic’s *Grand Tour*) and – increasingly – for science (e.g. “*The Earth from the air*” of Yann Arthus-Bertrand);

- **Spiritual experience and sense of place**: in many parts of the world, forests, mountains, caves became sacred places or developed religious meaning (Stonehenge, Mt. Kailash, the deserts, etc.).

*Each and any of these “experiences”, anyway, constitute a driver of change.*
“Sustainability” or “Responsibility” in managing any territorial change..

• imply the capacity to generate, beside private, also common goods supporting community development;

• calls for the inclusion of the larger amount of individuals/the widest range of aspects of their life: that’s why this is mostly in charge of public institutions/policy makers “ruling” the change;

• far from being selfish or sectoral (industry, tourism, services, etc.), practices need to rely on collectively desirable sceneries.

In managing change, this calls for to look to the wider context of local stakeholders.
Story # 3: “Who benefits from the Giant Panda tourism in Wolong (China)?”

- Wolong Biosphere Reserve, among most famous PAs of China, hosts the Giant Panda (GP);
- From 2002, ecotourism provides financial support to conservation management and income for inhabitants;
- (2008) 4.500 people living in the Reserve, mostly farmers, fragmenting GP’s habitat;
- Largest part of income “captured” by restaurant staff, souvenir sellers, infrastructure workers;
- Farmers living closer to roads had a larger part of income, while those living in the GP’s habitat .. no access to market! And need to rely on agriculture.
- Policy makers should act to involve them in the business, to avoid “capital” degradation!
Natural capital and poverty

Ecosystem services dependency

Ecosystem services as a % of classical GDP

Ecosystem services as a % of “GDP of the Poor”

Source: Gundimeda and Sukhdev, D1 TEEB
Territorial governance should rely on a holistic perspective to find out shared solutions for..
(picture 2) an equilibrated land use intensity, avoiding...
..(picture 3) highly intensive monocultures..
..or, in case of tourism, resource over-exploitation to destruction (e.g. the shoreline)
Eco/socially responsible institutions are key for sustainability.

- A strong need to reinforce institutional, social and economic framework, in view to protect and make the best value of cultures, in particular those linked with traditional knowledge and community creativity;

- Core importance of promoting strong local communities and institutions, able to establish a real experience and practice interchange among actors at local as well as multi-scale - regional, international, etc. – level.
Reinforcing capacities in managing drivers of change, more than declarations, require participation in decision-taking.

- Tourism development sceneries should be agreed among community stakeholders;
- Several tools for participative processes management (incl. Local21 Agenda, GOPP, Open Space Technology, etc.);
- But “sustainability” and “responsibility” of policies should rely on clear principles:
  - stakeholders really representing community diversity, in particular those affected by any “development decision”;  
  - clarity on the expectations of each group from the participative process;  
  - fair representation of the political and economic interactions among actors: who will actually benefit/lose from tourism activities?
  - Transparency & reliability of the facilitation process.

Principles are valid at different scales of relations, incl. different institutional levels looking at different strategic options e.g. soft “slow tourism” vs. “hard”, large resorts-based tourisms or different sectors (e.g. yachting port vs. sea-logistics pole).
Participation is key for actors’ knowledge development and the base to green communities and economies.

- “sustainability” in managing ALL local resources and “responsibility” towards ALL actors (including future generations) are key for “*a green economy in green communities*”;
- “*knowledge economy*” is a concept that, beyond its scientific-technological meaning, appoints to innovate the way communities deal with their *milieu* and the relations among different dimensions of territorial capital and nature services;
- *Participative governance* is a way to create shared knowledge on community capitals and a more fair access to benefits deriving from opportunities and assets and also to the drawbacks.

*Tourism-based local development do not escape these rules!*
Dealing with the demand side: management tools serving sustainable governance of tourism development

- Environmental Management Systems (EMS), ex ISO 14001 and/or EU Reg. 761/2001 “EMAS II”;
- Ecolabel for products and services, ex EU Reg. 1980/2000 (incl. hotels, B&Bs, agritourism, campings, mountain huts, etc.);
- Tourism quality marks, e.g. VISIT (Voluntary Initiative for Sustainability in Tourism), a european standard for tourism ecolabels
Site quality labels, e.g. Blue Flag awarding coastal areas.

- Awarded annually to beaches and marinas that comply with meet certain environmental, amenity and safety requirements;
- Assures recreational users of a quality visit to a beach;
- Used as a tool to communicate quality and attract users;
- Delivered to local public institutions, the tourism industry, the scheme operates in 41 countries from Europe to LA&Caribbean and Africa;
- In the good practice case of Kongweny Estuary (South-Africa) economic losses due to loss of Blue Flag are estimated 2.7 to 3.4 mln $/year.
Some key-message on the use of quality labels

✓ **Labels inform** on products and the services connected, providing consumers with the opportunity to maximize environmental/social benefits;

✓ **Certification assures** on the reference standards, providing credibility on the way of producing goods and services;

✓ **Labels pay**: if not improving market access, labels helps products in achieving a price premium;

✓ **Labels create common ground** among stakeholders: common work for sustainability standards can help in better addressing sustainability issues.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Source: Sergio Frau, Le Colonne d’Ercole, 2003