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Tourism skills development and community capacity building in Umlazi Township, South of DurbanCentral Business District

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Abstract: *This paper identifies and illustrates some of the common barriers for tourism skills development and community capacity building that end up having devastating consequences on the local residents of Umlazi Township. The study is based and builds on the work of other researchers who have found that in the townships of South Africa, the inability of local governments or municipalities to empower local residents and capacitate them through skills development has become a common barrier to tourism development which can play a pivotal role in changing the socio-economic status of the unemployed residents.*

Findings of the study solicited through open-ended questions from unstructured interviews have revealed the absence and the nonexistence of programmes that are put in place by the municipalities to emancipate local residents of uMlazi through skills development. Tourism fails to provide job opportunities in the township as a result very few if there are any of local residents that take it as seriously as the government which claims and construes it as the chicken that lays the golden egg and the industry that has the capacityto address unemployment in South Africa. Findings of the study also show that barriers to skills development and community capacity building do not vary from section to section. It is therefore expected that findings of the study could assist the government officials at all levels in knowing that their "arms' length attitude" and inability to implement reconstruction and developmental policies perpetuates unemployment and misery in townships. So reassessing tourism programs and implementing them could help spearheading tourism development in the township.

Keywords: *skills development; Community capacity building, Tourism development; Local residents, barriers of tourism*

INTRODUCTION

However community capacity building and skills development are an important principles for tourism development but they have some limitations (Aref&Redzuan, 2009). South Africa as a developing country is facing a problem and serious challenges of structural unemployment in which a large portion of the country's citizens especially the young generation are excluded from access to the main stream economy due, in part, to lack of capacity building and productive skills (Department of Labour, 2001; Mbeki, 2003). Structural unemployment is construed as the situation in which the majority of black South Africans continue to be denied access to productive assets, the financial sector or markets and certified skills are therefore unable to benefit from any increase in jobs or work opportunities (Kaplan, 2004). This study asserts that the South African ANC led democratic government through its poor and contradictory policies fails dismally to capacitate township residents through tourism skills development in order to escape from the quagmire and the vicious circle of poverty. The study virtually illustrates barriers to community capacity building and skills development as means to achieve tourism development specifically in the township of uMlazi.

Lack of skills development and capacity building is one of the key areas that restricts access

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to the economy for the majority of South African (Jackson, 2003; McGrath, 2003).

Tourism is a development tool used by many governments to promote local development and the argument is that community capacity building (CCB) and skills development SD is a necessary condition for tourism development (Reid & Gibb, 2004). The lack of capacity building and skills development including limited understanding of tourism impacts have been recognised as barriers to effective tourism development in third world countries (Moscardo, 2008). The study suggests that the above assertion also applies to the townships of South Africa including Umlazi the second biggest location in the southern hemisphere which is the main focus of the study. There is very little literature which discusses the practical application of approaches that have been successfully used to measure barriers to CCB and SD for tourism development in townships (Moscardo, 2008). Because South Africa's political history which was illuminated by Nelson Mandela who is highly respected globally, the country is considered among the most touristic countries with the tourism potential in the world (Kaplan, 2004). However, there are a number of barriers that retard its greatest potential for tourism development such as lack of skills development and capacity building which the researcher regards as core and yardsticks for creating jobs through tourism in the townships. According to Aref (2010) politicians appear to have little interest in tourism, probably having taken it for granted. In fact South Africa isa country that is ruled rather than being ledand the perception of its citizens is that political ruling supersedes professionalism and specialisations and competency. Quality education is highly compromised because politics always side-line and ostracises academics who should be playing a leading role in educational matters that relate to curriculum, policy and its implementation, as a result skills development and capacity building in the country is not achievable. Tourism is therefore hard hit, a myth and still a missed opportunityfor the township poorest of the poor who are excluded in the economic mainstream.

According toAref, 2010 the lack of external investment in tourism in townships can be seen as a major barrier to the tourism industry. Townships in the country also suffer from inadequate infrastructure and transportation facilities for tourists. Safety and security is also a major constraint.

This study asserts that CCB and SD can offer a viable solution for tourism development in all the townships of South Africa including uMlazi which is focused on. Community capacity building and skills development is supported by the literature and research evidence from health, education and agricultural sectors (Moscardo, 2008). In such a situation, CCB and SD are vital in order to empower local people in the townships to take advantage of the opportunities provided by tourism development (Laverack&Thangphet, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Chaskin, *et al.* (2001) the concept of capacity building has been given only limited attention in the tourism literature. Barriers to community capacity building in tourism development have hardly been debated by scholars of tourism (Moscardo, 2008). Skills development and capacity building for communities is critical for countries like South Africa which are still in the developing stages for numerous reasons. First, if tourism is to reach its potential in contributing to socio-economic development of township communities then it requires a sufficiently skilled national workforce to benefit from the job and business opportunities presented by tourism (Hughes and Vaughan, 2000). However the research contends that the above objective cannot be achieved without the intervention of the accountable and responsible local government and the municipality.

Community capacity building in tourism development can be seen as the capacity of people in communities to participate in tourism activities (Cupples, 2005). According to Bushell& Eagles (2007) building community capacity can include strengthening human resources, organizational and individual capacity. Capacity community building is the ability of individuals, organizations and communities to manage their own affairs and work

collectively to foster and sustain change (Howe & Cleary, 2001).

At the individual level community capacity building implies the development of skills and knowledge that allow individuals to increase the degree of control and influence they have over relevant aspects of their lives (Kieffer&Reischmann 2004; Raik, 2002). This level refers to people such as community citizens. Community capacity building at the community level reflects the needs to improve power of advocacy and decision making in tourism activities. Processes of community capacity building and skills development may imply training at community level and this level refers to informal groups bounded geographically.According to Hunt (2005) Capacity building and skills development require significant changes in the way many helping professionals deliver their services.

Despite the potential for CCB and SD in local communities, barriers do exit to its use and need to be addressed in tourism planning (Aref, 2010). CCB and SD for tourism development in the South African townships has often faced barriers (Moscardo, 2008). However, these barriers have hardly been debated by scholars of tourism. It is the main purpose of the study to understand the barriers of the CCB and SD as they retard tourism development in the township of uMlazi. The researcher believes strongly that exposing barriers for CCB and SD will make the South African government officials to understand that township communities face these barriers so that they can probably respond to and recognize the priorities of local communities. Overcoming the barriers to tourism development presents a challenge to both communities and government, but can facilitate and spearhead the policymaking process.

Sharma (2004) argues that most barriers in terms of skills development and community capacity building for tourism development are brought about by limited access to information, lack of awareness and insufficient community funding. However, in South Africa the main barrier is the inability, lack of direction and suitable qualifications from government officials to enhanceskills development and advance community capacity building for township communities to become recipients of tourism development. Balint, (2006) identified limited community support, inefficient resource mobilization, absence of capable leadership, lack of funding and commitment from all spheres of government as the most common barriers that impact township tourism adversely. He also suggests that CCB as a level of competence ability and skill and knowledge, is necessary in order to achieve the community goals. Kleiner et al. (2004) argue that barriers to skills development and community capacity building for tourism development also refer tolimited community resources such as funding, expertise and time; competition between local communities due to regionalism, community organizations and conflicts; difficulties in attracting participants' interest and time constraints as the commonly cited problem in the implementation of CCB for tourism development in the township local communities.

According to Kaplan (2004) raising levels of efficiency and service through the improvement of education and training to empower township communities through tourism are seen as some of the key ways in which comparative advantage can be created. Skills development and community capacity building therefore have an important role to play in effecting South Africa's tourism-led development strategy for two reasons (DEAT, 2003; Kaplan, 2004). First, in ensuring that as the industry grows, opportunities that are opening up in formal tourism industry (in hotels, tourism destinations, travel agencies, car hire companies) are filled by previously disadvantaged South Africans- not only in menial positions but at all levels. Second, in ensuring that people living in the more marginalised parts of the country like urban townships where tourism currently is being developed are able to take advantage and benefit from this development through jobs and business opportunities.

According to McGrath (2003) it is anticipated that, in future, much of South Africa's most exciting new tourism development is set to take place outside the mainstream and at the community level where innovative cultural, heritage and nature-based products and experiences are being developed. Yet the development of such projects is

often severely hampered by lack of appropriate skills necessary and community capacity building to run a successful tourism business in townships, but extends also to basic knowledge of what tourism is and how to benefit from the national tourism-led development strategy. The development of township tourism within uMlaziTownship, south of Durban can offer a useful case study to exemplify many of the key challenges and opportunities involved in using tourism as an instrument for development, more especially in terms of skills and community capacity building.

STUDY AREA

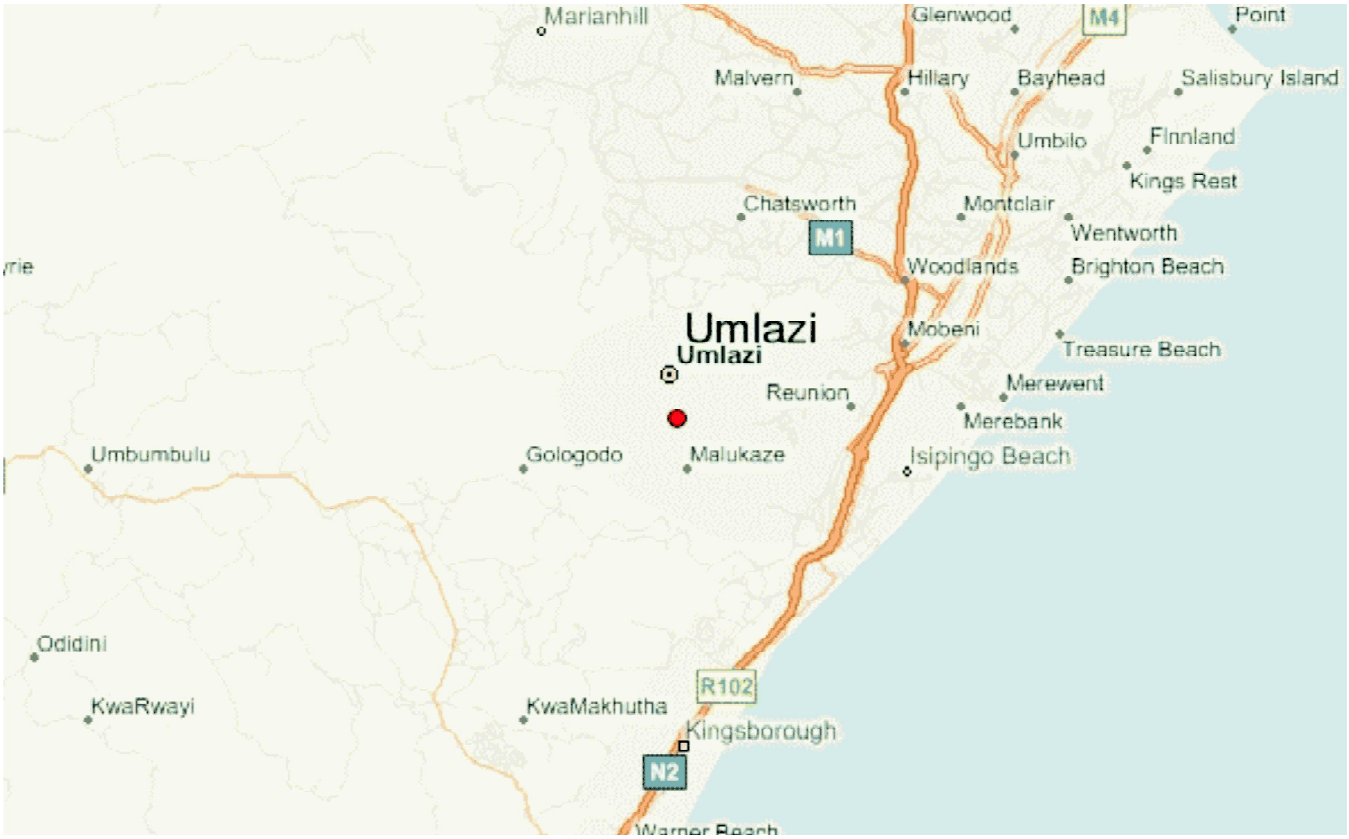
The Umlazi Township, within the eThekwini Municipality is located approximately 17 kilometres South of Durban's Central Business District and immediately west of the erstwhile Durban International Airport and the Southern Industrial Basin. The area of Umlazi is 4 481.7 hectares and forms part of eThekwini Municipality in KwaZulu Natal. The township is the only township in the country that has its own registration plate, which is NUZ, and it's comprising of more than 26 sections numbered according to letters starting from A to Z, with the exception of I, O and X, but with an addition of AA, BB and CC.

The population is estimated at 550, 000 inhabitants according to data from the Demarcation Board which reflects an increase of 166 438 from 383 562 inhabitants captured in the Census 2001. Umlazi has inherited the dismal effects of apartheid planning policies characterised by spatial and economic isolation. This area experiences the typical township problems; however they are magnified due to its extent (second largest township in South Africa).

Umlazi, like many townships in the urban areas of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, and Johannesburg, is witnessing increased private and government investments, as seen in the construction of new shopping complexes, primary and secondary schools, universities of technology and libraries. However, according to Chili (2015) there are only two tourism attractions that are popular in the UMlazi Township that is, KwaMax's lifestyle restaurant and Eyadini Lounge and they are situated within 3000 metres apart. The assertion is, although government investment can be claimed above but the truth is, it is not extricable linked with tourism. Most residents of uMlazi are virtually and practically not benefiting from tourism investment. Chili (2015) further suggests that the present democratic government is not significantly offering uMlazi township residents opportunities for economic development through community capacity building and skills development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper largely employed data collected from literature as secondary sources of recently published and still to be published papers and development plans that are intended to turn around the situation of the majority of poor South Africans through tourism. The study is basically based on qualitative approach to investigate the barriers of tourism skills development and community capacity building in the township of uMlazi which is engulfed with a high rate of unemployment. The researcher is arguing that although the national government under the reins of the African National Government (ANC) claims that it has played an integral role in the transformation of poor communities through tourism since its inception as government, there is hardly tangible and empirical evidence proving that the township poor communities have been capacitated and given necessary skills to help them becoming beneficiaries of tourism. As a result the paper attests that barriers hampering skills development and community capacity building in the township exacerbate and aggravate poverty and misery. For the purpose of the study and lack of tangible tourism activities despite thevastness of the township, the study focused where most of the business and educational activities are located.The research study used unstructured interviews with open ended questions and focus groups of few individuals who were first interviewed individually and later requested to be part of the focus groupdiscussion (FGD), and their choice was due to their enlightenment and understanding of what the research was requiring.Precisely, out of About 80 communitieslocated around the busiest hubof



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small businesses in the township,including popular tourist attractions knowns as Max's Lifestyle and Eyadini Lounge as already mentioned above. Invariable, only 32 formed part of the study including 12 respondents who also became part of the focus group, and that translated to a purposive sampling informed by enlightenment and knowledge on barriers of community capacity building and skills development for tourism development. One specific day that suited almost everybody who was going to be part of the focus group was set and honoredoverwhelmingly. Virtually, an individual interviewing process took three days whilst a focus group discussion that lasted for almost 30 minutes was held two weeks later in another suitable venue. A tape recorder was used for all interviews including the focus group discussion. Respondents included both males and females ranging in age from 25 to 64. The purpose of the study was clearly and extensively explained with respondents made aware that the study is not intended to effect positive changes in terms of socio-economic landscape. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and anonymity.

Qualitative research methods are recently widely used in tourism research and are gaining a wide acceptance in the social science (Bush, t al, 2002 and Fawcett et al., 2001) and they both suggested qualitative methods in the measurement of community capacity building and skills development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As already mentioned above this study was conducted with an objectiveto investigate barriers ofskills development for community capacity building trough tourism in the second biggest township of uMlazi in the Southern hemisphere after Soweto. Data were gathered from local residents who live close and around the economic business hub of u Mlazi which is evident in the entrance of the township. It was solicited through

interviews and focus group discussion. The respondents were chosen because of their direct and indirect involvement in tourism activities and also by being at closed proximity to the economic hub of uMlazi. The study illustrated that there are numerous barriers of skills development and community capacity building in the township and these barriers were investigated both at individual and organisational levels. At individual level there was mention of absence of skill and knowledge to participate in tourism, lack of tourism expertise and appropriate education.At organizational level there was mention of lack of expertise and lack of government programs. Lack of community expertise and lack of tourism facilities are the salient barriers in terms the entire community structure. Lack of expertise caused by lack of training and community capacity building, low levels of awareness and lack of financial assistance became the main barriers to community participation for the development of tourism. So the community of uMlazi within the study area does not take tourism seriously and as a goose that lays the golden egg. The findings of the study illuminated the lack of government support and lack of lo ng-term planning for tourism development in the township of uMlazi. Achelis (2005) suggests the lack of comprehensive tourism management plans as a barrier to the emancipation of poor communities through tourism. Results of the study reveal noticeably, lack of appropriate power and government support. Findings also show that the government led by the ANC has taken little or no initiative for promoting tourism with an objective to create job opportunities in most townships of South Africa. Consequently, poverty is escalating and becoming more devastating for communities of the townships who subsequently lose their social status as they end up indulging themselves with substandard, poor and unhealthy consumables which contribute to an increase to mortality rate.

The findings of the study also suggested that lack of direction and knowledge from government officials themselves at all levels was also retardingthe inculcation of skills development and community capacity building for local residents through tourism and this is blamed on politics that seems to be perceived by local residents as one major aspect considered by the government as opposed to competency for job suitability. The above revelation of the study simply meant that government leaders could not bring much of the planning to reality and embarking on specific strategies to tackle the above mentioned barriers is quite a challenge. The South African government is presently having endowed with a multiplicity of policies that only exist on paper but unable to be implemented and monitored by its officials. According to Ebbesen et al. (2004) lack of leadership, lack of competent public servants, lack of government initiatives, limited public support, lack of funding and resource investment are the most barriers to skills development and community capacity building. Hunt (2005) suggests on how any barriers to skills development and community capacity building activity or initiative in local communities must be acknowledged and addressed to empower poor communities. She outlines in broad strongest terms constraints such as lack of community participation in developing policies, power imbalances between governments and local communities, lack of tourism knowledge and short term funding programmes.

Findings of the study reveal that community capacity building and skills development could not take place in the township of uMlazi due to lack of technical assistance and other support from the government. The inability of tourism development could therefore not be blamed on the community leaders. The findings support the researcher's argument that lack of community capacity building and skills development in the township of uMlazi do not enable local residents to participate in tourism development processes. Cole (2007) argues that one of the reasons of underdevelopment for tourism development in developing countries such as South Africa is the low level of collaboration between government sector and the local communities. This is the case with uMlazi Township as findings of the study show that the government and the Thekwini municipality do not capacitate the local residents of uMlazi so that that have the necessary skills to become the beneficiaries of tourism. Very little initiative that has been taken by

the government to improve tourism as a source of income for local residents in the Town ship of uMlazi. This paper argues that as long as barriers of community capacity building and skills development are not addressed the social and economic status of the local residents of the township cannot change positively. Some writesalso regard technical assistance from the government as a key element in building capacity building and skills development (Grover &Vriens, 2006). According to the findings of the study, skills development and community capacity building on tourism processes have more effect in the process of tourism development and are vital for the empowerment of township residents. According to Aref et al. (2009) lack of skills and knowledge, community structure, absence of external support and resource mobilization are identified as barriers of skills development and community capacity building as well as weak because of the failure of local government and municipalities to provide resources, capacity building and skills development to local residents of UMlazi Township.

CONCLUSION

The study illustrated and investigated barriers that stifle and hinder skills development and community capacity building in the second biggest township of uMlazi and unfortunately these barriers affect tourism development adversely which is core for local residents of the township to become recipients of tourism. Generally the paper reveals lack of skills development and community capacity building as the main barriers for tourism development in the whole township of uMlazi. Literature search reveals that although numerous studies discuss the role of skills development and community capacity building as a way and means to empower communities and local residents through tourism, however, it has been evidently revealed again that studies that discuss barriers to skills development and capacity building in the townships of South Africa seem to be very few and limited. Data of the study reveal the absence and the nonexistence of programmes that are put in place by the municipalities to emancipate local residents of uMlazi through skills development.Tourism fails to provide job opportunities in the township as a result very few if there are any of local residents that take it as seriously as the government whichclaims and construes it as the chicken that lays the golden egg and the industry that has the capacity to address unemployment in South Africa.Findings of the study also show that barriers to skills development and community capacity building do not vary from section to section. In reality, the inability of the township residents to be capacitated and skilled so as to escape the vicious trap and cycle of unemployment seems to be a pandemic and catastrophic dead end for the unemployed township residents of uMlazi. The study shows it explicitly that there is a high rate of unemployment in the township of uMlazi and tourism plays no role to create jobs through small businesses.

Skills development and community capacity building is about community empowerment intended to fight the scourge of unemployment, poverty and misery. The capacitation of local residents through skills development assists individuals, organizations and the entire communities to be able to use their new acquired techniques and probably talent to earn a living through tourism activities taking place in their area. Community capacity building and skills development also enhance strengths and confidence of individuals desperately needed for tourism development unfortunately this is not the case with the township under the spotlight. Without capacity building and skills development opportunities and development process could not take place. The researcher argues that without community capacity building and skills development tourism programmes planned for communities can hardly succeed since building capacity through skills development runs parallel with community emancipation. Fiona (2007) argues that all stakeholders including municipalities and tourism development practitioners need to be aware of the pros and cons of the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of all the dynamics of skills development and capacity building in order to ensure and guarantee that the socio-economic objectives of tourism are achieved by everybody and

inter alia. The incentives attributed to tourism can only be achieved and benefit the communities of the uMlazi Township through skills development and capacity building programmes that are clear and run by informed practitioners. Achelis (2005) argues that skills development and community capacity building in tourism development in poor communities cannot become a reality unless specific and deliberate strategies at local and national levels are developed to tackle barriers.

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