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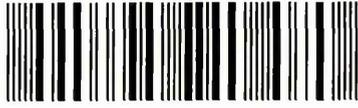
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**Tourism Projects for Community Development:  
Influences of Tour Operators and Development Organisations**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Abstract**

This study compares tour operators and development organisations, by analysing their role in three differently funded and operated tourism projects in Ecuador. Additionally, the study identifies links between micro level livelihood outputs of the projects, the meso level operational contexts, and macro level influences. The study reviews general assumptions that the tourism private sector is not as capable of contributing to poverty reduction to the same extent that the development sector is.

Guided by a political economy approach, whilst also considering Giddens' concept of structuration theory, the study examines whether traditional structuralist views of tourism development in less economically developed countries (LEDCs) are applicable within the context of three externally-led tourism projects. Elements of critical ethnography and livelihoods analysis were employed to gather primarily qualitative data, which was obtained by interviewing, observing, carrying out ranking exercises, and analysing documents.

Results of the study revealed that the tour operator project was considerably more successful in contributing to the livelihoods of residents surrounding the project. The tour operator was well equipped to respond to operational challenges of the project, and well networked with a range of organisations which provided technical expertise, and small grants. The projects supported by development organisations had notable positive outputs, but failed to create adequate networks with the private sector to sell the projects, and hence were suffering from over-supply and lack of demand.

The study showed that development organisations were more confined to operating within bureaucratic processes of head offices than tour operators, which also had detrimental effects on project outputs. Development organisation projects suffer from a lack of tourism expertise, and must adhere to strict regulations regarding project design and operations, echoing the power of institutional structures over agency. Although tour operators must comply with service and product standards to satisfy their international buyers, they appear to be more influential in altering traditional structures, such as networking between the private and development sectors, thus demonstrating the potential power of agency.

The evidence concluded that tour operators are better equipped to fund and operate sustainable tourism projects which contribute to community development, and that development organisations would significantly benefit from enlisting the assistance of tour operators in project design, operations, and sales outlets.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AITO	Association of Independent Tour Operators
ASEC	Ecuador Ecotourism Association
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DfID	Department for International Development
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
ESTA	Ecuadorian Sustainable Tourism Alliance
FCO	Foreign Commonwealth Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSTA	Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance
ICCO	Inter-Church Organisation for Development Cooperation
ICRT	International Centre for Responsible Tourism
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JLA	Journey Latin America
LATA	Latin American Travel Association
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MNC	Multi-national Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
ONHAE	National Huaorani Association of Ecuador
PPT	Pro-poor Tourism
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RA	Rainforest Alliance
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
STEP	Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty
TNC	Trans-national Corporation

TOFT	Travel Operators for Tigers
TOI	Tour Operators Initiative
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNORCAC	Union of Rural Organisations of Cotacachi
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department for Agriculture
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

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## **1.1 Overall aims of the study**

This study aims to compare four operators and development organisations by analysing tourism projects for community development, which were initiated and funded by different organisations external to the communities. The analysis of three tourism projects in Ecuador, which focus on the enhancement of local socio-economic development, compares micro level livelihood outputs, meso level operations and management, and macro level influences. The research also explores any links between the macro, meso, and micro levels, in order to assess whether such tourism projects are impacted by external factors. The study is influenced by political economy, but aims to add to traditional theories of tourism and dependency in political economy studies by exploring the role of actors within the three projects. The dual focus of the study seeks to identify the successes and failures of projects supported by the development sector and the private sector, and contribute to existing debates surrounding the structure of the tourism industry and whether this can be influenced by groups and/or individuals.

## **1.2 Study objectives**

- 1) Present a review of existing literature to investigate the politico-economic environment that shapes tourism development projects. This will aid in setting the context for the study and identify pertinent gaps in literature.
- 2) Drawing upon the literature review, develop a conceptual framework to highlight factors which impact upon tourism projects, and compares differently funded projects, in order to guide the study.
- 3) Assess and compare the livelihood outputs of three differently funded and operated tourism projects, based on the views and interpretations of community residents.
- 4) Examine and compare the operational context and management of the three projects at destination level and consider how this impacts upon the livelihood outputs.
- 5) Analyse the macro level influences and how these effect funding and support for the three projects, and consider how this impacts upon livelihood outputs, operations and management.
- 6) Determine any links between the macro level influences, meso level operations and management, and micro level outputs.
- 7) Conclude which project is the most successful in terms of livelihood outputs, operations and management, and ability to respond to macro

level influences. Using these results, the study will detail the theoretical contribution to academic knowledge by challenging traditional theories associated with political economy and external funding of tourism projects.

### **1.3 Study context**

“In over 50 of the world’s poorest countries tourism is one of the top ten contributors to economic development” (Scheyvens, 2007: 231), and the growth of the industry in developing countries is exponential. World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) figures indicate a 45% increase in tourism receipts between 1990 and 2000 in these countries compared with a 7.8% increase within the European Union (EU) in the same time period (UNWTO, 2002). With the global focus currently geared towards pro-poor growth, and the pressure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), tourism is viewed as being a conducive strategy as “it can be labour intensive, inclusive of women and the informal sector, based on natural and cultural assets of the poor, and suitable for poor rural areas with few other growth options” (Ashley & Roe, 2002: 61). Analysing the relationship between tourism and poverty reduction is, therefore, highly topical.

Recent studies, however, have not specifically concentrated on placing the tourism and poverty debate within broader theoretical discussions regarding structures and actors, and the contexts in which tourism development projects are operated. Dependency theory is often used in tourism studies to explain the disparities between the ‘North’ and ‘South’, and to describe unequal power balances (Britton, 1982; 1984). This structuralist approach is highly accredited, yet despite making a lasting contribution in tourism studies, it often fails to analyse contextualities and the role and power of actors in influencing structures, as well as vice versa. Whilst this study appreciates the applicability of dependency theory within tourism studies, particularly the work of Britton (1982; 1984), it aims to assess the validity of the structuralist approach within tourism development projects in LEDCs. This study aims to supplement the dependency debate by analysing the role of various actor groups and their relative influence on structures and outputs. The study borrows ideas from Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, which challenges the perceived dualism of structure and agency, replacing it with the duality of structure and agency. Social network theory is also applied to the study in order to solidify this argument by discussing, and appreciating, the value of networks surrounding tourism development projects in LEDCs. The study aims to contextualise this debate by comparing the role of development organisations and tour operators in tourism development projects, using Ecuador as a case study.

The enthused efforts of promoting tourism as a development strategy for LEDCs by international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), means that consideration of the political and economical factors driving and influencing this trend is essential, hence the influence of political economy in this study. Consequently, the popular topic of the global-local nexus in academic studies (e.g. Teo, 2002; Hawkins & Mann, 2007; Teo & Li, 2003; Scheyvens, 2007) has covered a range of issues such as distributive justice, the relationship between tourism and poverty, and foreign dependency. Yet much of the aforementioned literature associates foreign involvement with negative connotations, despite the structure of the tourism industry which predates that it is impossible not to become involved with foreign institutions and tourism companies. Drawing upon ideas presented by Bramwell and Meyer (2007), the study demonstrates that, rather than being viewed as two separate entities, the global and local are inherently entwined and that, whilst tourism development projects are influenced by global structures and actors, actors involved locally with the projects are also influential, again reflecting claims presented by Giddens (1984). Furthermore, the global-local nexus, also referred to as macro-micro, often neglects the meso level as part of the tourism industry. In the context of this study, the meso level refers to the destination context in which the projects operate. The results of this study propose to address a gap in academic studies as, although the global-local nexus is a trendy topic, it is not often presented in relation to actual impacts on case studies as interpreted by community residents.

To date, few studies have explored the practices of development organisations and the private sector on a comparative level. Similarly, evidence of positive and negative effects of the efforts of either are rarely documented other than by themselves, which tend to ignore any negative impacts of their involvement. Although the Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) Partnership and the Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Development (TOI) publish case studies of best practice, they do not sufficiently consider the views of communities who are affected.

The historical generalisation that development organisations deliver more benefits to the poor than the private sector, in a sense, stems from advocates of dependency theory (e.g. Britton, 1981; 1982; 1984; Schilcher, 2007). There is a belief that private sector business is only driven by profit and is dispossessed of any altruistic tendencies (Wahab & Cooper, 2001). The fact that companies have to make a profit, and many do carry out responsible and/or philanthropic activities for the purpose of business sense, is often overlooked. But over the last decade criticisms have also begun to emerge over the effects of development organisation practices, accountability, and motives

(e.g. Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Clarke, 1998; Lewis, 2002; Tandon, 2000; Borren, 2000). For example, Hulme and Edwards (1997) question if the 'development industry' are all becoming too closely knitted, "in terms of interests, values, methods, priorities and other factors" (Hulme & Edwards, 1997: 3), and claim that they are forgetting their original role of combating poverty and injustice. There are also few studies on the involvement of development organisations in tourism, despite the number of organisations which have added tourism to their portfolio of activities. With growing pressures on businesses regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR) from industry and consumers, coupled with the increasing growth of tourism arrivals to LEDCs, this study argues that the private sector can have a significant impact on poverty reduction.

Pro-poor tourism (PPT) is an important theme throughout the study. The three projects are not labelled as PPT projects, yet they do incorporate several of the key values of PPT, such as the inclusion of marginalised groups, and a focus on women's employment. When the concept of PPT first emerged in 1999, it was the buzzword of donor organisations and focused on "a different way of doing business" (Ashley & Haysom, 2005: 1). Although over the last decades academic papers have explored tourism as a tool for poverty reduction using different terminology, PPT has ignited new debates in academic studies, including environmental negligence (Chok *et al*, 2007), and the focus on growth as opposed to equity (Schilcher, 2007). Certain academics contest the concept of PPT (Schilcher, 2007), and Sofield *et al* (2004) refer to PPT as pejorative; a claim which this study takes into consideration in the context of the three case studies. Tourism is also criticised as a development strategy for poor communities due to the relatively small benefits communities receive (Britton, 1982). However, due to the economic disparities between the 'North' and the 'South', the income from tourism may have a more significant impact, as "in absolute terms the scale of benefits may appear small, they can be relatively very significant when viewed from the perspective of the beneficiary group" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 273). Criticisms of PPT are mainly based on the lack of case studies showing PPT as an effective development option to reduce poverty in communities in LEDCs (Harrison, 2008). Case studies are often carried out by practitioners and not the academic community. Although the aim of this study is not to provide in-depth impact studies on the effects of tourism on poverty, the concept of PPT is prominent in the practices of each of the projects operations and management. The study, therefore, demonstrates the applicability of PPT to such tourism projects, both those initiated by development organisations and the private sector, and discusses the impacts as viewed by community residents.

Although there are a host of studies on community tourism projects (e.g. Blackstock, 2005; Shepherd, 2002; Bramwell, 1994; Butcher, 2003; Dei, 2000), there are few which specifically compare the role of development organisations and tour operators in developing and funding such projects. Likewise, such studies tend not to analyse impacts on livelihoods. This study uses certain elements of the DfID (1999) sustainable livelihoods framework to explore the impacts on livelihoods for each of the projects and the operators/funders, in an attempt to address this gap. The framework was not specifically developed for tourism projects and, therefore, the study has also incorporated other theories and concepts, such as structuration theory and social network theory, to fulfil the research aims and objectives. The development of a conceptual framework (refer to chapter 2) will provide a useful tool to analyse tourism projects which are supported by external organisations. This is pivotal in contributing to academic research, given current trends which indicate the growing involvement of external organisations (both private and development) in 'responsible tourism projects'.

As the aim of the research states, this study encompasses a dual focus. By comparing the impacts and practices of development organisations and tour operators, the study concludes whether the private sector is capable of harnessing benefits to poor communities to the extent which development organisations are believed to be capable of. The study also determines any links between macro level influences, meso level operations and management, and micro level outputs, adding to existing debates surrounding dependency theory by arguing the power of actors in tourism, and not solely structures. This combination will potentially provide significant conceptual contributions in the academic arena.

#### **1.4 Research area and projects**

Political and economic reforms in South America led to a host of literature discussing political economy and dependency during the 1980s and early 1990s. Yet the lack of available literature on socio-economically benefiting tourism within South America suggests that this region has been under-researched in western-originated academic studies, despite the UNWTO including four of its countries in their Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) program (Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador). Many current tourism and poverty studies focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia due to the considerably low Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Furthermore, the few development practitioner reports which focus on tourism and livelihoods also concentrate on these regions (e.g. Ashley, 2000; Bah & Goodwin, 2003; Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Saville, 2001). However, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is classed by the World Bank (2006) as a developing region, and although there are selected studies on

the Caribbean (e.g. Meyer, 2006; Ashley *et al*, 2006), there are notably less case studies carried out in South America. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) (2005) states that although rates of absolute poverty in South America do not compare to those in Sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage headcount of those who are chronically poor remains high<sup>1</sup>. The report also states that "persistent poverty in Latin America is largely a distributive problem...inequality undermines the potentially positive impacts of growth on the poor as well as hindering growth itself" (CPRC, 2005: 79). In this respect, the development of small-scale community tourism projects would appear an ideal solution, as it is widely recognised that such forms of tourism can be inclusive of marginalised groups (Ashley, 2001).

Despite the steady stabilisation of political circumstances within specific countries, inequalities and distribution wealth discrepancies continue to be endemic (Conaghan, 2008; Kay, 1999). Furthermore, considering the stable level of foreign aid money injected over the last decade (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2010), number of NGOs within South America (Clarke, 1998), coupled with the political and economic reforms that should have enhanced development, uncertainty arises as to why there is still a serious problem of inequality and distributive justice (Conaghan, 2008).

Ecuador is one such country where there are severe problems of wealth distribution (López-Acavedo & Tinajero, 2009; Correia & van Bronkhorst, 2000; Conaghan, 2008). World Bank reports suggest that the development of non-agricultural industries in rural areas would aid in closing the gap between 'rich' and 'poor' (López-Acavedo & Tinajero, 2009; Correia & van Bronkhorst, 2000), and tourism has formed part of this development. Further details of the Ecuadorian context of the study can be found in section 4.2.2.

Three tourism projects were selected against a set of criteria that enable comparisons and the analysis of external factors, in order to fulfil the study aims and objectives. Three case studies were selected to compare a private sector-funded project, a development organisation-funded project, and a project jointly funded by a development organisation and local NGO, in order to explore any differences between the approaches. The three project funders and operators have all approached tourism development in different ways, which enabled the researcher to compare which approach was most successful. The projects were all considered appropriate for this study, and each presented an interesting case study to assess the successes and failures of having an external organisation involved in a tourism project. Furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 in every 25 people in the region is chronically poor (CPRC, 2005)

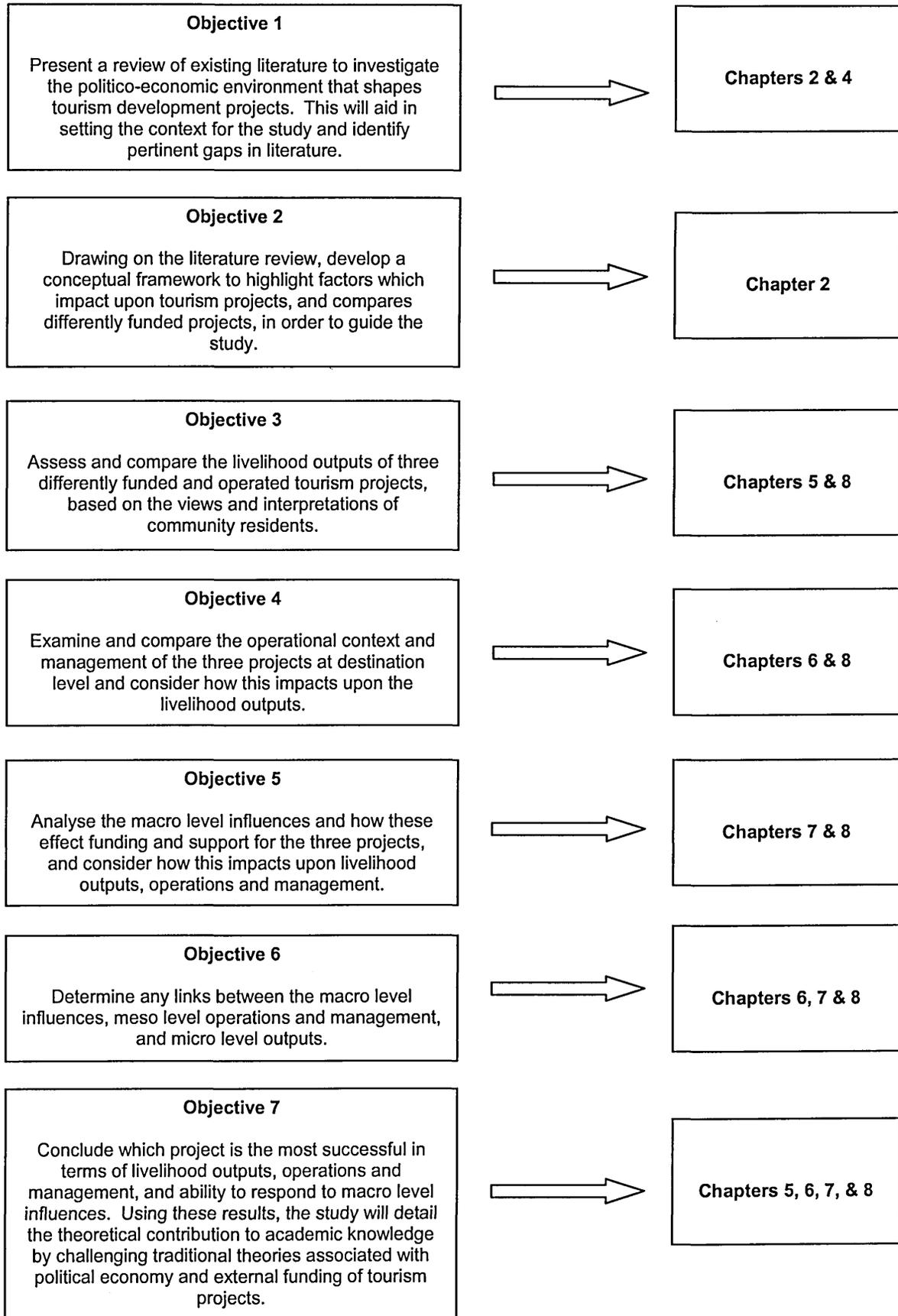
each of the projects had strong links to actors and influences external to the communities, such as marketing channels and funding. Therefore they were appropriate projects to analyse any links between the macro, meso, and micro levels (refer to section 3.4.1.1 for more detailed criteria). Brief details of the three projects are as follows, and further details can be found in section 4.3:

- 1) **Tropic project:** initiated and primarily funded by Tropic Ecological Adventures, an Ecuadorian tour operator owned by a UK citizen. The project is based around a tourist eco-lodge and local excursions in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest. Tropic own and manage the eco-lodge but plan to transfer ownership in the future.
- 2) **Care project:** initiated by Care Ecuador and primarily funded by Care UK, a development organisation with its head office in the USA. The project is a 'tourist trail' of different community tourism visits and small tourism businesses in northern Ecuador. Care funded the marketing and development of the project until their withdrawal in August 2010.
- 3) **Runatupari project:** jointly initiated by a local farmer's organisation (UNORCAC) and Dutch development organisation, Agriterra, and primarily funded by Agriterra. The project is based around home-stay tourism and local excursions in the Cotacachi region of Ecuador. Agriterra officially withdrew from the project in 2005, although maintain contact.

## 1.5 Chapter outlines

The study is divided into eight chapters and Figure 1.1 highlights the study objectives and correlating chapter(s) where they are discussed. The contents of each chapter will now be presented in turn.

**Figure 1.1 Study objectives and corresponding chapters**



Chapter 2 is divided into two sections: a review of the literature, and the conceptual framework. The first part of the chapter presents a review of existing literature which discusses key theories and concepts relevant to the research study. In order to provide background information to the study, and identify gaps in current academic studies, the review of the literature establishes a theoretical basis for the study. The review is divided into four main sections: firstly, relevant theories on the political economy of tourism are discussed; secondly, the review presents existing debates surrounding the topic of actors and networks in tourism; thirdly, a discussion of tourism and poverty reduction is presented; and, finally, community tourism development projects are discussed, highlighting the main theories within this field. Theories and concepts discussed within the review have been used to develop a conceptual framework. This is presented in the second part of chapter 2. The conceptual framework guides the study, and its applicability will be reassessed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 3 explains the philosophical and methodological approach. Combining deductive and inductive methods of inquiry, the design for the research is based on several strategies, in accordance with methodological pluralism and explains the use of a combination of critical ethnography, and case study research. The combination permits the researcher to explore a broad range of issues from different perspectives. The methods used to collect data are detailed, including: semi-structured interviews; ranking exercises; informal interviews; observation techniques; and document analysis. The chapter also details the themes used for data collection, which were drawn out of the conceptual framework. Finally, the chapter reviews the data analysis process, which followed a systematic approach.

Chapter 4 presents the context of the study which provides an overview of tourism in South America, relevant information on tourism in Ecuador, and presents background information on the selected projects. The Ecuadorian context provides justifications as to why fieldwork was carried out at this destination, highlighting the lack of existing studies. The context chapter then presents an overview of each of the three selected projects. Descriptions of the projects are provided, and reasons discussed as to why the projects were initiated. The chapter also provides relevant background information of each of the project funders. Evidence for this chapter is based on document analysis and interviews with the project funders and operators.

Chapter 5 is the first results chapter of the study, and discusses the livelihood impacts of the investigated tourism projects. The analysis of livelihood outputs is divided into five sections: human capital, social capital, physical capital, financial capital, and

natural capital. These are discussed in the order of importance as depicted by the respondents. Each section presents an overview of the main strengths and weaknesses of each project, and then analyses the responses in more depth. The concluding section of the chapter compares the main strengths and weaknesses of each project in each area of capital outputs. This provides evidence as to which project is viewed as the most successful in contributing to livelihoods, as revealed by community residents.

Chapter 6 presents the operational activities of the projects, with a specific focus on the barriers and challenges for the project funders and operators. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the meso level context (at destination level) in which the projects operate. The chapter is divided into five sections: firstly, an analysis of operational activities and management discusses the different approaches to developing the projects, the access to market and product offering, the location of the projects and transport access, and the capacity of the projects to meet tourists' expectations. Secondly, the chapter analyses the actor networks surrounding each of the projects with a focus on shared values between actors, and the strength of their relationships. Thirdly, the chapter analyses the agendas of each of the project operators for supporting the three projects, and discusses respondents' views which suggest alternate agendas. Fourthly, raised expectations of collaboration are discussed. Finally, the chapter analyses issues of project longevity, in order to assess the future sustainability of the projects. The chapter makes continuous references to the links between operational activities and livelihood outputs, and comparisons of the three projects are also presented throughout.

Chapter 7 analyses the macro level influences and motivations of external organisations to support tourism development projects. As well as discussing the specific projects, this chapter also makes several generalisations about macro level influences on tourism projects in LEDCs, based on the evidence gathered. This demonstrates that several of the conclusions may be applicable to other case studies. The chapter is divided into three main sections: firstly, the chapter discusses the effects of organisational mandates and ideologies, showing the impacts of decision making at the macro level on the operational activities of the projects and subsequent livelihood outputs. Secondly, an analysis of the driving forces to reduce poverty is presented, with references to consumer and industry pressure, and also the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); issues which were highlighted whilst reviewing the literature. Finally, the chapter analyses the macro level networks and the relevance of these networks to the projects. Again, comparisons of the three projects are drawn, and references made to the links between the macro, meso and micro levels.

Chapter 8 concludes the study, presenting the main findings and drawing conceptual conclusions based on the evidence. The chapter, firstly, describes how each of the study objectives were fulfilled. It then presents the theoretical basis of the conceptual approach and the conceptual framework. The main findings of the study are then discussed, which correlate to the study objectives. Following this, the chapter discusses the conceptual conclusions, and how these relate to, and challenge, existing theories and concepts. Contributions of the conceptual framework are also presented. Finally, the chapter presents the limitations of the research methodology, and provides recommendations for future research, in order to counter the limitations experienced within this study.

## **Chapter 2 *Theoretical Concepts and Conceptual Framework***

## **2.1 Introduction**

Through drawing upon past works of academics, and examining practitioner reports, this chapter identifies the theoretical basis of the research, and provides relevant background information on the topics covered throughout the study. This aids in guiding the approach of the study, and highlights some of the key debates surrounding the issues, identifies main theories in the field of tourism in LEDCs, and displays areas which are under-researched in academic studies. The identification of these gaps indicates the necessity of this study in contributing to academic knowledge.

This chapter covers four main areas relevant to the research. Firstly, the chapter discusses the relevant theories applied to the research, thus presenting a theoretical basis and justifying the purpose of the study. The core argument is that dependency theory, whilst a valuable theory to apply to tourism development projects in LEDCs, can be supplemented by taking into account the role and power of actors, as well as structure. Secondly, the literature discusses the role of actors, namely development organisations and tour operators for the purpose of this study, in order to compare literature on the main driving forces to reduce poverty for both these groups. This section aims to cement the argument that actors have a powerful role in tourism development projects, whilst also being influenced by certain structures. Challenges facing such actors are also discussed to further contextualise the debate. Finally, the chapter considers tourism and poverty reduction, focusing on tourism and livelihoods, pro-poor tourism (PPT), and community involvement in tourism, highlighting the main theoretical discussions surrounding this topic and identifying any gaps in current academic studies.

## **2.2 Political economy theories of tourism**

### **2.2.1 Tourism and dependency theory**

Dependency theory is based on the premise that “the centre [developed countries] and the periphery [underdeveloped countries] formed a world economic system, whereby...[existed] an unequal distribution of profits from productivity gains and different income elasticity’s for primary and secondary goods” (Bowen, 1998: 27). The theory was developed by Raul Prebisch (1947) in the late 1940’s as a reaction to modernisation theory. Whereas modernisation theory advocates that less economically developed countries (LEDCs) can equal developed countries through drawing on their aid, expertise, and following the same development pattern (Bowen, 1998), dependency theory maintains that LEDCs are the periphery of transnational capitalism which supply and uphold developed countries in their wealth. The theory

professes that developed nations perpetuate a state of dependency through a myriad of policies and initiatives, and that attempts to resist such actions can result in economic sanctions (Martin, 1995). Although this is the extreme end of the view of dependency theorists, the notion that developed countries hold a certain 'power' over LEDCs has been an inherent theme throughout tourism studies for decades.

Andre Gunder Frank brought dependency theory to the English speaking world<sup>2</sup> in 1969 and redefined the theory using elements of Marxism. Frank's theory is well summarised by Blomström and Hettne, (1984), who state that "it was the incorporation into the world capitalist system that led to development in some areas and underdevelopment in others" (Blomström & Hettne, 1984: 67). This view stresses that not all developing nations which enter into the global capitalist system fail to achieve similar levels of development to developed countries, thus rendering it slightly different to the original theory developed by Prebisch (1947).

In light of some of the failings of some of the inward-orientated development models such as import substitution industrialisation strategies proposed by early dependency theorists, such as Prebisch (1947), a new group emerged, in part, to explain these failings. Theorists such as Dos Santos (1970; 1973), Furtado (1970), and Sunkel (1969; 1974) sparked what is commonly referred to as the 'new dependency perspective' (Furtado, 1970). Attributing the failings to both internal and external factors, this new dependency perspective differed from the original with its emphasis on social class structures and distributive justice, and on the negative effects of foreign capital (often permeating in joint ventures between local elites and foreign investors) (Bowen, 1998). Adherently, the new dependency perspective is also defined as such by theorists from various disciplines. For example, it is alleged that, in reference to tourism, "dependency involves the subordination of national economic autonomy to meet the interests of foreign pressure groups and privileged local classes rather than those development priorities arising from broader political consensus" (Britton, 1982: 334). Given the focus of this study on the relationships between external companies/organisations and local communities, this dependency perspective is an important aspect to consider throughout.

Dos Santos' (1973) states that "the relation of interdependence between two or more economies, and between those and world trade, assume the form of dependence when some countries (dominant ones) can expand and be seen as self-sustaining, while the other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion"

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<sup>2</sup> Frank was the first to publish academic works exploring dependency theory in English and subsequently is the most common theorist to be associated with the theory in English speaking countries.

(Dos Santos, 1973: 109). It is such statements, showing a consensus amongst theorists of varying disciplines, which have rendered dependency theory a popular method to explain the inequalities between the 'North' and 'South'. Although dependency theory has its critics, and warranted criticisms in that it is not open to changing economic and political conditions, nor does it take account of nations which have prospered with the input of foreign capital (Lall, 1975; Warren, 1980) it has, nevertheless, "made a lasting contribution to the debate and understanding of the development process and the importance of domestic and foreign forces within this process" (Bowen, 1998: 31). Thus, it is an important theory which can aid in explaining relationships of power within tourism studies.

One of the most influential theorists on the subject of tourism and dependency is Britton (1981; 1982; 1984), who suggests that political and economic structures must be taken into account when analysing tourism in LEDCs. He criticised foreign institutions and their political and economic motives for becoming enmeshed in tourism in these countries, claiming that the "industry structure ensures that third world destinations have a largely passive and dependent role in the international system" (Britton, 1982: 347). Similarly, Jackson and Morpeth (1999) believe that the private sector is overly focused on profits to position themselves to assist community development, describing the propensity of the private sector to have a positive impact on livelihoods as "ambitious" (Jackson & Morpeth, 1999: 6). These negative views of tourism are too frequently applied to tourism studies, without taking into account the positive impacts of the industry or the positive impacts that foreign companies and organisations have on communities within developing countries (e.g. Francisco, 1983; Scheyvens, 2007; Brohman, 1996; Jackson & Morpeth, 1999; Tosun, 2000).

Britton (1982) does, however, pay credit to the idea that local elites can find themselves in very beneficial positions when foreign companies/institutions decide to enter the area. Likewise, Tosun (2000) states that "developing nations are ruled by a small group of well-organised powerful elites to a larger extent than developed countries are" (Tosun, 2000: 613) which hinders the active participation of the community in the planning and management of tourism projects.

Britton's (1982) notion of the passivity of receiving destinations and communities has been critiqued by theorists, such as Picard (1993) who demonstrates that tourism is all too often viewed as an external force which has imposed itself on the destination whereas, alternatively, it should be seen as development which has been spurred from within. Picard (1993) argues that tourism development is a strategy adopted by states

and destinations, and therefore international tourism companies should not be blamed for 'imposing' themselves onto a destination. Thus, dependency is not something which is created by the international tourism industry but, rather, is invited by destinations and a necessary part of development. Furthermore, Friedman (1988) claims that "there are no single uniform responses to conditions imposed from outside forces. Rather, the variety of local conditions generates a variety of responses to forces which may lie outside the reach or control of individuals" (Friedman, 1988: 8), thus contending Britton's notion of the passive recipient destination. Clifford (1988) recognises that where once dependency could be understood as a way in which to explain disparities, globalisation now must also be considered. "The world system is in fact replacing one diversity with another: and the new diversity is based relatively more on interrelations and less on autonomy" (Clifford 1988: 71), by which Clifford is appreciating that the world is becoming ever more linked together and globalised, rendering dependency a perhaps over-emphasised discussion.

### **2.2.2 Global-local nexus**

The development of tourism which focuses on socio-economical benefits within communities in LEDCs, is often said to maintain local control, avoid leakages, and contribute to poverty reduction to the maximum extent. But such tourism development is still open to external influences and actors, as is the case with each of the three projects presented in this study. Advocates of dependency theory would argue that embarking on such tourism ventures creates international relationships between global and local actors and invites domination by foreign tour operators and other marketing channels. Likewise, Brohman (1996) argues that "local people commonly find themselves enmeshed in a globally integrated system of resource use over which they cannot exercise control" (Brohman, 1996: 55). Criticisms such as these have long been published in academic studies (e.g. Britton, 1980 & 1982; de Kadt, 1979; Erbes, 1973), yet "tourisms' compatibility with a poverty reduction ideology based on the need to incorporate into the global economic system to accelerate economic growth, must be recognised" (Schilcher, 2007: 169). Promotion of the tourism industry, in the fact that it has the propensity to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (see Appendix 1), can be criticised from a dependency perspective, but it is undeniable that tourism has the ability to deliver benefits to poor communities who may otherwise be reliant on single industries, such as agriculture.

Teo and Li (2003) argue that "scale becomes intrinsic to transformations in the social, political and economic landscapes" (Teo & Li, 2003: 288) and that the effects of input from international institutions leads to complex ramifications and power relations of the

global over the local. Yet Bramwell and Meyer (2007) criticise dualistic thinking between the local and the global, claiming that the notion of the global-local nexus “tends to cleave theoretical perspectives into two distinct and incommensurable parts” (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007: 768). Their reference to actor relations and structures presupposes that the local and the global should be accepted as entities “which achieve their meaning through their complex interconnections” (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007: 768). The local and the global should not be theoretically considered as separate entities, but in their propensity to be interlinked. This suggests that not only can influences at the global level have an effect on outputs and outcomes at the local level, but also vice versa. This study therefore adopts this position that the concept of the global-local nexus should not be viewed as a negative relationship, as dependency theorists would suggest, but rather as an opportunity for the local to become part of the global.

DfID (1999) recognise that “a priority for future work will be to develop...better ways to understand the relationship between the micro and the macro to enable us to pinpoint, with confidence, where constraints to the development of more sustainable livelihoods lie” (DfID, 1999: 18). Consequently, it is important to identify links between macro level influences and micro level outputs and outcomes, in an effort to overcome problems which potentially hinder the livelihood benefits of tourism.

Furthermore, the meso level, i.e. tourism context at destination level, operational environment, barriers to success, and regional context, is all too often overlooked, as studies often only refer to the macro and micro levels (e.g. Jamal & Stranzà, 2009; Milne & Altejevic, 2001). Thus, it can be concluded that two pertinent gaps are identifiable in the current research literature: firstly, the lack of attention paid to definable links between occurrences at the macro level and the impacts at the micro level; and, secondly, the lack of attention paid to the meso level dimension within these discussions in reference to the operations and management of the project at destination level.

### **2.2.3 Structuration theory**

Whereas dependency theorists have used structuralism to explain the inequalities between the ‘North’ and ‘South’, Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory challenges this traditional thinking by arguing the duality of agency and structure, rather than the perceived dualism. Giddens (1984) claims that agency (human action) is able to influence structures as well as vice versa, therefore disputing the structuralist approach advocated by dependency theorists. Whilst Giddens appreciates the impacts and power of structure over agency, he equally recognises the role of agency in

development, emphasising the power which actors are able to exert over structure in some cases. Bramwell and Meyer (2007) and Murdoch (1997) argue that there is a need to challenge binary positions within tourism studies, such as local and global, developed and undeveloped, and subjective and objective. The dualism of structure and agency is another binary position, which Giddens suggests should not be viewed as separate, but co-existing and co-evolving. For the purpose of this study, the recognition of structuration theory within the three projects is pivotal in disputing the dependency approach that may ordinarily be applied to studies on tourism and poverty. It is suggested that whilst structures may be dominant in some scenarios, actors may play a more proactive role in decision making and the subsequent outcomes than the passivity described by Britton (1982).

Structuration theory is comprised of three core components: firstly, application of the theory should consider the extent to which actors are knowledgeable and reflexive; secondly, institutionalised interactions across time and space should be gauged; and finally, the duality of agency and structure should be assessed. The concept of knowledgeable and reflexive actors implies that structure both constrains and enables human action. Giddens (1984) suggests that, within social science research, it is essential to recognise that no structure exists without the knowledge of social actors. He argues that in order to understand how patterns of interaction can become standardised it is essential to study the actors' knowledgeability and awareness and response to the structure surrounding them. The second component of structuration theory suggests that research into interactions across time and space can divulge patterns which then become institutionalised in the social world. While several works have long documented these interactions within organisational structure, its applicability and relevance to tourism development projects has yet to be discussed at length. Giddens (1984) argues that repetitive actions taken by actors can eventually become institutionalised, again challenging the power of structure over agency. The final element is how the previous two components lead to a more in-depth discussion of the duality of structure and agency. Lending itself to a critique of structuralism, structuration theory contends that "action, which has strongly routinized aspects, is both conditioned by existing cultural structures and also creates and recreates those structures through the enactment process" (Walsham 1993: 34). The power of structure and the power of agency are clearly entwined and fluctuate depending on the context. Analysing the duality of structure and agency within tourism development projects could add a new theoretical dimension to academic discussions on the propensity of tourism to contribute to poverty reduction. Whereas previous studies focused either on the theoretical structural constraints of using tourism in this manner

(Sofield, 2003; Chok *et al*, 2007; Schilcher, 2007), or on micro level impact studies, it is suggested that structuration theory could be a useful tool for analysing tourism development projects in LEDCs.

#### **2.2.4 Social network theory**

Network research became popular in the social sciences in the 1950s, as researchers sought to explain social relationships and the effects these networks had on situations (Bott, 1971; Barnes, 1972; Wellman, 1988; Mitchell, 1969). Much of social network analysis in tourism studies is largely based on early ideas developed by these theorists, and is described by Stokowski (1994) as a theory which “provides an empirical approach that links inter-actionist and structural considerations in the analysis of social behaviour” (Stokowski, 1994: 59). Jóhannesson (2005) claims that network theory has been underutilised in tourism studies, despite its potential to explain the unequal and unbalanced relationships which are so prominent within tourism. Some recent studies, however, have used different network theories to explain these relationships, and how they impact upon tourism development (e.g. Dredge, 2006b; Fadeeva, 2004; Van der Duim, 2007; Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008). Dredge (2006a) describes network theory as “networks [which] are characterised by a variety of participants that transcend organisational boundaries and structures” (Dredge, 2006a: 270), and involve various individuals and/or groups. Using social network theory in studies can facilitate a deeper understanding of the way in which various actors interact and effect outcomes and outputs. This is strongly linked to Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, which stresses that networks of groups and/or individuals can have a significant influence on their surroundings. However, Haugaard (1997), whilst appreciating the premise of Giddens’ work, suggests that Giddens is overly optimistic about the power of agency, and under-emphasises the power of structure. Haugaard favours Foucault’s approach, and suggests that “power can be progressed by analysing the interactions between the goals of agents, structures, conflict and consensus” (Coles & Church, 2007: 23). This argument, though, still appreciates that analysing networks and relationships between actors surrounding the three projects, therefore, is a useful tool to demonstrate certain elements of structuration theory, thus adding to Britton’s (1981) work on structural influences within the tourism industry.

Studies such as these have often used certain measurements of network relationships and referred to ‘strong ties’ and ‘weak ties’ (Jóhannesson, 2005). This theory is based on two different levels of relationships: strong ties are those which are local or territorial with the highest level of involvement and understanding; and weak ties are those which are often seen to be somewhat segregated from the situation. Yet Granovetter’s

(1973) concept of 'the strength of weak ties' argued that, in certain circumstances, weak ties classified by weak interaction might actually be a lot stronger than what are generally classified as strong ties. He claimed that informal relationships and personal contacts (weak ties) were far more important than those which were classed as 'strong' (Granovetter, 1973).

Dredge (2006a) argues that there are far more factors than the dualistic approach of strong and weak, and she refers to issues of centrality, density and reciprocity. Centrality refers to where the actor lies in relation to the wider structure of the network; density takes into account the number of actors involved in the network and the density of connections between actors; and reciprocity refers to the balance of the relationship and the level of exchange between actors. Dredge (2006a) also cites arguments for and against dense networks: on one hand density "suggests greater cohesion and offer greater opportunities for information exchange and shared responsibility" (Dredge, 2006a: 272); but on the other hand, dense networks can "reinforce inertia, and can be particularly hostile to innovation and policy entrepreneurialism" (Dredge, 2006a: 272). Within tourism, however, dense networks are often unavoidable due to the number of actors involved in the process from building a product to marketing it. It is therefore argued that dense tourism networks can still remain effective and open to innovation, providing there is a certain level of shared values and visions.

Despite this, the increasing adoption of collaborative partnerships between different actor groups to fulfil the criteria of sustainable development (Halme, 2001) means that networks in tourism are very rarely comprised of homogenous groups with an overarching value. Halme (2001) states that "in the public-private networks for sustainable development very different rationales and mindsets meet, which make the creation of a common basis for learning more difficult" (Halme, 2001: 101). In the context of this study, each project is networked with several different actor groups including local community representatives, and the case studies aim to show the effects of collaborative working between non-homogenous groups.

Furthermore, networks are subject to various power relationships, and it could also be argued that certain individuals or groups must assume command in order to facilitate collaboration between several actors, thus acting as a form of mediator. Jackson and Morpeth (1999) cast doubts over the actual levels of community involvement in tourism projects due to their lack of power, stressing that the majority of tourism projects are still controlled by a small group of 'elites'. Foucault (1987) defined power as something which is exercised, as opposed to something which is obtained. Based on this assumption, Wearing and McDonald (2002) criticise theories which consistently refer to

power as a negative. Rather, they adopted Foucault's (1987) thinking, whereby "power and knowledge indirectly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge" (Foucault, 1987: 27). This suggests that power is a "productive and positive phenomenon" (Wearing & McDonald, 2002: 197). The notion that power is interlinked with knowledge and that there are counter actions to every action, suggests that actors play a far more important role in influencing structures than traditional dependency theory suggests. If power and specific fields of knowledge can be exercised by different actors, then dependency can actually move between actors, constantly shifting power from one direction to the other. For example, communities may be dependent on external actors, such as tour operators, but tour operators may be equally dependent on communities for the product they are selling; a concept which this study aims to explore.

## **2.3 The role of actors in tourism development projects**

### **2.3.1 The role of tour operators**

"The three most lucrative components of Third World tourism...are normally handled by vertically integrated global networks" (Brohman, 1996: 55). Herein, Brohman (1996) refers to international transport to the destination, food and lodging procurement, and the marketing of destinations, by such bodies as tour operators, in LEDCs. The tour operators' function is integral within the tourism industry as they are the principal connection in the distribution chain; "they purchase separate elements of transport, accommodation and other services, and combine them into a package which they then sell directly or indirectly to consumers" (Holloway, 2002: 220). The dominant position of tour operators has been discussed at great length within academia (e.g. Andriotis, 2003; Carey *et al*, 1997; Wearing & McDonald, 2002; Mosedale, 2006; Dieke, 1991; Sinclair, 1992; Tapper, 2002). However, such studies often fail to recognise some of the positive responsible tourism practices of tour operators.

Meyer's (2003) study of UK based tour operators assessed the repercussions on PPT. Meyer (2003) displays the varying positive and negative aspects of tour operators operations, and the effects this has on the socio-economic development of developing countries. She states that "while high volume operators rely strongly on large-scale suppliers, the situation is often very different for niche operators. Many specialists differentiate themselves from mainstream operators by sourcing small-scale local suppliers with individual rather than standardisation characteristics" (Meyer, 2003: 48). Despite the fact that volumes of purchasing are considerably lower than those of mainstream operators, they are nevertheless utilising destination-based resources and creating linkages which have the ability to avoid such high levels of foreign leakages.

Thus, niche market operators and the growing demand for their services are important for poorer communities, where the product offering can be unique and it is exceptionally important to retain revenue within the community as much as possible.

With regards to the adoption of PPT strategies, Meyer (2003) provides three reasons why tour operators are often disinclined to become involved. Firstly, the view of tour operators is often that the responsibility for poverty reduction initiatives lies with governments, and is not the responsibility of the commercial sector. Secondly, tour operators highlight the highly competitive market in which they are operating. The allocation of resources to contribute to poverty reduction programmes or price increases for consumers, due to pro-poor practices at destination level, is something which they deem to be detrimental to their success, contradicting Goodwin and Francis's (2003) claim that there is an increased demand for such responsible practices. Finally, the regulations of the EU package directive is oft cited as a significant issue to overcome, due to the responsibility tour operators face should anything go wrong. They are subsequently reluctant to involve themselves with a high number of small-scale local suppliers as the territory is classed as unfamiliar. The risk of being taken to court is also stated in a Tearfund (2001) report, which claims that "many of the bigger operators who arrange package tours said they were keen to promote local restaurants and services, but were afraid that if something went wrong they would be sued when the client came back to the UK" (Tearfund, 2001: 7). Tearfund (2001) explain that there is a lack of quality services provided on the ground that will meet 'Western' expectations (see also, Forsyth, 1997) Despite this, some motivations for employing PPT strategies are presented, including CSR, the improvements of the product offering, and changing consumer demands, coupled with the global impetus to contribute to the socio-economic livelihoods of poor communities around the world (Meyer, 2003), which Tapper (2001) claims is a call beginning to be answered by tour operators.

Despite the recognition that there are deterrents for tour operators in adopting PPT strategies, their structure, expertise and, in a sense, domination, renders them a prime candidate for employing such strategies, which could potentially harness considerable benefits to communities in developing countries.

However, there are only a handful of successful case studies highlighted by the PPT partnership. One of these examples is the pro-poor approach adopted by Wilderness Safaris in South Africa. Wilderness Safaris are a tour operator committed to generating local employment, making effective use of the supply chain and contributing to community development initiatives (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). Poultney and

Spenceley's (2001) research revealed positive impacts for the community in areas of training, access to education, household income, and funds for the community. This demonstrates the propensity of tour operators to positively impact upon communities. To date, however, too few studies exist which examine the positive impacts of tour operators on the livelihoods of communities.

### **2.3.1.1 Driving forces to reduce poverty**

Christie and Sharma (2008) assert that "tourism private sector participation needs to be identified and linked to the MDGs" (Christie & Sharma, 2008: 428). In 2007, the UNWTO called for the tourism industry to intensify its efforts in achieving the MDGs, stressing the industry's importance, and making specific reference to the ability of the private sector to contribute to poverty alleviation. Scheyvens and Momsen (2008) recognise that there has been an effort to reverse the thinking of the 1990s, that developing countries were excluded from benefiting from tourism in the same way as wealthier nations. They state that the "poverty alleviation thrust is founded on a consensus by donors that globalisation offers a path out of poverty" (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008: 24), and that tourism is one of the most significant industries that can accomplish this. Tourism conforms to the MDGs due to its rapid growth in developing countries and its subsequent potential positive impact (Tapper, 2001). Despite criticisms presented of tourism and the foreign involvement it brings with it, leading institutions and prominent academics see the value in what the industry has to offer to the MDGs. Efforts made to involve the private sector in achieving the MDGs are also clearly evident, with the establishment of organisations such as the Travel Foundation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) initially funded by the UK government but now funded by the tourism private sector to provide tools and training to tourism companies to help them contribute to sustainability.

"CSR is a process driven by globalisation, deregulation and privatisation" (Ite, 2004: 2), but it is evident that pressures to achieve the MDGs and reduce the North-South divide also act as a profound motive to contribute to poverty reduction (Kalisch, 2002). Although definitions of CSR are somewhat varied, often depending on the nature and culture of the business or organisation defining it, the fundamental principles remain the same, and are well summarised by Ite (2004), who states that "business has responsibilities beyond the production of goods, services and profit making, and...socially responsible business can help to solve important social and environmental problems" (Ite, 2004: 2). Mowforth and Munt's (2003) definition is more pragmatic, claiming that "CSR is a specific application of the notion of environmental and social auditing to business practice" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 185). Their definition

implies that the desire to be beneficial to the environment and communities across the globe is not enough, and the use of the word 'auditing' suggests that it has to be a wider strategic process. Their definition claims that social and environmental consequences and actions are part of business practices and thus, these aspects should be audited in a similar manner to profit performance.

CSR is not always termed as such and, within the tourism industry, it is most popularly referred to as 'responsible tourism', although this also includes the responsibility of tourists themselves, not just the business. Smith (2002) describes the 'responsibility to distant others' stating "it is implicitly a perspective of the more affluent ('North') towards the less developed ('South'), raising the role of beneficence in the transfer of resources from rich to poor (Smith, 2002: 131). This notion is equally applicable within the realm of tourism, as CSR in the industry often means donations, project support, and training of local people, consequently transferring resources from 'North' to 'South'. The question of the benefactor remains controversial, but the transference of resources are recognised to benefit poor communities. The belief that CSR can only be executed by multi-national corporations (MNCs) is common, as is stated "CSR is very much the preserve of corporations, those companies large enough and wealthy enough to fund departments which monitor and report on their environmental, social and community impacts" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 186). Many small-scale, independent companies, such as members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) follow responsible tourism guidelines. For example, the policies of tour operators such as Exodus, Dragoman, Intrepid Travel, and Explore Worldwide, all commit to the use of locally owned accommodations, using local guides and purchasing local produce. Several tour operators also donate to community development projects or charities in developing countries, and Explore Worldwide has been actively involved in campaigning for porter welfare in Peru ([www.exploreworldwide/news/archive](http://www.exploreworldwide/news/archive) Accessed 21/06/10).

CSR has also had a substantial impact on governance in developing countries. Schilcher (2007) claims that taking advantage of the private sectors' CSR policies – or 'duty' as some may call it – is the states way of reducing the pressure on itself to reduce poverty. Through adopting a neo-liberal stance and encouraging private sector business, it provides governments with an additional stakeholder who can play a role in contributing to economic development. Private tourism businesses, particularly those based in the developed world, are often encouraged by donor organisations and NGOs to make a difference in the developing world, which in turn can alleviate some of the pressure from these governments (Schilcher, 2007).

Tapper's (2001) research deduced that "tour operators are motivated to adopt their ethical approaches by desires to address issues of importance to their customers" (Tapper, 2001: 357). Although he recognises that responsible tourism practices also make business sense in terms of market differentiation, Tapper (2001) stresses the growing importance of public accountability to tour operators. Furthermore, schemes such as the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Development have highlighted a response to growing consumer and industry pressure. Goodwin and Francis (2003) discuss the growing trend in consumer demand for 'ethical' holidays and highlight a growing consumer "pressure across most sectors for evidence of corporate social responsibility" (Goodwin & Francis, 2003: 272). Likewise, Miller (2001) argues that CSR is motivated by consumer demand, yet Font *et al* (2008) concluded that consumer demand is not a driving force for tour operators to act responsibly. This is based on the unwillingness of consumers to pay extra for tour operators' responsibility. Indeed, Goodwin and Francis (2003) did recognise that price was the most important factor for tourists when choosing their holiday, and therefore CSR practices were a secondary concern. Font *et al* (2008) argue, however, that a broader distribution of information on sustainability and responsible tourism practices could eventually motivate consumers to pay extra for a more 'responsible' holiday. This leaves tour operators with two distinct problems: firstly, responding to demand and pressure for more responsible practices; and, secondly, maintaining prices low enough so as not to deter tourists from purchasing more 'responsible' holidays.

### **2.3.2 The role of development organisations**

In 1994, an article was published in *Foreign Affairs* titled "The Rise of the Non-Profit Sector" (Salamon, 1994) which was one of the first to address the proliferation of NGOs and donors and what this meant to citizens and governments alike. Salamon (1994) argues that "we are in the midst of a global associational revolution" (Salamon, 1994: 109), by which he was referring to the rise of a third sector as the answer to the problems of failing states. Despite economic and political reforms in democratic societies in LEDCs, the ability of those in power to fundamentally alter the way in which the poor live is often considered questionable, which Tandon (2000) claims has "lent itself easily to a major critique of the very function of the state" (Tandon, 2000: 321). The prevalence of such organisations signifies a lack of faith in the capacity of governments to forcefully tackle issues of poverty and inequality. However, some argue that tackling these issues can be difficult for governments in developing countries due to problems such as corruption, and lack of expertise (Hume & Edwards, 1997).

There has been a plethora of development organisations which have emerged since the latter quarter of the 20th Century (Salamon, 1994; Clarke, 1998) and they are often romanticised as "saintly" (Salamon, 1994: 119); a belief that, until recently, has faced little debate. Their focus on public welfare and poverty reduction has no doubt had far reaching effects on the lives of certain poor communities (Buckland, 1998), yet some studies have questioned their practices, motivations and accountability (Lewis, 2002). Hulme and Edwards (1997) note the severe lack of empirical research on this issue, despite the fact that there are "major concerns about the contribution...to development" of development organisations (Hulme & Edwards, 1997: 3). They argue that development organisations are viewed as inherently 'good' for society and economic development, but that this is actually the "NGO myth" (Hulme & Edwards, 1997: 4). Clarke (1998) voices similar concerns over the lack of empirical research on the sector, making several references to the ignorance of political scientists to discuss development organisations in political studies. He claims that "much of the literature on NGOs has been produced by NGO activists or by social scientists with close links to funding agencies" (Clarke, 1998: 39), which has resulted in a distinct lack of independent evaluative studies and a host of practitioner reports that fail to address concerns regarding their practices. Thus, a formidable gap is identified in the literature with regard to investigating the practices of development organisations from a political economy perspective. Consideration of macro level influences which drive development organisations and effect how they operate could aid in fulfilling this gap.

Moreover, there is a distinct lack of literature on the involvement of such bodies in tourism development (with the exception of Hawkins & Mann, 2007; Barkin & Bouchez, 2002; Wearing *et al*, 2005; Van der Duim, 2007), despite the fact that the industry is currently being pushed by a range of international institutions such as the World Bank, the UNWTO, the ADB and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Likewise, Hall (2007) recognises that development organisations have become far more interested in tourism upon recognition of tourism's propensity to contribute to human well-being and equity: two inherent elements of pro-poor tourism.

However, development organisations have faced criticisms regarding their approach to tourism, in particular the lack of attention paid to market demands. Van der Duim and Caalders (2008) claim that tourism projects initiated by these organisations are frequently supply-driven, which results in "the development of non-viable tourism products and a lack of exposure to the market" (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008: 111).

Borren (2000) raises the issue of development organisations' unclear and untimely withdrawal strategies, highlighting another criticism of their involvement in projects.

Arora (1994) states that unless clear exit strategies are in place and agreed upon by all actors, then withdrawing from a project “will leave a vacuum which will add to the powerlessness rather than empowerment of the people” (Arora, 1994: 692). This suggests that if sufficient capacity building is not carried out and the withdrawal is not appropriate, then the project could potentially collapse. Novelli and Gebhardt’s (2007) study of community based tourism in Namibia, highlighted concerns about the number of community projects receiving assistance from development organisations, stating “there is a concern for the sustainability of projects due to the phasing of donor funding and NGOs involvement in these development ventures” (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007: 449). They conclude that the lack of cooperation with the private sector could result in many of the community tourism initiatives becoming dependent on the financial assistance of development organisations. In order to make such initiatives sustainable, it is crucial that the tourism project has a market outlet which is built on sound relationships with the private sector.

### **2.3.2.1 Driving forces to reduce poverty**

When the MDGs were adopted by 189 heads of state in 2000, the pressure to achieve quantifiable targets by 2015 was felt across public, private and not-for-profit sectors alike (Millennium Project, 2005). In 2005, the Millennium Project was faced with the stark realisation that “many of the poorest regions of the world...are far off track to achieve the goals” (Millennium Project, 2005: 347). This has been attributed to a lack of concrete results achieved by the public, private and development sector, and the Overseas Development Organisations (ODI) (2010) questions whether or not the targets are realistically achievable. In addition to the MDGs, industry and consumer pressures are also a growing concern for tour operators and development organisations.

The driving forces for development organisations are inherently different to those of tour operators. Development organisations often become involved in countries in order to address failings of the state (Lewis, 1998), and critics argue that the state subsequently transfers pressure to development organisations (Bosch, 1997). Likewise, the need to create an enhanced global social policy perspective (Lewis, 1998) has led to increased attention being paid to development organisation practices, which has resulted in growing responsibility being put on them (Bosch, 1997).

The pressure to achieve the MDGs affects development organisations more than any other sector, as achieving the MDGs for development organisation’s is a key area of their work. Given that development organisations were already working towards such goals before the formulation of the specific MDGs, it is understandable that they are

viewed as the most important sector in achieving the targets. Yet some claim that the sector is facing too much pressure, and that development organisations face unjust criticisms for the lack of progress made in achieving the MDGs (Clemens *et al*, 2007). Adding another perspective, Brinkerhoff (2004) claims that “government has a primary role in structuring and influencing the contributions of the private and NGO sectors” (Brinkerhoff, 2004: 2). This suggests that governments must play a more proactive role in achieving the MDGs with assistance from development organisations, rather than the responsibility being primarily placed on development organisations (Clemens *et al*, 2007). It is clear that global efforts to reduce poverty, and the MDGs, motivate the development sector. However, there is little literature which discusses whether such driving forces (or pressures) may actually be having a detrimental effect on development organisations and the question is posed whether or not driving forces, such as the MDGs, are pushing development organisations too far. For instance, are some development organisations becoming involved in projects for which they have little background knowledge or expertise, such as tourism, in an attempt to satisfy such targets?

It is equally important to understand that driving forces may not always be related to global pressures. Borren (2000) claims that there is another complexity involved in efforts to reduce poverty, and she refers to personal motivations of individuals working for development organisations. Borren (2000) places the development organisation debate in the context of emancipation and solidarity, in order to illustrate the inherent links between the two and highlight how problematic issues arise between the helpers and those being helped. This stresses power relationships between communities which receive support from external organisations/companies. Although Borren’s (2000) reference is specific to development organisations, it is argued that it is equally applicable to the private sector. She describes those in a state of emancipation, or the desire to become emancipated, in comparison with those who strive to combat injustice and suffering in an unfair world (solidarity). Problems arise when the issues and solutions are recognised and addressed by those showing solidarity, rather than those who wish to be emancipated. Borren (2000) asserts “the helper will then dominate those being helped, and so undermine their emancipation” (Borren, 2000: 409). She continues, stating that “unfortunately, there are (too many) examples of escapism, personal gain, and a variety of unlikely forms of exploitation in the name of solidarity...[which are] distinctly harmful to the emancipation process of the people concerned” (Borren, 2000: 409), and thus creating a dependency on the organisation which has initially aided the process of emancipation. This is true of community tourism projects which have been initiated by an external organisation/company, as the

community may lack the knowledge and expertise to initiate a tourism project themselves, and therefore they may become dependent on the assistance. In order to avoid this situation as much as possible, Borren (2000) states that such bodies must have clear values, functions and roles laid out which aim to suppress the often subconscious desire of individuals to satisfy their own needs. These core values are the vital in recognising when to withdraw from a community project. Consequently, employing appropriate withdrawal strategies that leave any such projects sustainable in their own right without the input of the organisation, are fundamental in order to reduce dependency on the organisation.

However, Borren's (2000) arguments do not highlight the importance of personal motivations in poverty reduction. For example, the owner of a tourism company may have a desire to contribute to poverty reduction, which is consequently embedded in the ethos of the company. Likewise, people who work for development organisations may do so because they have a desire to help reduce poverty. Thus, the personal motivations of individuals are an important driving force to reduce poverty.

Overall, it is clear that there are several different driving forces for development organisations and tour operators to contribute to poverty reduction. They do, however, operate in very similar contexts, thus facing similar challenges when approaching and operating tourism development projects.

### **2.3.3 Challenges facing actors in tourism development projects**

The opportunity to capitalise on tourists' desire to explore the unknown and partake in unique experiences (Urry, 2002) can be an attractive option for rural communities. Rural communities are often those with the most substantial levels of poverty (CPRC, 2005), and one of the key advantages of developing rural community tourism can be a reduction in migration. Smith (2003) explains that if the economy and job opportunities are improved, more people, specifically the younger generations, will be encouraged to stay. This consequently reduces urban migration, which can cause problems such as overcrowding, increased crime rates, and city slums (Smith, 2003). Thus, tourism development can be an attractive and rewarding option for rural communities. There has been a host of literature on rural community tourism, both on successes and shortcomings (e.g. Blackstock, 2005; Shepherd, 2002; Bramwell, 1994; Butcher, 2003; Dei, 2000). Previous studies have highlighted that community tourism projects which attempt to contribute to poverty reduction face a variety of challenges, such as "lack of skills, low understanding of tourism, poor product quality and limited market access" (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008: 111). This is true of the majority of such projects,

regardless of which organisation or company has initiated, funded or managed it. As a result, the project initiator faces problems from the outset.

The nature and scale of tourism development is a crucial aspect to consider in rural areas and marginalised communities. Excessive infrastructure or an over-abundance of tourists can seriously impose on every-day lives, and result in culture-shock (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, the location of community tourism projects, often in rural areas, can render them difficult to access for tourists (Wearing & McDonald, 2002; Hall, 2007). This is a significant challenge for project initiators as “time-space restrictions entail additional time in reaching peripheries and, hence, location becomes a major disadvantage” (Müller & Jansson, 2007: 7). Despite this, other research has explored the attraction of this for tourists. Urry (2002) summarises this concept, stating that “the tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other times and other places away from that persons everyday life” (Urry, 2002: 9). This is what Wang (1999) refers to as the search for “existential authenticity” (Wang, 1999: 359). Whilst it is recognised that accessibility is a core element of a projects success, research suggests that initiating a tourism project in a remote area caters for a specific type of tourist, who may find the difficulty of access enhances the experience (Urry, 2002).

Another challenge for tourism projects is the capacity to meet tourist expectations in terms of the experience the tourist will have. Debates on this have led to a plethora of studies on tourisms’ ability to commodify cultures in order for a community to meet these expectations (e.g. Cohen-Hattab & Kerber, 2004; Urry, 2002; Uriely, 2005; Butcher, 2003). Furthermore, the move from mass tourism to “new tourism” (Butcher, 2003:7) has contributed to the growing concerns over commodification of cultures. Butcher (2003) asserts that this post-fordist tourism is a shift away from mass consumption and homogeneity, tailored around individual needs and desires resulting in an increase in cultural tourism. But there has also been a shift within community tourism itself. There is “a shifted focus from the displayed objects provided by the industry to the subjective negotiation of meanings as a determinant of the experience” (Uriely, 2005: 200). Uriely (2005) is essentially referring to the way in which the industry is having to construct a destination in a multitude of different ways to meet the expectations of various tourist demands. Thus, it is evident that tourism projects, particularly those in remote settings, must contend with meeting tourist expectations in terms of providing them with the cultural experience which they seek. Yet the issue of meeting tourist expectations does not solely relate to cultural experience. Cohen-Hattab and Kerber’s (2004) point that tourists enjoy home-comforts, suggests that a certain standard of hospitality and facilities is required, no matter how remote the location.

Following discussions on the potential of the private sector to contribute to the success of small-scale tourism projects, it is important to consider how such projects are marketed. Despite the aforementioned lack of collaboration between tour operators and development organisations, projects assisted by development organisations still require a commercial outlet. Much has been documented about the apparent domination of tour operators and their marketing capabilities (e.g. Brohman, 1996; Irlandu, 2004; Andriotis, 2003; Sindiga, 1999), with a view that “the vast majority of third world destination marketing is created and distributed by first world promoters who are economically motivated to sell a particular brand of fantasy” (Echtner & Prasad, 2003: 661) However, it is argued that foreign-based tour operators are also motivated to provide clients with accurate information for their own commercial interests. Similarly, small-scale tourism projects (and also developing country destinations) may often lack the financial resources or market access to carry out overseas marketing, demonstrating that foreign involvement is a considerable benefit (Bastakis *et al*, 2004).

Overall, the challenges faced by project initiators, and communities, when developing a small-scale tourism project in a rural area are clearly plentiful. Literature discussing ways in which these challenges can be overcome often focuses around community participation (e.g. Smith, 2003; Simpson, 2001; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Nelson, 2004; Brohman, 1996). There is, however, recognition of the problems associated with community involvement, such as lack of knowledge and the aforementioned different interpretations of impacts. Regardless, the active participation of communities is viewed as the key to success for small-scale tourism development projects (Hausler & Strasdas, 2002), and is advocated by the majority of theorists.

#### **2.3.4 Collaborative partnerships: the key to success?**

Dredge (2006b) argues that the drive towards sustainable development has prompted increased theoretical debates on participation, communication, and collaboration. Although there is a plethora of literature regarding collaboration with communities (e.g. Jamal & Getz, 1995; Simmons, 1994; Page & Getz, 1997; Selin, 1999), collaborative planning and marketing (e.g. Wang, 2008; Reed, 1999; Laws, 2006; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007), and a host of studies that discuss public-private partnerships (e.g. Dredge, 2006b; Hall, 1999; De Lacy *et al*, 2002; Buckley, 2008), there is very little literature which discusses collaborative partnerships between development organisations and the private sector or, more specifically, tour operators. Three arguments support collaboration between these two bodies; firstly, the literature on actor networks clearly states the propensity of collaborative networks between different sectors to contribute to sustainability to a greater extent than homogenous networks

between, for example, just development organisations; secondly, regardless of the motivations, tour operators are increasingly involved in responsible tourism practices which aid in contributing to the livelihoods of the poor; and thirdly, a rising number of development organisations are adding tourism to their portfolios after recognising its potential to reduce poverty. It is subsequently argued that this issue has been neglected in academic studies, which instead over-emphasise the problems of collaboration in the realms of community participation, planning and marketing. Stokowski (1994) asserted that “researchers have yet to broaden their analyses to consider...ties within or between organisations or other complex collectives” (Stokowski, 1994: 85) which, to date, still appears to be a realistic assessment of the literature.

However, it is undeniable that there is a rising trend in cross-sectoral collaboration, and collaborative partnerships have been advocated by the PPT Partnership, the World Bank, and SNV. The reference to cross-sectoral collaboration here is not assuming relationships between different economic sectors, but rather, as Fadeeva (2004) describes, between a group of individuals or groups which are institutionally different but act as “constellations of organisations that interact around mutually relevant issues” (Fadeeva, 2004: 175).

Fadeeva (2004) attributes the growth in such collaboration to a variety of reasons, including: the need for other knowledge sources to assist in problem solving; the need to balance power between actors who have a say in policy formulation; the so-called ‘legitimacy’ of the potential for collaborative partnerships to achieve sustainable development; and the opportunity to reduce risk for one particular actor. However, Bramwell (2004) argues that collaboration is problematic for many reasons, including the potential for certain powerful groups or elite individuals to form alliances which assure them of domination. Alliances such as these can mean that certain actors within the network, in many instances, the community, have little say in tourism developments, as they can be over-powered or outnumbered by actors which control the development (Tosun, 2000). Likewise, Halme (2001) places collaborative networks in the context of ‘teachers’ and ‘students’, criticising the powers that particular actors exert over others. Halme (2001) claims that ‘teachers’ assume a powerful role which results in a one-way transferral of knowledge and communication. In so doing, the other actors (students) become passive in their role in the collaborative venture, and in many instances, simply work via commands of their ‘teachers’. Hence, tourism projects which are operated by a collaborative partnership between different actors often face being manipulated by the most powerful actors, leaving the community with little say in developments. Dredge (2006b) argues that, although collaboration and the

equal participation of various actors is well theorised, the implementation of such approaches is somewhat lacking, often despite the best intentions. This can be attributed to “dynamic multi-actor interactions, complex power differentials and uneven resource and information exchange between actors and agencies” (Dredge, 2006b: 562). Thus, the sheer complexity of collaboration often results in a distinct lack of application, as actors are unfamiliar with how to approach such a scenario. Despite agreements and signings of cooperation agreements between actors, it may be the case that this cooperation never actually occurs, and the operator of the project may find themselves isolated.

Collaborative ventures between development organisations and tour operators could result in successful sustainable tourism projects which could aid in reducing poverty. Van der Duim and Caalders, (2008) support this notion, stating that “establishing links with the private sector is probably the best way to help ensure that initiatives are commercially successful” (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008: 109). It is argued that links must be developed further into collaborative ventures “to include issues affecting basic business skills, capacity building and product development” (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008: 109). Zhao and Brent Ritchie (2007) claim that any attempt to reduce poverty without the substantial input of the private sector, in terms of operations, product development, and marketing, would be futile. Similarly, SNV (2001) stress that “active participation of local people, organisations and other stakeholders is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of any development programme” (SNV, 2001: 32).

Although studies on collaborative projects are somewhat under-researched, there are a few examples of collaborative projects which support the aforementioned arguments in favour of collaboration. Gordillo Jordan *et al's* (2009) study of ‘Posado Amazonas’, a tourist lodge in the Peruvian Amazon, discussed the success of the collaborative project between Rainforest Expeditions (tour operator), Conservation International (NGO), and the community. After Rainforest Expeditions have taken a cut of the profit, the revenue earned from the lodge has, so far, provided the community with improved road access, building maintenance on a school, and potable water. Ownership transferral to the community is planned in 2016. This shows a positive example of a collaborative project which has been developed with the input of three distinctly different actor groups. Rodriguez’s (1999) study of the Kapawi Ecolodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon also highlighted the success of the collaborative venture between Canodros (tour operator), several NGOs, and the Achuar community. The lodge received various grants from different NGOs, and was partially funded by Canodros. The project has also received extensive technical assistance from rainforest conservation NGO, the Pachamama Alliance. It is primarily operated and managed by

the community and ownership transferral is due to take place in 2011. The success of the Kapawi Ecolodge has also been discussed by Stronza (2008) in her study of successful partnerships in tourism.

It is therefore concluded that collaborative ventures between development organisations and tour operators could be inherently lucrative. The literature is lacking in solutions to address the problems of collaboration, and further empirical evidence of successful collaborations is required.

## **2.4 Tourism and poverty reduction**

### **2.4.1 Tourism's contribution to livelihoods**

Measuring impacts on livelihoods is a commonly used tool, particularly in agricultural studies, to assess how a particular development has contributed to poverty reduction. Chambers and Conway (1991) define a livelihood, stating that "a livelihood comprises people, their capabilities, and their means of living...Tangible assets are resources and stores, and intangible assets are claims and access" (Chambers & Conway, 1991: 1). This is the main definition used by DfID (1999) in the sustainable livelihoods framework. The sustainable livelihoods framework was developed by DfID (1999) as a tool for evaluating projects and developments, and has been applied to various studies in tourism (e.g. Ashley, 2000; Goodwin & Roe, 2001; Spenceley, 2002; Murphy & Roe, 2004; Tao & Wall, 2009). Impacts on livelihood capital are one of the key areas of the livelihoods framework, which is divided into financial capital, human capital, social capital, physical capital, and natural capital. DfID (1999) argue that evaluating the impacts of development projects on these five areas can identify where projects are failing, and where they are achieving, thus providing a basis from which to improve. Tao and Wall (2009) argue that "understanding the current livelihood activities, assets, and entitlements of an individual or community naturally provides the best guide as to how their livelihoods can be made more productive and more sustainable" (Tao & Wall, 2009: 91).

The sustainable livelihoods framework also has the following elements: the vulnerability context, which focuses on the external environment such as stocks, trends, and seasonality; transforming structures and processes, which stresses the importance of analysing the policies, institutions, and legislation which can affect people's livelihoods; livelihood strategies, which discusses how people attempt to improve their livelihoods; and livelihood outcomes, which stresses the key outcomes of improved livelihoods, in terms of income, security, and sustainability (DfID, 1999). DfID (1999) claim that

applying this framework can facilitate a sound analysis of the impact of development projects on poverty reduction, and aid in devising ways to improve such projects.

Studies on tourism and livelihoods emphasise the importance of tourism's cohesion with other livelihood strategies. Tao and Wall's (2009) study of a marginalised community in Taiwan found that tourism was generally perceived as being positive for the community, as it was an additional livelihood strategy for many community residents. Due to seasonality, it would be difficult for tourism to become such a significant economic sector that it could sustain the livelihoods of the community. Yet the manner in which it supplemented their existing livelihoods led to positive reflections about tourism's impacts, which evidence in this study will also demonstrate.

To date, studies evaluating tourism's impacts on livelihoods have been confined mainly to practitioner studies carried out by development organisations. These studies, however, do provide some relatively successful case studies, which detail several positive outputs of tourism on the livelihoods of surrounding communities. Ashley's (2000) study of Namibian rural tourism found that there were several positive impacts in each of the five aspects of capital, including: the invested earnings from tourism into agriculture and livestock; increased training and development of skills; and improved social cohesion. The only negative impacts were the lack of access to natural resources due to tourism development, and an element of local social conflict. However, Ashley's (2000) study stresses that perceptions of impacts on livelihood capital is affected by individual assets and livelihood priorities. Thus, the impacts of tourism can vary dramatically depending on the respondents. This will be discussed further in section 2.5.3. Saville's (2001) study of a tourism project in Nepal, initiated by the Netherlands Development Organisation's (SNV), concentrated mainly on financial capital outputs, showing distinct improvements to the livelihoods of individuals based on their additional earnings from the tourism project. Other areas of capital outputs were also discussed, although many of the assertions were based on the anticipated livelihood outputs of the project in the future, rather than being based on concrete evidence. Such studies, although optimistic in their projections for future livelihood impacts, cannot provide solid evidence that tourism is having a substantial positive impact on livelihoods; hence, there are still relatively few studies examining the contribution of tourism to livelihoods, particularly within the academic arena.

#### **2.4.2 Pro-poor tourism (PPT)**

Tourism's contribution to livelihoods is not the terminology often used in academic tourism studies (with the exception of Tao & Wall, 2009; Simpson, 2009). More recently, the popular terminology relating to tourism's propensity to contribute to

poverty reduction has been 'pro-poor tourism' (e.g. Schilcher, 2007; Hall, 2007; Harrison, 2008; Meyer, 2008; Scheyvens, 2009). Although the PPT approach does vary from the livelihoods approach, the concept of PPT is similar in terms of tourism's impact on poverty reduction. Ashley's (2002) methodology for PPT case studies also focuses on the importance of impacts on livelihoods of the poor as part of the assessment. Thus, it is an important topic to discuss as each of the three projects researched for this study adopted aspects of the PPT strategy, such as creating women's employment and focusing on marginalised communities.

The aim of PPT is to generate net benefits to poor communities and the focus is on employing it as a strategy, as opposed to developing a specific type of tourism, such as ecotourism. Through developing linkages between communities and the private sector, and emphasising the supply chain, PPT can enhance livelihood benefits to communities (Ashley, 2000). Although many tour operators do not label their activities as pro-poor, several responsible tourism guidelines suggest that the underlying principles are an inherent part of their business practice (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). Nevertheless, PPT continues to fundamentally remain the language of development organisations, and several of the principles of PPT are applied to tourism projects funded by development organisations. Therefore, the debate as to what development organisations and tour operators comparatively achieve through applying certain PPT principles is one which requires addressing.

Mowforth and Munt (2003) refer to two problems with PPT; "the first relates to an understanding of power relationships in tourism; the second to the ability of pro-poor tourism to reduce poverty" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 270). Mowforth and Munt (2003) recognise that power imbalances are prevalent in many industries, and stress the need to understand the structure of these relations and how they can be utilised to further the benefits of tourism to the poor. The fundamental question, therefore, is posed: "does PPT simply offer another route by which economic imperialism, through tourism, may extend its tentacles, or is it an appropriately liberating and remunerative option?" (Hall & Brown, 2006: 13). Given the lack of independent evaluations of existing projects, this question currently remains contentious, and therefore this study will consider this question throughout. It is also recognised that "most of the critical decisions that affect the sector are made outside of the country or by a few powerful local interests" (Ashley *et al*, 2001: 28), suggesting that a community may not have much say in tourism development. This refers back to the prior issues raised regarding the global-local nexus, and the dependency debate surrounding the industry. What is interesting to note, is that this is recognised by firm advocates of PPT (e.g. Ashley *et al*, 2001), who believe that the significant potential of tourism to contribute to livelihoods

outweighs the problems that must be overcome. This leads to Mowforth and Munt's (2003) second concern: the potential propensity of PPT to contribute to poverty alleviation. There are several case studies which highlight where PPT strategies have been successfully executed (e.g. Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Ashley, 2000; Saville, 2001), yet the majority of these are practitioner reports. Academic studies may aid in substantiating some of the claims whilst linking the practical outputs and outcomes to theoretical discussions. The recognition that it is difficult to assess contributions to livelihoods due to the diversity of strategies, the complexity of the supply chain, contributions to extended families, and social benefits, mean that opponents of PPT are common place (Sofield, 2003; Soloman, 2005; Schillcher, 2007). The publication of a dedicated volume in *Current Issues in Tourism* (2007) on PPT signified a change in the writings on the issue and PPT is now highly topical in academic discussion, although the majority of such studies discuss the theory of PPT rather than presenting specific case studies of where it has been applied. Mowforth and Munt (2003) maintain that there is a lack of empirical evidence on successful PPT projects and that "accounts of pro-poor tourism are replete with imponderables (the 'may', 'should', 'likely to')" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 271).

Chok *et al* (2007) presented a critique of PPT from a political economy perspective. Placing PPT within the context of sustainability, one of their key criticisms is the lack of focus on environmental preservation, which itself is a fundamental resource for the sustainable livelihoods of the poor. However, studies such as Ashley (2000) and Poultney and Spenceley (2001) clearly cover environmental issues within discussions of PPT, conflicting with this critique presented by Chok *et al* (2007). Furthermore, it can also be said that environmental issues have been covered to such an extent within other tourism approaches, that an emphasis here would merely be reminiscent of past strategies and detract from the focus of PPT: poverty reduction. Nevertheless, this adds a further dimension to the cases Mowforth and Munt (2003) present, and Chok *et al* (2007) argue that "tourism's reputation for being a highly polluting and resource intensive industry with a substantial ecological footprint...therefore places necessary limits on its appropriateness as a large-scale pro-poor strategy" (Chok *et al*, 2007: 154). However, compare this to other industries, such as agriculture, and one can see that the balance between positive and negatives with regards to environmental sustainability are perhaps similar (Bennett *et al*, 1999). Furthermore, programmes in rural areas in Tanzania to increase awareness of local communities about protection and enhancement of the natural landscape (as a tool for attracting tourists) are just one example of where tourism has actually aided environmental preservation (SNV, 2001).

### 2.4.3 Community involvement in tourism development projects

Community involvement is a prevalent theme throughout the literature. The majority of studies stress the importance of community involvement in planning and operations of tourism, and claim that it is integral to the success of a tourism venture (Smith, 2003; Inskip, 1999; Okazaki, 2008; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Tosun, 2000, 2002 & 2006). Involving local communities in decision making can help to generate positive attitudes towards tourism which is important to a tourism projects' success (Hausler & Strasdas, 2002; Jamal & Getz, 1995). Simpson (2001) asserts that complete community involvement and control actively leads to sustainability. Green's (2005) study of resident perceptions of tourism impacts in Koh Samui, Thailand, found that the majority perceived the negative impacts as far outweighing the positive impacts. Green (2005) attributed this to a distinct lack of involvement of the community in the planning stages of tourism development. Yet involving communities in planning and operations of a tourism project leads to various difficulties (Reid, 2003).

One of the most cited problems is often a lack of knowledge and expertise (Simpson, 2001; Nelson, 2004; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Okazaki, 2008). Tourism is a multidisciplinary concept which requires careful planning, monitoring and control. With little or no knowledge of such an industry, it is debated how a local community can develop an attractive, sustainable tourism product without assistance from a person, company or organisation with extensive knowledge of the industry.

The community itself can possess a diverse range of opinions and interests (Broham, 1996; Jamal & Getz, 1995). This leads to another debate about who mediates and decides which groups' views are more important than others. Furthermore "product development is not a single-stop affair; it must be continuous and in step with changing tourist tastes" (Sindiga, 1999: 144). This suggests that community involvement is not only vital at the incipient stage of development, but should be continual in order to prevent any unwanted developments that may result in conflict.

Okazaki (2008) summarises four main reasons why community participation is important in tourism planning and decision-making. Firstly, communities are likely to become hostile towards tourists if they do not agree with particular developments. Secondly, Okazaki (2008) highlights that the community is part of the tourism attraction and the assets of the community form part of the tourism product, meaning the community must be involved in order to grant 'access'. Thirdly, community involvement is necessary to protect the community's culture and natural environment. Finally, it is argued that tourism will only be sustainable if it contributes to the socio-economic development of the community, thus requiring community input. Goodwin and Santilli's

(2009) study of 28 community based tourism initiatives throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas, revealed that 15 of the projects had at least partial community participation in the development of the initiatives, which had contributed to their relative success and acceptance of tourism by the community. However, Goodwin and Santilli (2009) argue that community participation in planning may help to develop a more successful project, but without managing the project, the community do not have enough power to stipulate how developments should occur in the long-term. This, they claim, means that many projects which are labelled as community tourism projects, are often not so, and are primarily controlled by an external actor(s). Therefore, it is argued that in order to create a long-term sustainable community tourism project, the community must participate from the outset and, at some stage throughout the project, assume ownership and management of the project. Mitchell and Muckosy (2008), however, argue that community tourism enthusiasts are misguided, claiming that "CBT rarely reduces poverty and vulnerability...[and] mainstream tourism may have a more beneficial impact" (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008: 1). They attribute many of the failing CBT projects in Latin America to a lack of financial viability, regardless of whether the community are involved in planning and management.

#### **2.4.5 Community interpretations of impacts**

The way in which livelihood outputs of the three projects are interpreted by community residents is a key aspect of this study. Several studies which analyse community perceptions of tourism impacts use social exchange theory (e.g. Ap, 1992; Perdue *et al*, 1990; Jurowski *et al*, 1997). "Social exchange theory suggests people evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange" (Andereck *et al*, 2005: 1061), and stresses that perceptions of impacts are also influenced by personal values and priorities. This reiterates the importance of assessing people's basic livelihood needs in order to evaluate the way in which they perceive tourism impacts. Wang and Pfister (2008) argue that the majority of tourism studies which apply social exchange theory concentrate on economic domains, and do not pay enough attention to perceptions of non-economic beneficiaries. They state that too many studies are concerned with the perceptions of people who benefit economically, and those who don't benefit economically, without taking into account those who benefit (or do not benefit) non-economically. This highlights an under-researched area in academic studies. Furthermore, personal characteristics for differentiating between people's perceptions of impacts are often based on demographic criteria, such as age, gender, education, and income (e.g. Wang & Pfister, 2008; Sharma & Dyer, 2009). However, social exchange theory is not an ideal tool for analysing community interpretations, as it is based on the assumption that

every individual is completely aware of the costs and benefits of every impact. This study, therefore, appreciates the perceptions of community residents, whilst understanding that they may be unaware of certain impacts and how these effect the community.

Analysing community tourism in terms of the perceived impacts by those affected has been well-researched (e.g. Andereck et al, 2005; Ite, 2009; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Perez & Nadal, 2005; Andriotis, 2005; Ritchie & Inkari, 2006). For community tourism projects operated by tour operators or development organisations, community interpretations of impacts are an area which they must attempt to manage. The difficulty with this is well summarised by Schilcher (2007), who claims that “as poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, different (poor) people define both problems per se, as well as the aspired solutions in different ways” (Schilcher, 2007: 184). This presents a significant challenge for project initiators: not only may communities have different priorities in terms of what a tourism project should achieve, but they may also interpret the impacts in a different way from the organisation or company who has assisted with the project. Similarly, community members interpret impacts differently depending on their relative proximity to the tourism activities or their involvement in it (Tosun, 2002). The aforementioned negative and positive impacts of tourism on communities are oft cited as a given, for example, the sometimes negative effects of tourism on the social structure of a community. However, Tosun (2002) criticises this generic approach to evaluating impacts, claiming that “host perceptions...are shaped by various site specific conditions” (Tosun, 2002: 251). Tosun (2002) explains that impacts cannot be generically evaluated, and must always be presented as a case-by-case scenario.

Interpretations of impacts can also be affected by the expectations of impacts (Yen & Kerstetter, 2008). If a community expects tangible results in a short space of time and do not witness this, then any positive impacts of the project may be played down as a result of the community's disappointment. Poultney and Spenceley's (2001) study of the tour operator Wilderness Safaris revealed that the community had unrealistic expectations of what tourism, and Wilderness Safaris, could achieve. Several community residents believed that Wilderness Safaris had a responsibility to contribute to social services and infrastructure which the authors rightly highlight should be the responsibility of the government and not the private sector. Likewise, DfID (1999) recognise that tourism is a commercially driven business and not a social service to the poor. Consequently, managing community expectations and providing residents with realistic possible outcomes of a community tourism project can help to alleviate the problem of raised expectations (Yen & Kerstetter, 2008).

## 2.5 Conclusion to the theoretical approach

Establishing the theoretical approach to the study has sought to highlight the key theories, debates surrounding these, and pertinent gaps which require addressing in order to contribute to academic knowledge. The discussion of dependency theory has shown that it is a useful theory for explaining the unequal relationships within tourism. However, it has been noted that dependency is often inevitable in tourism due to the structure of the industry, which suggests that applying other theories in tourism and development could add to the dependency debate. Consequently, the chapter has sought to emphasise alternate theories such as structuration and social network theory in order to accentuate the role and power of actors within the realm of tourism and poverty reduction. These theories will be applied to the study in order to supplement existing research on tourism and dependency theory.

This chapter has shown that it is not solely development organisations which have the ability to reduce poverty; “the private sector in general has enormous capacity to influence development outcomes, and this has received increasing attention in recent years from intergovernmental organisations concerned with socio-economic development and environmental protection” (Tapper, 2001: 352). However, there are critics of development organisations and the private sector, and similar concerns about both are expressed in the research literature. For example, foreign development organisation assistance is said to be a “new form of imperialism that maintains political and economic control over periphery countries” (Bowen, 1998: 32). Similarly, tourism is described as a “neo-colonial extension of economic forms of under-development that reproduces historical patterns of structural inequalities between developed and developing countries” (Britton, 1980: 149). The fundamentals of each of these statements are essentially the same. It is also clear that there is a distinct lack of studies of successful community tourism projects initiated and funded by tour operators or development organisations. Although several practitioner reports exist, there is little within the academic arena to compare the impacts of both of these bodies.

Additionally, the review has highlighted some of the key challenges facing tour operators and development organisations in contributing to poverty reduction through community tourism development projects. It is clear that contending with how different community residents interpret different impacts is also a challenge, and project operators must also seek to manage community expectations of what tourism can accomplish. Thus, academic studies are also lacking in empirical evidence which compares development organisations and tour operators and the ways in which they attempt to overcome these challenges. The discussion has also highlighted some of

the key influences and driving forces which affect the practices of the tour operators and development organisations in terms of reducing poverty, demonstrating Giddens' (1984) concept of the duality of structure and agency.

Tourism's contribution to livelihoods is another under-researched area in academic studies, despite the clear propensity of community tourism to deliver livelihood benefits. This led to a discussion of pro-poor tourism, which incorporates many of the ideals of livelihoods, and the concept is currently facing much debate in tourism studies. However, it is recognised that too few studies exist which provide sound evidence of tourism's contribution to poverty reduction. This is supported by Roe and Urquhart (2004) who claim that other than PPT cases produced by the PPT partnership, there are very few examples which give a balanced view of the success of projects. Given that "much of the discussion on PPT is based on theory and preliminary research at this stage" (Chok *et al*, 2007: 148), the literature review has added value to the claim that there is a need for empirical research on this subject.

Overall, the research aims to assess the impact of global institutions and structures on local socio-economic development, using discussions of politico-economic factors throughout. The chapter has revealed that there is a distinct lack of research on the links between macro level structures and policies, and micro level impacts. It also highlighted that the meso level is often neglected in academic studies and that links between the three levels are neglected.

## **2.7 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework has been developed based on theories and concepts discussed whilst reviewing the literature. The purpose of the framework is to guide the empirical research, to enable comparisons of tour operators and development organisations, and their role in tourism development projects in LEDCs. It is not suggested that the framework lists all the issues related to tourism development projects but, for the purpose of this study, it establishes the integral issues which must be taken into account.

Developing the framework was an iterative process, which evolved throughout the course of the research. Certain issues, such as government involvement, which were included in the original framework in Figure 2.1, were found to be relatively inconsequential for the three projects in question, and this was consequently omitted from the framework. Originally the framework had also indicated that the study would commence with analysis of macro level of influences. However, this was altered in order to coincide with the order of the fieldwork, and enabled the researcher to assess

project outputs/outcomes, before discussing these with project operators/funders, and other respondents. The micro level had not originally used DfID's sustainable livelihoods framework as a guideline, and these were later added to provide more structure and focus. Further details of these changes and the contribution of the conceptual framework are discussed in chapter 8.

The refined conceptual framework, presented in Figure 2.2, comprises three main areas which will be discussed in further detail in the forthcoming sections. Firstly, the micro level is presented which has been classed as 'project output evaluation'. For the purpose of this study, the micro level solely relates to impacts on livelihood assets. Secondly, the framework details the meso level, which equates to the 'project operating context'. The meso level has been designed to show the operating contexts of the three projects at destination level. Thirdly, the macro level covers issues which relate to the 'global influence analysis'. These three levels are connected to allow the study to show comparisons of each of the projects on the three levels, and also to determine links between the micro, meso, and macro levels. At each of these levels, the study will consider the role and influence of structure and actors, and debate which has more 'power' within the contexts of the three projects.

One of the fundamental aims of the study is to compare tour operators and development organisations to ascertain how they impact upon tourism development projects and the communities surrounding the projects. In line with structuration theory, the study also aims to look at the relationships between these actors and how the relationships influence the outputs/outcomes. Mosedale (2006) claimed that it is the "relationship between all the actors within the tourism sector – both at the origin and the destination and at different geographical scales – that shapes the general development of tourism" (Mosedale, 2006: 437). Thus, Mosedale's (2006) statement justifies the analysis of different actors involved in tourism projects, and their role at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

Mowforth and Munt (2003) question how applicable Britton's political economy framework is to 'new types' of tourism in developing countries, since his theories were based on criticisms of general orthodox mass tourism. Furthermore, with the relatively new tourism eras of 'responsible tourism' and PPT, it is questionable whether Britton's (1981) theories of dependency still apply to such a notable extent. Thus, the framework has been developed with dependency theory in mind, but also drawing on ideas from Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, actor network theory, and social exchange theory. Applying this range of theories enables the conceptual framework to analyse contextualities of organisation and global structures, external influences, and

outputs and outcomes of three differently funded/initiated tourism development projects.

**Figure 2.1 Original conceptual framework**

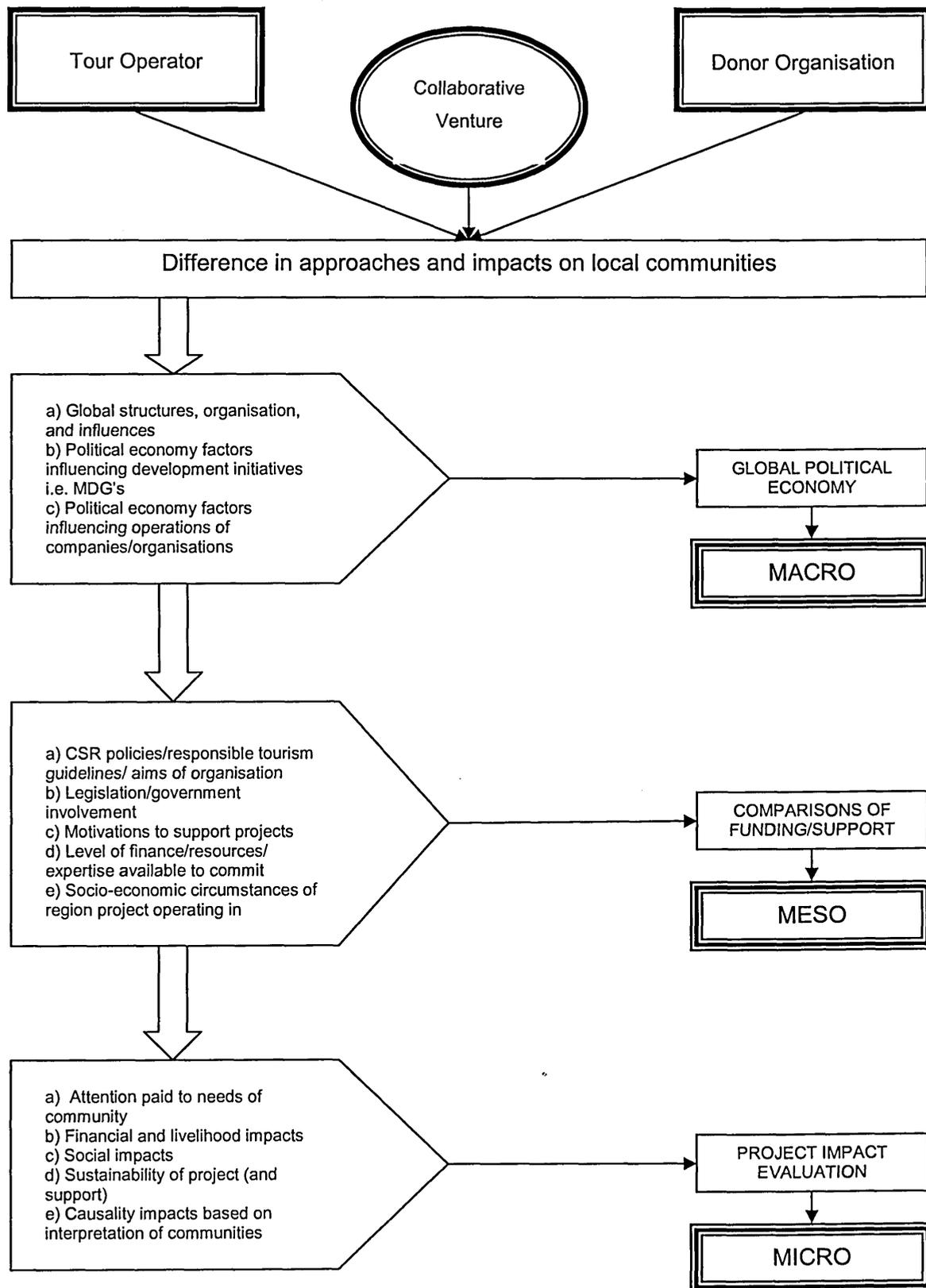
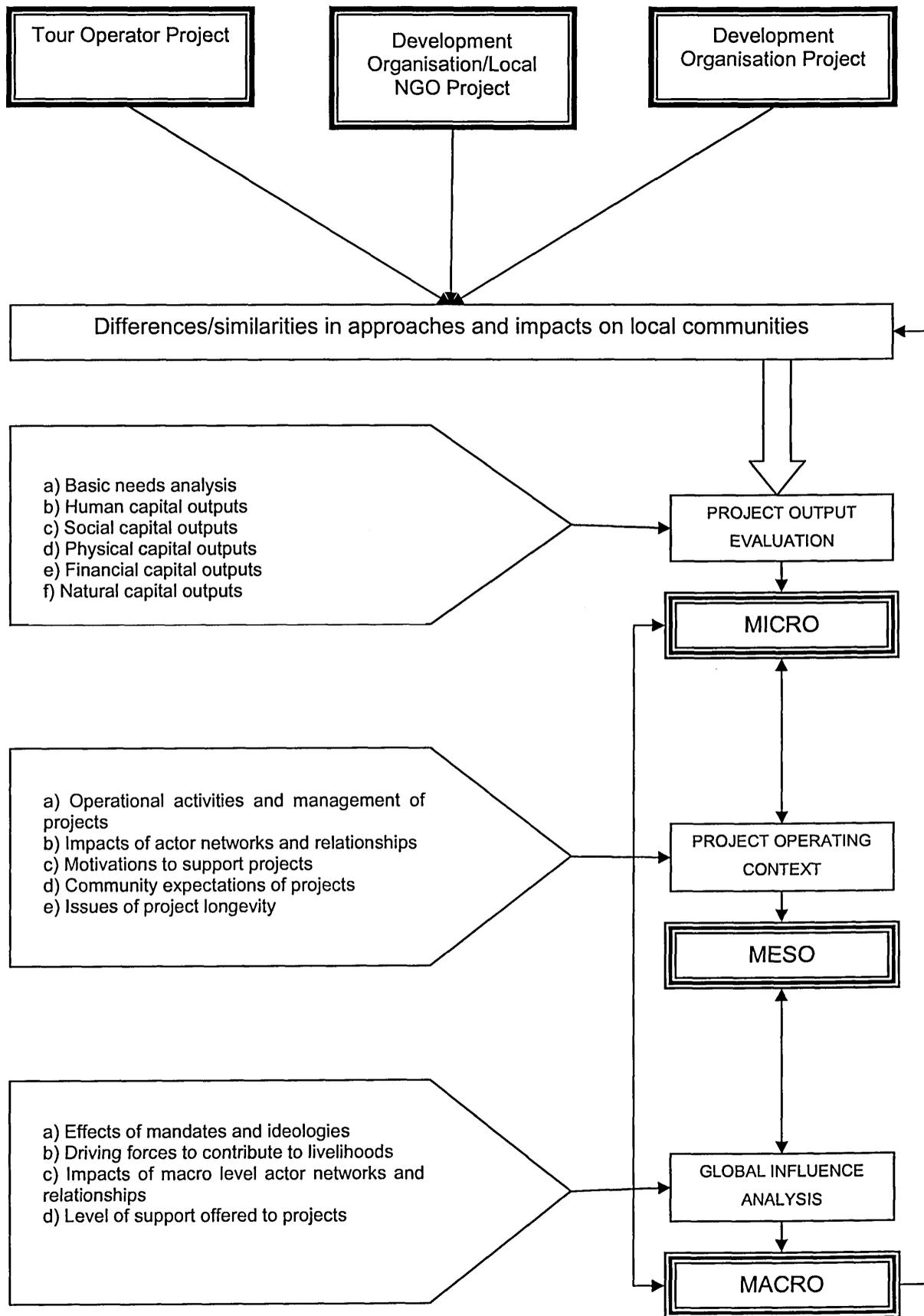


Figure 2.2 Refined conceptual framework



### 2.7.1 Micro level framework

The micro level of the refined framework involves a 'project output evaluation' of the three projects. The main aim of the micro level is to assess the impacts of the projects on the livelihoods of the community residents where the projects operate. This part of the framework is based primarily on part of the sustainable livelihoods framework developed by DfID (1999) (see Appendix 2). The DfID (1999) framework was not designed specifically for tourism projects; hence not all of aspects of the framework are applicable to this study. It does, however, provide a guideline for the analysis at the micro level, and is appropriate due to the emphasis on interpretations of livelihood impacts by the communities themselves.

The micro level begins with basic needs analysis. Ashley and Hussein (2000) advocate the identification of basic needs by the respondents themselves, in order to gain an accurate reflection of what is important to community residents. The identification of basic needs sets a basis from which to assess respondents' interpretations of the contributions of the projects to livelihoods capital. It is also important to gauge if respondents in the three project areas have different basic needs, which will aid assessing if the project operator has considered local needs in the area.

Firstly, human capital outputs are presented as a key factor to evaluate project outputs. The two core components of human capital are health and education, and training. As well as being key assets themselves, human capital assets are also transferable to achieve other livelihood outputs, for example, training can lead to improved skills which can generate income, thus contributing to financial capital.

Secondly, social capital outputs must be analysed. The main areas of social capital are membership of more formalised groups, networks and connectedness, and relationships of trust and reciprocity (DfID, 1999). Analysing the outputs of social capital are strongly based the interpretations of the respondents, as the outputs are generally intangible. It is a key area for assessing how the project's impact upon social structure within the communities.

Thirdly, the framework specifies the analysis of physical capital outputs which are important to gauge how the projects contributed to infrastructure development, transport access, and water and energy access. The outputs may be to individual people or reflect wider community benefits. These kinds of tangible outputs can subsequently assist communities in achieving other livelihood objectives.

The fourth aspect of livelihoods analysis is the impact of the projects on financial capital. Although it is often recognised that the financial outputs of tourism projects, such

as the three in question, are minimal and isolated to a select few, it equally recognised that relatively minor financial benefits may have significant meaning to the beneficiary group (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Financial capital refers to both available stocks, i.e. livestock, liquid assets, and cash; and regular inflows of money on which people are able to plan and invest in their future.

The final livelihood aspect of the framework is natural capital. DfID (1999) describe contributions to natural capital as “the provision of services/input for forestry, agriculture [and] fisheries” (DfID, 1999: 11), and the conservation of natural resources. All three projects are in rural areas where the natural environment is integral to the agricultural industry in which many are employed. Therefore, any negative natural capital outputs could have serious effects on other livelihood areas. Likewise, positive outputs are likely to be viewed favourably.

Overall, the micro level of the framework details aspects which will provide a basic analysis of the impacts of the three projects. The main focus of the study is not to provide an in-depth impact assessment, in line with the argument that past studies on tourism and poverty reduction have often ‘counted’ impacts without linking to broader theoretical discussions, and consequently, the project output evaluation provides overviews of the key outputs/outcomes.

### **2.7.2 Meso level framework**

The second part of the framework demonstrates the meso level aspects which influence the project operating context. This displays factors which directly affect the projects, and factors which influence the project operators, within the destination context. The meso framework is both influenced by the macro framework, influences the micro framework, and vice versa.

Firstly, is the analysis of operational activities and management of the three projects within the destination context. This aims to analyse some of the challenges facing the project operators, such as location and transport access, and examine how the operators respond to difficulties associated with rural tourism projects.

The second section the framework cites the need to analyse the impacts of actor networks and relationships. This reflects DfID’s (1999) concept of examining ‘structures’, however, for the purpose of the study, draws on Dredge’s (2006a) concepts of network density and reciprocity. Analysing these aspects will demonstrate the actors involved in each of the projects, and how these networks influence the operations and management of the projects.

Thirdly, the framework highlights the need to analyse the project operators' motivations for funding and supporting the three projects. This is crucial for the study in order to detail comparisons between development organisations and tour operators, and gauge whether different motivations affect the outputs of the projects and the way they are operated.

The literature review discussed community interpretations of tourism impacts, which led to a discussion of how interpretations are effected by expectations (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). Due to the focus on comparing tour operators and development organisations, it is crucial to evaluate whether communities have different expectations of the two actor groups, as this may impact upon how negatively or positively they perceive the impacts of the projects.

Finally, the framework highlights the consideration of project longevity. This is included due to criticisms in the literature of the short-term involvement of development organisations in projects, which effected long-term sustainability. The framework subsequently seeks to show the differences and similarities between development organisations and tour operators in terms of future planning.

### **2.7.3 Macro level framework**

The final level of the framework highlights macro factors which aid in analysing global influences. The macro level is particularly focused on politico-economic factors which influence tourism development projects in LEDCs.

Firstly, the effects of mandates and ideologies are crucial to analyse. Although the three projects are not specified as PPT projects they do, however, encompass some of the core ideologies of the concept as part of the organisational mandates. Secondly, the framework highlights the importance of analysing the driving forces to contribute to poverty reduction. This theme was granted significant attention in the literature review, based on the MDGs, and consumer and industry pressure to act responsibly (Tapper, 2001). Having analysed motivations at the meso level, it is important to assess the macro level forces in order to compare the influences driving development organisations and tour operators.

The third section of the framework specifies analysis of macro level actor networks and relationships. This will aid in comparing how well connected the different project operators are, in terms of market outlets for the projects, funding, and technical expertise from the international level. Evaluating the existence of dependency relationships will also assist in gauging the relevance of dependency theory to community tourism projects funded and operated by external sources.

The final part of the macro level framework analyses the level of support offered to the projects from the macro level. The purpose of this section is to assess the relevance of the projects to macro level actors, and conclude if support from the macro level is really important to the projects at meso and micro levels.

#### **2.7.4 Conclusion of the conceptual framework**

Following the linkage of these three levels, an arrow links these back to comparing the differences and similarities between the three projects and project funders/operators. The arrows also show that it is possible that micro level impacts are directly affected by macro level influences, and vice versa, thereby bypassing the meso level. Thus, the conceptual framework addresses the two main aims of the study: to compare development organisations and tour operators; and to determine the links between the micro, meso, and macro levels. The conceptual framework subsequently guides the study and aids in forming interview themes.

### **3.1 Introduction**

The aims and objectives of the research require the assessment of micro level outputs and the external influences. Consequently, an overall political economy approach has influenced the researcher, which focuses on the connections between politics, economics, knowledge and values (Hollander, 1998). This allows for deeper consideration of underlying factors that may influence the outputs and outcomes of the projects, aiding the analysis of any links between macro level influences, meso level operations and management, and micro level impacts. The nature of this study called for the use of a range of approaches and methods to understand the politico-economic environment in which tour operators and development organisations operate, and to gain an in-depth insight into how they contribute to the socio-economic development of communities in LEDCs. For this reason, critical ethnography was combined with case study research to satisfy the aims and objectives of the study.

The first section of this chapter outlines the adopted research approach, highlighting the philosophical approach and the overall critical theory/political economy approach which shaped and guided the research. The second section of the chapter describes the design of the research in relation to the following issues: combining deductive and inductive approaches; qualitative research; triangulation; critical ethnography; and case study research. This section seeks to justify the methodological pluralist approach of combining critical ethnography, and case study research and it stresses the relevance of each of these approaches to the study. The third section discusses the various research methods used to gather evidence, justifying why these were the most appropriate methods for the research design. Finally, the chapter explains how the data were analysed, and how these were translated into results. This section also evaluates the methodology by justifying the use of triangulation, and assessing the trustworthiness of the research.

### **3.2 Research approach**

In line with the study objectives, the overall theoretical approach of the research is influenced by political economy, in order to explore and add to Britton's theories of tourism and dependency within the context of three case studies. The purpose of identifying the research approach is "to frame the study within the philosophical and theoretical perspectives" (Creswell, 1998: 73). These perspectives can range from broad philosophical approaches, namely, ontology, epistemology, and methodology, to more specific theories which guide and shape the research. The research approach is often based upon the researcher's own views of the social world and how it is interpreted, and Gill and Johnson (2002) argue that the research approach must be

determined in order to explain the nature of human actions as viewed by the researcher, which “has direct methodological implications” (Gill & Johnson, 2002: 168). Firstly, this section details the philosophical approach of the research and, secondly, it discusses the adopted theoretical framework of political economy as the overall approach to research.

### **3.2.1 Philosophical approach**

In order to establish a basis of ‘thinking’ for the research study, the epistemological, ontological, and methodological standpoints which guide the research, are detailed here. These three components make up the research inquiry paradigm, and the researcher’s own views of reality were at the forefront when making the methodological choices. The relativist ontological standpoint reflects the researcher’s own beliefs on the nature of reality which presupposes that the social world must be understood from operating within it, rather than as a distant observer. In so doing, the researcher recognises the need “to explore how knowers’ values and politics impact upon the ways in which they undertake research and create knowledge” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004: 35). This approach coincides with the research aims and objectives which propose to analyse facts, and the interpretation of facts, by various respondents. This is also in line with the partial ethnographic approach of the study, as the researcher was attempted to understand situations from the perspectives of the respondents.

Although the constructivist approach is often the advocated epistemology for studies relating to human enquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), the approach which best coincides with the researcher’s own ontological approach and understanding of the nature of knowledge, is interpretivism. The study adopts an interpretivist epistemology, which is “distinguished by an interest in understanding the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Locke, 2001: 8). Research within the social sciences can often benefit from an interpretivist standpoint (Bryman, 2001) and this study emphasised the opinions of the respondents, the way in which they viewed the subject, and how they interpreted the situation. Document analysis and observation were also used to support or challenge some of the interpretations, yet the interpretivist approach helped to facilitate a unique understanding of the situation. This epistemological approach also allowed the researcher to supplement data with their own interpretations, and personal views on the situation based on informed knowledge. Although it is possible to search for hard facts and truth to assess the reality of the situation, it is recognised that, on occasions, this may be unobtainable, hence the interpretivist approach of the study.

In an attempt to complement the adopted ontological and epistemological approaches, the methodology has been designed in accordance with methodological pluralism. It was important to adopt this approach which allowed for a variety of approaches in research design, methods, and analysis. This is due to the dual focus of the study which analyses different issues surrounding the micro, meso and macro level environments, whilst comparing three case studies. The dual focus requires evidence from a range of sources and standpoints, hence the pluralist approach. Trow (1957) justified the use of this approach, arguing that “different kinds of information about man and society are gathered most fully and economically in different ways, and the problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation” (Trow, 1957: 33). Likewise, Gill and Johnson (2002) claim that the preoccupation with deciding between a nomothetic or idiographic methodology is unnecessary, as it is possible to combine the two and draw both specific conclusions and wider generalisations. Throughout this chapter, the justification for methodological pluralism is continually noted, and was selected on the premise that it coincides with “a commitment to linking micro-analyses of individual or group action(s) with a macro-structural analysis of society” (Gill & Johnson, 2002: 171). This demonstrates a strong link with the overall aims and objectives of the study, which attempt to link micro level outputs and outcomes, with meso level operations and management, and macro level structural influences.

### **3.2.2 Theoretical approach**

This study has been influenced by political economy, which is an approach to research encompassed by critical theory. Hence, the theoretical approach has been partially based on critical theory, which “focuses on the inherent connection between politics, values and knowledge and, thereby, provokes a deeper consideration of the politics and values which underpin and legitimise the authority of scientific knowledge” (Johnson & Duberley, 2000: 115). Originally, critical theory was Marxist inspired thinking, and the concept developed over time, with the most influential theorist of post-war times being Habermas (1984; 1987) of the Frankfurt School, who presented a holistic view of sociological theory. The nature of critical theory has rendered it a popular approach amongst those seeking to discover the relationships between local issues and global structures, such as discrimination and social representation, and paying attention to these macro actors across a range of disciplines. Within tourism, these relationships are important due to the fact that it is a globalised industry whereby international actors play a significant role in the demand, supply and types of tourism which affect tourist-hosting communities. Critical theory examines the political and economic factors which influence local processes, and thus it was a suitable theoretical

approach for the research, based on the objective to identify links between the macro, meso and micro levels.

Adopting this approach allowed for analysis of the political and economic factors surrounding the topic of tourism development projects and poverty reduction. Clancy (1999) stresses the importance of the political and economic implications of becoming involved in the international tourism industry, stating that “they [LEDCs] are, in effect, embracing greater integration into the world economy” (Clancy, 1999: 2). Yet Clancy (1999), like Britton (1982), often focuses on the negative aspects, such as dependency and unequal power balances, which have tended to guide some tourism studies in the academic arena.

As a result, the study is also influenced by Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, to explore the duality of agency and structure within the three projects and compliment traditional political economy studies of tourism which tend to focus on structures more than actors. The aim of the study is to add to political economy debates by considering the relative power and role of actors surrounding the projects, and structuration theory is considered an appropriate approach to fulfil this aim (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007). The study considers Giddens’ three core components of structuration theory: knowledgeable and reflexive actors, institutionalised patterns of interaction, leading to the duality of structure and agency, which were discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2.3. Despite the potential of structuration theory to explain the relationships between agency and structure within the tourism industry, to date it has been underutilised in tourism studies (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007). Thus, there are no distinct methodologies for examining structuration theory in tourism. This study, therefore, uses the most appropriate methods for fulfilling the research aims and objectives, and presents the results with consideration given to the three components of structuration theory.

The combined theoretical approaches of critical theory/political economy and structuration theory aimed to compare the involvement of tour operators in tourism development projects with the involvement of development organisations, and the impacts of these projects on community development. The approach of the research provided an in-depth analysis of the tour operators' role, and the role of development organisations, in contributing to livelihoods. It also facilitated a pragmatic study that critically evaluated the notion of the 'bad' private sector and 'good' development organisation sector in a tourism and development context. In order to achieve this, a combination of critical ethnography, and case study research was selected, which will be discussed and justified in the next sections.

### **3.3 Research design**

The design of the research was based on the philosophical and theoretical approaches, and on what the researcher considered to be the most appropriate way of fulfilling the aims and objectives of the study (Bell, 2005). In order to achieve this, and coinciding with methodological pluralism, several strategies were employed. The research design is divided into the following sections: combining deductive and inductive approaches; qualitative research; triangulation; critical ethnography; and case study research.

#### **3.3.1 Combining deductive and inductive approaches**

The processes of inductive and deductive inquiry are very different, and substantially affect how the researcher engages with theory and research. Generally, the inductive approach relates to starting with a specific example and generating a theory, whereas the deductive approach moves from general theory to the specifics. Researchers generally assert which approach they will adopt before commencing their research, basing it on their general way of working and past research they may have carried out. However, this does not mean that the approach must be rigorously adhered to, and the researcher recognises that the mode of enquiry for this study has moved between these two approaches. Applying deductive thinking was a natural process for the researcher when commencing the study, which began with making tentative hypotheses based on theories and past research which could subsequently be tested. This process also involved developing a conceptual framework which guided the study. Yet whereas the deductive approach conformed to the researcher's own style of working and of developing theories, the inductive approach enabled the researcher to constantly update the evidence and arguments based on revisiting the literature at several stages, which was also demonstrated in the comparisons between the original conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) and the refined version (Figure 2.2). Gathering empirical data commenced with the micro level outputs of the projects, and themes drawn from this evidence were used to conduct later stages of the research, which demonstrates the applicability of the inductive approach. This combination of approaches allowed for the development of theories through a primarily exploratory and qualitative study, whilst maintaining the original approach of evaluating tentative hypotheses.

#### **3.3.2 Qualitative research**

This study is primarily designed around qualitative research, although triangulation is used in some aspects, particularly the ranking exercise method. Creswell (2003)

describes qualitative research as an exploratory approach which permits the researcher to generate theories through the data collected from an in-depth perspective. This study explored and critically evaluated the assumption that tour operators cannot have a similar impact on livelihoods as development organisations (Miller, 2001). Yet, at the same time the study aimed to generate theories with regard to the motivations, relationships, and practices of the aforementioned organisations/companies. Furthermore, assessing how people who are directly affected by the projects view the practices of development organisations and tour operators is an under-researched area. The study consequently requires in-depth research with a significant focus on people and their interpretations, which Bryman (2001) describes as one of the most important features of qualitative research, stating that “in contrast to the adoption of a natural scientific model in quantitative research, the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Bryman, 2001: 266). Thus, qualitative research supports the interpretivist standpoint employed for this study. Furthermore, many studies which have been carried out on tourism’s impacts on livelihoods have adopted a primarily quantitative approach (e.g. Ashley, 2000; Saville, 2001). Such studies often focus on ‘counting’ impacts without due attention given to the interpretations of the impacts by community residents. This study aims to bridge the gap between livelihood impacts and qualitative research by focusing on rich accounts of the impacts, rather than numerical data. This approach also coincides with the aim of the study to supplement, and in certain cases challenge, some of the theoretical positions adopted by Britton (1981; 1982), who primarily focused on quantitative data and its interpretation. Hence, the study adds an alternate dimension by applying qualitative methods to complement traditional political economy studies.

### **3.3.3 Triangulation**

Using triangulation in research studies is advocated by several theorists (Bryman, 1996; Robson, 2002; Denscombe, 2003), because it enables the researcher to analyse certain issues from a variety of angles (Robson, 2002). Although the primary approach of the study was qualitative, it combined qualitative and quantitative methods, facilitating method triangulation, which has aided in substantiating several of the arguments made throughout. As Bryman (1996) states, “quantitative and qualitative research may be perceived as different ways of examining the same research problem, [and subsequently validity] can be enhanced if they are shown to provide mutual confirmation” (Bryman, 1996: 131). By using quantitative methods it is possible to gain a large sample of answers to the same questions, in turn facilitating a firm basis for comparative analysis (Denscombe, 2003), which can be displayed in charts and graphs

to provide a visible overview of the situation. Although quantitative research contains several methods of inquiry, this present study focused on ranking exercises, which were used to compliment and substantiate the research findings. Thus, method triangulation was part of the research design, which also supported the pluralist approach to the study.

### **3.3.4 Critical ethnography**

This study adopted an approach discussed by Putnam *et al* (1993), whereby the critical theory approach uses elements of ethnography within the research design. This is “informed by critical theory’s concern to expose power asymmetries” (Johnson & Clark, 2006: xxxix), as opposed to just an ethnographic description. This methodology consequently utilises critical ethnography, which assesses relationships, practices, and in some cases power, and their impact within the project contexts. Ridley-Duff (2006) states that critical ethnography “has a commitment to expose power relations” (Ridley-Duff, 2006: 12), which also coincides with structuration theory. Combing critical theory with ethnography adds an alternate dimension to the study, which Farrands and Worth (2005) argue is substantially lacking in academic studies.

As this study uses elements of ethnography within the critical theory approach, it is necessary to explain the principles behind ethnographic research. First, it should be emphasised that the purpose of this study was not to provide an in-depth, longitudinal ethnographic analysis, which would have required full acceptance of the researcher into a community or setting. Rather, elements of ethnography were used to better understand the situation through examining the way the people involved interpret it, and to see things from a perspective other than the researcher’s own external views.

Hammersley (1990) states that “ethnography is directed towards producing what are referred to as theoretical, analytical, or thick descriptions (whether of societies, small communities, organisations, spatial locations, or social worlds)” (Hammersley, 1990: 598). The ethnography approach is applicable to a variety of settings, as in each case ethnography seeks to understand deeper, rooted meanings. As part of the research design, the aim to provide qualitative data from local perspectives justified applying a partially ethnographic approach.

It is important to realise that the aim of ethnographic study is not to interpret the way something is viewed from an outsider’s perspective, but how the people or culture themselves understand certain issues. Despite this, it is equally recognised that the researcher’s own views impact upon analysis of the data, due to the subjective nature of human beings. The researchers’ personal understanding of the social world, the

manner in which others' understandings are expressed or conveyed shape the interpretation of the data and becomes an element of the evidence. For example, "by using a journal to record descriptions and feelings, the researchers' reactions become part of the data used to develop theory" (Ridley-Duff, 2006: 2). In other words, it is an amalgamation of the researchers' reactions and analysis, and the evidence gathered from the empirical research, again relating back to the relativist and interpretivist approaches to research. Furthermore, "critical theorists have particularly considered the interests in knowledge – the reasons why knowledge is sought – as a crucial factor in all scientific endeavour" (Richards, 2000: 185). Such researchers, particularly those who adopt the theories of the Frankfurt School, believe they are not a separate entity from the research they are conducting, which again supports the recognition that a degree of subjectivity is justified, and the adoption of an interpretivist standpoint.

### **3.3.5 Case study approach**

Applying a case study approach allows the researcher to explore interactions between processes and actors in specific contexts. By analysing three case studies in the form of three different tourism projects, the study has presented three descriptive and exploratory cases in order to test and generate theories as per the aims and objectives of the study. Combining elements of critical ethnography within the case study approach, as well as combining various methods, the study presents the comparisons between the three cases in a logical manner, which allows the reader to clearly depict the differences and similarities between the cases. Such an approach was particularly relevant for this study in order to analyse specific contexts of externally led tourism projects in LEDCs, as contextual information was not the primary focus of Britton's work. In order to add to past studies on the political economy of tourism in LEDCs, it was therefore necessary to apply this approach, described by Creswell (1998) as "an exploration of...a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998: 61), which justifies its application.

Creswell (1998) recognises that there are several problems associated with case study research, the first being the process of selecting which case(s) to study for the context of the research. For this, the researcher must develop a rationale for the selection process in order to justify the chosen case(s). The following section details the criteria which were applied to the selection process.

### 3.3.5.1 Case study selection criteria

In order to provide a comparative analysis, and fulfil the study's aims and objectives, three differently funded projects were selected. It was considered feasible to research three case studies in the time-scale available, which also appreciated the depth of research required to comply with the aforementioned research methodology. A set of criteria to evaluate possible projects against was developed to guide the search. The criteria were developed based on the aims and objectives of the study, and on the conceptual framework which was drawn out of the literature review. Possible projects were evaluated against the following criteria:

- The project must have the objective of contributing to community development and livelihoods, as the aim of the study is to evaluate how funders of such projects are capable of achieving this.
- The project must be funded and initiated by a tour operator, development organisation, or by a joint partnership with a local development organisation or NGO. This is to fulfil the aim of the study to compare private sector tour operators with development organisations, and a project initiated/funded with a local organisation may highlight any differences such collaboration entails.
- The tour operator or development organisation must be foreign-owned or operate on an international level respectively. A tour operator project must have strong links with the international market and not solely a domestic market, or have its head office in another country, and a development organisation must have its head office in another country. This is to enable analysis of the macro level influences.
- The project must demonstrate considerable involvement by the tour operator or development organisation, in terms of project design, implementation, knowledge transfer, and funding, i.e. not just a case of philanthropy or providing funding for a local NGO. This is to allow for analysis of involvement, rather than solely the analysis of funding.
- Each project must be differently organised/funded/managed, to demonstrate how different organisations/companies have varying ideas about the most appropriate way to achieve their objectives.

Projects which met these criteria ensured that the aims and objectives of the study were fulfilled. The projects involved different types of activities and the scale of involvement of the organisations and companies varied, but this aided in highlighting the differences in approaches that the organisations and company adopted. The projects were not selected on their geographical location within Ecuador, but on their

suitability for the study's aims and objectives. The following section briefly details each of the selected projects and justifies the selection against the aforementioned criteria.

### **Project 1: The Tropic project**

The Tropic project was selected as it was funded and initiated by Tropic Ecological Adventures, a tour operator based in Ecuador but owned by a UK citizen. As well as making a profit for the business, one of the key objectives of the project was to contribute to community development through tourism. The project was selected due to the high level of involvement by the tour operator meaning the impacts of Tropic's involvement could be analysed. Due to the substantial linkages with the UK market, it satisfied the project criteria and enabled analysis of the macro level influences. The core element of the project was an eco-lodge in the Huaorani territory of the Amazon Rainforest. This was also supplemented by guided tours and cultural activities (refer to section 4.2.1 for further details of the project and company).

The Tropic project was brought to the researcher's attention after contacting a previously established contact at Journey Latin America (JLA). The contact (group manager for JLA) followed up by sending an e-mail to the general manager of Tropic, enquiring if he would be interested in assisting with the research. Although the Tropic project was suggested by a contact, previous documentation had already been published about the project by the Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) Partnership in 2001. Analysis of this report provided further details of the project which were then assessed against the selection criteria. This revealed that the project satisfied each of the criteria.

### **Project 2: The Care project**

The Care project was funded and initiated by an international development organisation, which is heavily involved in the project through the Ecuador country office. The project was initiated to contribute to livelihoods of marginalised communities in the northern region of Ecuador, thus meeting the criteria for project selection. The focus on capacity building and strengthening networks shows the different approach Care adopted, which emphasised the alternative method used by this development organisation in comparison with the tour operator (refer to section 4.2.2 for further details of the project and organisation).

The Care project was discovered after researching the organisations' website and finding details of the involvement in tourism projects. Contact was then established with Care UK, which provided details of the Care project in Ecuador and further contacts in Ecuador, including a consultant for Care Ecuador who was managing the

project. Care supplied a monitoring report and presentation slides detailing the aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes of the project at the time. Analysis of this documentation revealed that the project was suitable for the aims and objectives of the study and satisfied the stipulated criteria. It also resulted in a clear understanding of the project before undertaking the research.

### **Project 3: The Runatupari project**

The Runatupari project was selected as it was funded and initiated by Dutch-based donor, Agriterra. The objective of the project was to contribute to the livelihoods of farmers through tourism, and also to strengthen the local farmer's organisation, UNORCAC. The project was chosen due to the different approach used to contribute to livelihoods, as it now runs as a private enterprise with no donor involvement, thus meeting the project selection criteria. The core element of the project is home-stays and local excursions, which again is a different way to contribute to community development and livelihoods compared with the other two projects (refer to section 4.2.3 for further details of the project and organisation).

Unlike the first two projects, the Runatupari project was chosen whilst fieldwork was underway in Ecuador. It was selected as an alternative to a previously selected project, which transpired to be unsuitable upon commencing the fieldwork due to the very early stages of its implementation and lack of impacts on the community at that time. Therefore, contact with the Runatupari project operators was established in Ecuador through an existing contact at the Ecuadorian Sustainable Tourism Alliance (ESTA), who suggested that the Runatupari project would be a suitable project due to the different approach of home-stay development and entrepreneurial focus of the initial donor. ESTA supplied two reports detailing the project and the objectives, which were then analysed to reveal that the project fitted with the selection criteria.

### **3.4 Methods of data collection**

Bell (2005) stresses that there are no right or wrong methods for collecting data; the aim is to select methods which are most appropriate to the study. The methods were selected as the most appropriate tools for achieving the study aims and objectives. Bell (2005) also emphasises the importance of financial and time constraints, and highlights the importance of using data collection methods which are feasible and viable for the researcher. Thus, the methods selected were those which could be feasibly and viably applied within the timeframe and financial constraints of the researcher. Previous sections of the chapter have discussed the adoption of a methodological pluralist approach, which is also applicable to selecting methods of

data collection. The following sections explain and justify the selected research methods, including: ranking exercises, semi-structured interviews, informal interviews, observation techniques, and document analysis.

### **3.4.1 Ranking exercises**

Although ranking exercises were not the primary method of data collection, here they are detailed first as they were carried out prior to the semi-structured interviews with community residents, using the same sample of respondents. Responses in the ranking exercises were also used to lead questions during the follow-up interviews, hence it is important to detail these before the semi-structured interviews. Livelihoods analysis has been a key factor in influencing the data collection methods as the approach offers an alternative assessment tool for the impacts of development in that “it contrasts with conventional tourism perspectives which tend to focus exclusively on economic, commercial or environmental impacts” (Ashley, 2000: 7). Adopting a more participatory approach, it aims to assess how development fits with the livelihood priorities as viewed by those affected. This notion is also similar to participatory rural appraisal (PRA), which essentially makes up part of the sustainable livelihoods analysis. PRA focuses on learning with the community and using techniques which enhance the participants understanding, and the knowledge of the researcher. There are many advantages to using PRA techniques, and Chambers (1992) claims that one of the key advantages is that “participation generates diversity; villagers play a part in interpreting, applying, and sometimes inventing the methods themselves” (Chambers, 1992: 18). Thus, the researcher is not dictating the information or possible answers, thus the range of data gathered can be varied and accurately reflects the respondents views or interpretation. The application of PRA techniques in the form of ranking exercises in this study was both feasible and essential for gauging the impacts of the selected projects on surrounding communities. Yet as DfID (1999) state in respect of the livelihoods framework “like all frameworks, it is a simplification; the full diversity and richness of livelihoods can be understood only by qualitative and participatory analysis at local level” (DfID, 1999: 1), which again shows the importance of using a partially ethnographic approach to the study.

Ranking exercises are one of the most commonly used tools of PRA. In many cases, the researcher may initiate the process and then ‘step aside’ so as not to influence the subject (Chambers, 1992). By doing so, the researcher is acquiring information which has not been placed in the respondents mind beforehand. PRA, does not, however, object to the researcher probing for information. The use of a ranking exercise, prior to interviews, to gauge perceptions on basic needs and their relative importance,

irrespective of the projects, was considered the most appropriate tool that would avoid influence by the researcher.

### **Ranking exercise sample**

The sample of respondents selected for the ranking exercises and follow-up interviews with community residents was based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling, meaning the researcher selects respondents on the basis that they will be more valuable to the research topic than a cross-section selected at random (Denscombe, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) recognise that purposive sampling is the most common way to seek respondents in a qualitative study. Purposive sampling was appropriate for the research as it was necessary to question respondents who had knowledge of the particular project, otherwise they would have been unable to gauge how it had impacted on their livelihoods. It was also more feasible and viable than carrying out random sampling, which would have required a larger sample to be representative of the population. It is not claimed that the sample selected for the study was completely representative, but it aimed to provide rich, relevant data which could address the research topics. The views presented throughout the study, therefore, represent partial community views.

In order to assess the impacts of the projects, ninety-seven respondents from the communities took part in ranking exercises and interviews; thirty two respondents were from community residents in the Tropic project; thirty-four respondents were community residents in the Care project; and thirty-one respondents were from the Runatupari communities. Table 3.1 details the respondent's occupation and gender by project case study. The table also indicates the date the respondent sample was collected in each project area. The sample size was considered feasible for the time and financial constraints, and due to the length of time taken to complete the ranking exercises and interviews, which ranged between forty-five minutes to an hour. This number (thirty per community) was also advocated by DfID (1999). Other than possessing knowledge of the tourism project, there were no definitive criteria for selecting respondents, yet the aim was to acquire a broad range of opinions. In line with purposive sampling, efforts were made to question a variety of respondents. For example, after several respondents who worked in farming or agriculture had been questioned, the researcher attempted to avoid asking others who worked in this sector. Efforts were also made to select a cross-section of ages and gender. There was a relatively equal split of male and female participants, who worked in a variety of different jobs, although due to the nature of the three projects and the rural locations, the highest percentage worked in agriculture. This commonality between the three projects demonstrated the perceived

potential by each of the project operators of rural tourism in primarily agricultural regions. Ages of interviewees ranged from nineteen to sixty four, again, to gain a range of opinions from a variety of people.

**Table 3.1 Community resident respondent's occupation and gender by project area**

Community Resident Respondent's Occupation	Project Area (dates sample gathered)	Tropic (3/6/08-28/6/08)		Care (5/5/08-1/6/08)		Runatupari (7/7/08-25/7/08)	
	Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Artisan/Handicrafts		1	5	2	5	1	5
Construction worker		2	0	2	0	4	0
Cook		0	1	0	0	0	0
Driver (canoe)		1	0	0	0	0	0
Farmer/agricultural worker		5	4	7	4	7	7
Hospitality industry		1	2	0	1	1	1
Housewife		0	4	0	1	0	0
Informal worker		3	0	2	0	1	0
Student		0	0	1	1	0	1
Teacher		0	1	0	1	0	0
Tourist guide		2	0	2	1	2	0
Unemployed		0	0	3	1	0	1
<b>GENDER TOTALS</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>32</b>		<b>34</b>		<b>31</b>	

### Ranking exercise design and execution

Once the respondent had agreed to participate, the researcher explained how to fill out the ranking exercise. The ranking exercises were designed in tabular format (see Figure 3.1), and respondents were provided with a piece of A4 paper (to allow adequate space for responses) with the following headings: the first column was titled 'basic needs for you and your family'; the second column was titled 'level of importance (where 1=most important and 10=least important); and the third column asked the question 'how has the tourism project contributed to these basic needs?' This final column asked respondents to state if the tourism project had 'no or a minor impact'; 'a moderate impact'; or 'a major impact', for each of the basic needs they had written in

the first column. All of the headings were written in Spanish (see Appendix 3 for completed Spanish version) and the exercise was carried out in Spanish, as the majority of respondents did not speak English.

**Figure 3.1 Ranking exercise template**

Basic needs for you and your family	Level of importance (where 1 = most important and 10 = least important)	Contribution of tourism project to basic needs (1 = major impact, 2 = moderate impact, 3 = no or minor impact)
<i>Example answer: water</i>	<i>Example answer: 1</i>	<i>Example answer: 3</i>

During the course of the ninety-seven ranking exercises, the researcher remained mostly silent so as not to influence the answers. Respondents generally did not ask further questions as they understood how to complete the exercise, which took respondents approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete. The ranking exercises were designed this way as they were simple for the respondents to understand and complete. They also allowed the researcher to easily collate the information when analysing the data. The results provided respondents' views of their basic needs, and many respondents claimed that the exercise had made them think about how the tourism project had impacted upon their lives. The results of the exercises provided the basis for analysing the impacts of the projects, as it was possible to compare respondents' interpretations of impacts with how they had ranked certain basic needs. They were also referred to during the follow-up interviews, as the researcher was able to gauge, at a glance, how important the tourism project was to the respondent.

### 3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used throughout the research, and were the most commonly used tool for gathering evidence. Interviewing is a commonly used method of gathering qualitative data and is described as "one of the most...powerful ways we use to try and understand our fellow human beings" (Fontana & Frey, 1998: 47). The

researcher may take a subjective stance and use personal knowledge and views to elaborate points or discuss the controversial issues surrounding them. From a positivist perspective, the subjectivity may be criticised, but Elder (1978) noted that the interpretation and subjectivity of the approach actually forms part of the data. The use of a semi-structured interview enables all topics of interest to be addressed, however, also allows for elaboration and the prompting of further questions should they be necessary. Bryman and Bell (2003) assert that through using this format of interview, the interviewer has room to ask questions that may come to mind during the interview and is thereby not constrained to a rigid set of questions. This interview format was useful as several topics discussed revealed issues which required further questioning.

It can be argued that questionnaires would have allowed for a substantial number of responses as to how local people viewed the projects and the work of the involved companies/organisations placing considerable emphasis on their population validity. In this instance, the lack of depth of questionnaires has rendered them inappropriate for the aim of the research. In addition, prior experience of research conducted in a LEDC in rural settings found that communities were not practised in simply responding with 'yes/no' or 'tick box' answers. Whereas in western societies, populations are familiar with such a format due to marketing research, it has been observed that cases in LEDCs differ dramatically. Stories and accounts of events which are recalled during interviews actually facilitated much more valuable, in-depth information that could not be obtained from a questionnaire. Therefore, the desire to obtain such depth and understanding justifies the use of interviews rather than questionnaires. The following section detailing the sampling, design, and execution of the interviews has been divided into the three main 'groups' of respondents, as each group required different approaches and questions.

#### **3.4.2.1 Community residents**

##### **Interview sample**

As the interviews directly followed the ranking exercises, the interview sample is the same as was detailed in section 3.4.1.

##### **Interview design**

The purpose of interviewing community residents was to assess and compare the impacts of the projects on the communities and their livelihoods, in line with the third objective of the study. The interview themes were largely guided by the sustainable livelihoods framework which was developed by DfID. The framework "is a way of putting people at the centre of development, thereby increasing the effectiveness of

development assistance” (DfID, 1999: 1). This approach provided a way of thinking about the assets, both social and material, of people’s lives and assessing how these were impacted by tourism development projects. The livelihoods approach has been utilised in numerous previous studies and is a framework strongly favoured by organisations such as DfID and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and, in tourism studies, livelihood impact analysis has been beneficial when analysing development impacts (e.g. Ashley, 2000). Whilst it is appreciated as a very useful tool, only select elements of livelihoods analysis have been applied to this study, as it was considered important to use other methods of data collection as well, in order to satisfy the study aims and objectives. The core elements of livelihood impact analysis at the micro level involve assessing impacts on the following: social capital, human capital, financial capital, physical capital, and environmental capital (DfID, 1999). These elements were an inherent part of the conceptual framework and, hence, guided the first section of interview themes for community residents, as shown in Figure 3.2. Respondents were provided with examples of what each of the livelihood capital elements referred to. For example, when asked about the impacts of the particular project on human capital, respondents were prompted to consider how the project had affected their access to information and training, affects on healthcare, affects on education, etc. This was done in order to ensure that the respondent understood the terminology in the questions, and could answer the question accordingly.

The second section of the interview related to the meso level of the conceptual framework, and the fourth objective of the study, which is to ‘examine and compare the operational context and management of the three projects at destination level and consider how this impacts upon the livelihood outputs’. The purpose was to analyse the project operating context of the three projects and the barriers and challenges facing the project operators, as viewed by community residents. It was considered important to gain perspectives of community residents on these issues, as well as project operators, to provide a holistic view of the project operating context, and understand the challenges facing the projects as interpreted by community residents. The following themes were addressed: general views of the project; views of the project operator (organisation or company); expectations of the project; and opinions on the involvement of development organisations and tour operators. These themes aided in ascertaining problems with the projects, and comparing the respective project operators from the perspective of community residents: issues which could subsequently be put to the project operators.

**Figure 3.2 Interview template for community residents**

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is your occupation?</li><li>2. How do you feel the project has contributed to your basic needs as you've just detailed?<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Your environmental assets, i.e. land protection, clean environment?</li><li>b. Your financial assets, i.e. income from tourists, income from selling to home-stays?</li><li>c. Your social assets, i.e. sense of empowerment, building relationships?</li><li>d. Your physical assets, i.e. any tangible benefits?</li><li>e. Your human assets, i.e. training, education, health?</li></ol></li></ol>   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Can you tell me some of the positive/negative aspects you feel the project has delivered to the community as a whole?</li><li>4. How do you feel the operators of this project have succeeded/failed in assessing the needs of the local area and its residents?</li><li>5. Does the community have a representative (person or group) with which you can express your ideas and/or concerns regarding this tourism project?</li><li>6. What level of input do you have? Could you be more involved with the project if you wished?</li><li>7. Do you have any concerns regarding the project?</li><li>8. Do you feel there is a chance the local community could become dependent on the project and subsequently its operator(s)?</li><li>9. Does this project tie in with other initiatives in the area that contribute to local development and livelihoods?</li><li>10. What are your views on having external organisations/operators working with the community?</li></ol> |

**Interview execution**

Respondents were accessed via a tour guide or organiser of the project. These informants are often referred to as gatekeepers (Creswell, 1998); those with the power to grant or deny access to the setting and people involved. The researcher possesses a moderate level of Spanish language skills and was able to converse at a basic level. However, the use of an interpreter was required on many occasions to overcome the nuances of language. In each of the projects, a local guide was hired to aid with interpretation, and in other situations, the project operator was present to assist with any queries. Potential respondents were approached whilst walking through farmland, outside small shops, in markets, whilst walking through villages, and in communal areas, such as a river where women were washing clothes. The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and what the main objectives were. Potential respondents were, firstly, asked if they had knowledge of the tourism project,

and if they believed this knowledge was sufficient to be able to gauge the impacts of the project on livelihoods, as this was key for the third objective of the study. When the answer was 'yes' the researcher continued explaining the process. Respondents were informed what the ranking exercise and follow-up interview would entail, and that the whole process would last a total of between forty-five minutes and an hour. Of the ninety-seven respondents, seven declined due to a lack of time, and other respondents were sought instead. Respondents were informed that they would remain anonymous, to ensure that they were more comfortable divulging possibly sensitive information about the tourism project, project operator, or those who benefited from the project.

The interviews were recorded in a notebook, without the use of a recording device. The reason for this was the high number of community respondent interviews which were carried out, meaning that listening to and transcribing the interviews at a later date would not have been feasible in the time constraints, especially since the majority of interviews were carried out in Spanish and would have taken longer for the researcher to interpret. Using field notes enabled the researcher to record information accurately, and also allowed for note-taking on body language and eye contact, which sometimes showed intent about a particular statement. At points where the researcher wished to record a phrase word-for-word, as opposed to note format, the respondent was asked to wait until the phrase had been transcribed. This enabled the researcher to use exact quotes from community residents during the analysis of the research. After the interview, usually on the same day, the researcher referred to the interview notes and clarified any notes which were incomplete. This was done whilst the information was still fresh in the researcher's mind. Bell (2005) notes that, without the use of a recording device, this process is the most appropriate and accurate way to record interviews without omitting any important evidence.

#### **3.4.1.2 Project operators and funders**

##### **Key informants**

The sustainable livelihoods framework details issues which influence impacts on capital, with particular attention given to structures and processes. Structures refer to various actors and their level of involvement, and processes is concerned with the operational environment (DfID, 1999). Therefore, structures and processes are also key areas of the framework which are applicable to the study, as it aims to analyse the meso and macro level environments and the influence of various actors. Consequently, interviews with project operators and funders were essential to fulfil the study objectives. Interviews were carried out with project operators and funders, which are detailed in Table 3.2, all of whom were considered to be key informants.

Interviewing key informants differs from the survey sample used for community residents, as the purpose of the key informant interviews was not to gain a partially representative sample, but to acquire vital information about the projects which could only be obtained from these particular sources. This was to gain an insight into the project operations, management, and motivations for funding the particular project, and to probe each project operators'/fundere's view on the others in question. Four interviews were carried out with project operators: one from the Tropic project; one from the Care project; and two from the Runatupari project (one from Agriterra and one from UNORCAC who jointly operated the project). Project operators are defined as those who were based in Ecuador and implemented and operated the projects, in terms of planning, developing, liaising with the community and other stakeholders, marketing, etc. To gain further insight into the funding of the projects and macro level influences, a further three interviews were carried out with those who funded the three projects: one from each project. Project funders were those who approved the project for funding, usually from the 'head-office' based in another country, and provided the funding (see Table 3.2). These interviews were sufficient to provide full details of the projects and their respective funding, as the interviews were carried out with personnel who had the most knowledge of the projects. Selecting interviewees in this manner is referred to as 'purposive sampling' (Denscombe, 2003), whereby respondents are hand-picked. The interviewees were selected on the basis that they were critical for the research, and because "they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data" (Denscombe, 2003: 15).

**Table 3.2 Interview details of project operators and funders**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Interview Location/Method</b>
Tropic	Jascivan Carvalho	General Manager	Quito/Face-to-face
Care Ecuador	María Luisa Rendon	Tourism Consultant	Quito/ Face-to-face
Agriterra	Geert van Weert	Project Advisor	Otavalo/ Face-to-face
UNORCAC	Fausta Gualsaqui	Secretary	Santa Barbara/ Face-to-face
Tropic	Andy Drumm	President	Via Skype
Care UK	Gianluca Nardi	Private Sector Advisor for Latin America	Via Skype
Agriterra	Cees van Rij	Liaison Officer	Via Skype

## Interview design

All interviews were semi-structured to allow for further questioning if necessary, and to permit open-ended questions to access as much information as possible (Denscombe, 2003). The design of the interview for project operators followed the themes indicated in the conceptual framework, and the interview plan is presented in Appendix 4. These themes were drawn out of the literature, and were considered to be the most important aspects to aid in assessing the project operating contexts. In total, the interview plan contained twenty-one questions, although several of these had two or more parts to the question. Although an interview plan was drawn up before the interviews, this was meant to act as a guideline for the researcher, as opposed to a rigid set of questions, and other questions were also asked as topics arose throughout the interview. Details of the interview themes and the corresponding questions are detailed below:

- Questions one to five related to how the project started, the objectives of the project, and how the project operators viewed the project in terms of the contribution to livelihoods. This was to gain an overall view of the project from the project operator's perspective, and to clarify certain details.
- Questions six to eleven were based on the theme of networks and relationships, which was highlighted in the conceptual framework to be an integral aspect of analysing the project operational contexts.
- Questions twelve to fourteen related to the main operational and managerial barriers and challenges of the projects. During the analysis, the answers to these questions often explained why community residents had illustrated certain flaws of the projects.
- Questions fifteen to eighteen were based on the theme of motivations to support projects, how the project coincided with macro level ideology and mandates, and what the expectations of the project, and project operators, were. The answers to these questions were used to fulfil both objective four and five of the study, as the questions also addressed the macro level aspect of the conceptual framework.
- Questions nineteen to twenty-one related to the theme of project longevity and issues associated with withdrawing from the projects, as these were some of the key criticisms raised when reviewing previous case studies.

The design of the interview for project funders covered some of the same topics as above, in order to gain a different perspective. However, several other themes were also covered to give a broader perspective of the issues associated with funding tourism projects in LEDCs, in turn enabling the researcher to draw out certain

generalisations regarding the process. An example of an interview plan for project funders is presented in Appendix 5, which was specifically for Agriterro who funded the Runatupari project, and details twenty questions: the first thirteen questions were specific to the project and the company/organisation; and the remaining seven questions covered general issues of supporting community tourism projects in developing countries. Again, several other questions, which arose during the interview, were also asked, and the interview template was meant as a guideline rather than a structured interview plan. The following key themes were taken from the conceptual framework and applied to the interview plan:

- Questions one to eight covered issues of funding, mandates and ideologies, and withdrawal strategies. These themes were key in assessing how the project coincided (or did not) with the overall aims of the company/ organisation.
- Questions nine to eleven related to networks and relationships at the macro level. Again, this was a key theme in assessing how projects at the micro level are influenced by the macro level which was crucial in fulfilling the overall aims of the study.
- Questions twelve and thirteen were based on the theme of driving forces to contribute to livelihoods, which questioned project operators about motivations to fund and support the projects. This was to address objective five of the study and understand the various reasons for supporting tourism projects in LEDCs.
- Questions fourteen to twenty covered general issues, not specifically related to the projects, such as: the main challenges facing development organisations and tour operators in contributing to livelihoods; issues of collaboration between these two actor groups; and what could be done to improve projects such as the ones in question. The purpose of these final questions was to ascertain a broader overview of the macro level environment to allow for certain generalisations and contributing to conceptual conclusions regarding the involvement of development organisations and tour operators in tourism projects in LEDCs.

### **Interview execution**

Interviews with project operators were conducted in Ecuador while undertaking fieldwork on the projects. Interviews with project funders were conducted by telephone from the UK, as none of the project funders were based in Ecuador. The purpose of these interviews was mainly to analyse the project operating contexts, and the effects of the macro environment on the project operators/funders. Access to the interviewees was gained prior to commencing the fieldwork, as each project operator and funder had

agreed to participate and assist with the research, but the interviews with project funders were carried out after fieldwork had finished in Ecuador, enabling the researcher to cover issues which were raised while conducting fieldwork in Ecuador. Interviews with project operators were conducted face-to-face, which Creswell (2008) asserts is the most effective way of interviewing. Face-to-face interviews allow the researcher to take notes on body language and non-verbal communication, which may suggest a certain opinion. The interviewees were sent an e-mail with the interview plan attached, and dates and times were coordinated. This allowed the interviewee time to prepare themselves for the questions beforehand. These interviews took place in the office of the project operator in Ecuador.

Interviews with project funders took place from the UK using Skype, in order to reduce costs. Although face-to-face interviews would have been preferable, financial constraints prevented this. This is due to the fact that the project funder for the Runatupari project was based in Holland; the project funder for the Tropic project worked mainly from the US; and the project funder of the Care project was, at the time, out of the UK, where he usually would have been based at Care's head office. As well as recording the interview, it also enabled the researcher to take additional notes during the interview as the system is hands-free. This meant that it was possible to take notes about issues to refer back to later in the interview.

All of the interviews with project operators and funders were recorded using a digital recorder. This was to allow for transcriptions to be completed at a later date, and enabled the researcher to give their full attention to the interviewee without having to take many notes. As there were only seven of these interviews with project operators and funders, this method of recording data was considered feasible. The process of transcribing and analysing the interviews is detailed in section 3.5.

#### **3.4.1.3 Actors independent of the projects**

##### **Key informants**

Throughout the course of the research, the researcher became aware of other actors who had knowledge of the projects, and viewed their contribution as critical to the research. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with other organisations and companies which were familiar with one or more of the three projects under research. Interviews were also carried out with other organisations that had an interest in development projects relating to tourism. The aim of conducting interviews with actors who did not operate or fund the projects was to gain various insights into the practices of development organisations and tour operators, and how and why such projects are

supported. Carrying out these interviews supplemented the data and contributed to achieving objectives five, six and seven of the study, which were analysing the macro level influences on the projects, identifying any links between the macro, meso and micro level environments, and concluding which project was considered most successful overall and drawing conceptual conclusions from the research. Table 3.3 provides details of these interviews. These interviewees were also considered to be key informants. Snowball sampling was also used, whereby the researcher asked interviewees to suggest any other actors which may be able to contribute to the research. Denscombe (2003) recognises that snowball sampling is highly compatible with purposive sampling and that “the researcher can use the nominator as some kind of reference to enhance his or her *bona fides* and credibility” (Denscombe, 2003: 16). This is a very important part of conducting interviews, as access to participants can often be difficult to gain. This tactic, therefore, ensured that sufficient interviews were carried out with useful and credible participants. There were, however, several potential interviewees who did not respond to correspondence. These were primarily representatives of tour operators, and although a large number were contacted, twelve did not respond and therefore further interviews could not be carried out. Due to the nature of such research, this was anticipated, hence the reasons such a large number were contacted, and it is believed that the interviews conducted with tour operators were sufficient for the purpose of the study.

**Table 3.3 Interview details of actors independent of the projects**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Interview Location/Method</b>
Ecuadorian Sustainable Tourism Alliance (ESTA)	Hamilton McNutt	Specialist in Sustainable Tourism	Quito/ Face-to-face
Ecuador Ministry of Tourism	Rodrigo Salas	Project Coordinator	Quito/ Face-to-face
Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV)	Paola Galvez	Tourism Advisor	Guayaquil/ Face-to-face
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Thomas Rhodes	Director-Economic Development, Growth and Environment	Quito/ Face-to-face
USAID	Monica Suquilanda	Program Specialist	Quito/ Face-to-face
Rainforest Alliance	David Grey	Technical Manager	Quito/ Face-to-face
World Tourism Organisation Sustainable	Antia Portillo	Researcher	Quito/ Face-to-face

Tourism Eliminating Poverty (WTO STEP)			
WTO STEP	Tatiana Calderon	Programme Coordinator	Quito/ Face-to-face
Organisation of the Huaorani Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon (ONHAE)	Moi Enomenga	Member	Huaorani Territory/ Face-to-face
The Nature Conservancy	Juan Carlos Garcia	Tourism Manager	Quito/ Face-to-face
Ex-Tropic	Jorge Fabre	Guide	Quito/ Face-to-face
Green Consulting	Arnaldo Rodriguez	Founder and Manager	Quito/ Face-to-face
Steppes Travel	Alex Mudd	General Manager	Via Phone
Journey Latin America (JLA)	Isabelle Mazille	Product Manager	London/ Face-to-face
Senderos Marketing	Simon Heyes	UK Representative	Via Skype
International Centre for Responsible Tourism	Harold Goodwin	Director of Researcher	Via Phone
Travel Foundation	Rachel James	Programme Officer	Bristol/ Face-to-face
Discovery Initiatives/ Travel Operatives for Tigers	Julian Matthews	Founder	Via Phone
Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO)/ JLA	Sarah Beard	Committee Member/ Group Manager	London/ Face-to-face
Wilderness Explorers	Claire Antell	UK Representative	Via Skype
Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	Jon Mitchell	Programme Leader- Protected Livelihoods and Tourism	Via Phone

### Interview design

The design of the interviews for actors independent of the projects (see Appendix 6) were based on fulfilling objectives three, four and five of the study, meaning questions were themed on issues covering the micro, meso and macro level environments which impacted on the projects and the outputs. Questions varied depending on the interviewee and their knowledge of the particular projects. Although the interview plans differed, the following broad themes were addressed in the majority of these interviews:

- Motivations and driving forces of development organisations and tour operators to use tourism projects to contribute to livelihoods.

- Opinions of development organisations and tour operators and their abilities to contribute to poverty reduction.
- Issues with collaboration between these two actor groups.
- The approaches to tourism projects used by development organisations and tour operators to contribute to livelihoods
- The possibility of communities becoming overly-dependent on a foreign organisation or company
- Issues with foreign organisations and companies being involved with community projects

### **Interview execution**

Establishing contacts with potential interviewees was often facilitated with the aid of the project operators through snowball sampling, although other contacts were also sought independently. Contact was primarily established via e-mail, whereby the candidate was sent an introductory e-mail detailing the study, its objectives, and the reasons for requesting the interview. If the candidate responded and agreed to partake in the interview, an interview plan was e-mailed and a date and time arranged. Again, this allowed the interviewee to prepare any relevant material before the interview took place. Interviews with independent actors who were based in Ecuador took place face-to-face. This was the preferred method of interviewing for both the researcher and the participant. Interviews which took place from the UK, however, were often conducted using Skype or the telephone, mostly at the request of the interviewee to reduce time. This was also feasible for the researcher as it reduced travelling time and costs. Two interviews were conducted where the participants wished to remain anonymous, and these interviews were not listed in Table 3.3 to respect this request. Again, all of the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder to enable transcription at a later date.

#### **3.4.3 Informal interviews with tourists**

In addition to the ninety-seven semi-structured interviews which took place with community respondents, fourteen interviews were conducted with tourists, which were less-formal and adopted more of a conversational format. The majority of respondents were not selected based on pre-determined criteria, but they provided perspectives of tourists who were familiar with one or more of the projects. Several of the informal interviews took place with tourists whilst the researcher was embarking on tourist treks for the purpose of participant observation. Interview themes and topics, drawn from the conceptual framework, were nevertheless still prepared for informal interviews. Based on knowledge of previous research, it was understood that such conversations often divulge information that may not have been considered beforehand, but is

relevant regardless. These were often recorded with the use of field notes whereby the researcher constantly recorded what was seen, heard, and thoughts and reflections. Field notes such as these can be one of the most insightful data sources to be analysed and interpreted when writing up the thesis, as they are constantly used to record information (Denscombe, 2003). Field notes were referred to throughout the writing up process, and aided in substantiating other evidence.

#### **3.4.4 Participant and non-participant observation**

Participant and non-participant observation are intrinsic elements of ethnographic research which “enables researchers, as far as is possible, to share the same experiences as the subjects [and] to understand better why they act in the way they do” (Bell, 2005: 17). Creswell (1998) asserts that an ethnographic study is typified by participant observation, in which the researcher immerses themselves in the setting. In this case, some degree of participant observation was executed, although not to the full extent that a solely ethnographic study would constitute. The researcher took part in both tourist treks and capacity building workshops, to gain a different perspective and insider view of the issues surrounding the projects. The researcher was also able to attend meetings between communities/community representatives, and the project operators. This gave an invaluable insight into how the two parties interacted and revealed certain power balances between the two groups of actors. It also revealed the level of training provided to communities and the differences/similarities between how the project operators carried out such training. Participant observation was also used to ascertain some of the challenges faced by the project operators. For example, partaking on journeys to and within the tourism projects enabled the researcher to gauge ease of access and transport infrastructure.

Gill and Johnson (2002) describe non-participant observation as a role whereby “the ethnographer only observes events and processes and thereby avoids becoming involved in interactions with subjects” (Gill & Johnson, 2002: 144). Non-participant observation can often prevent the researcher from truly understanding the perspectives of the group as they are purely observing from a distance and analysing from the perspective of their own culture. Yet, on occasions, it appeared more fruitful to remain segregated from the group, thus not effecting the natural situation. Again, as the study only used certain elements of ethnography, the level of participant observation was less than it would have been for a fully ethnographic study. Furthermore, the short time frame and the lack of broad acceptance into an alien community forced non-participant observation. This was carried out in several ways, for example, observing interactions

between tourists and hosts, and observing some of the physical capital outputs of the projects, such as a laundry facility funded by Tropic.

Combining overt and covert observation is also recognised as being a very fruitful method of data collection (Bryman, 2001). In some instances it was necessary to remain covert in order to avoid effecting the situation or the willingness of people to divulge information, for example, whilst talking with a group of tourists. Providing the ethics of the situation was assessed and justified, covert observation was occasionally employed in order to provide the most accurate results, although the majority of observations were carried out overtly.

#### **3.4.5 Document data collection**

Throughout the research, it was necessary to carry out secondary research in the form of document analysis. Denscombe (2003) states that “documents can be used as a source of data in their own right” (Denscombe, 2003: 212), but he stresses that evidence should not be taken at face value, since it is the analysis of the documents which forms the actual data. Document analysis was firstly used to identify the three suitable tourism development projects. Several reports were referred to which contained information about possible projects. These reports were reviewed to ascertain whether or not the project would fit with criteria that would enable the aims and objectives of the study to be realised.

Secondly, document analysis was used throughout the remainder of the research to further investigate topics which were raised whilst carrying out primary research. This form of document analysis also assists in adding data to the empirical evidence which may not have otherwise been available through primary research methods. Reports and data on the project were supplied by the Runatupari office and a contact at Agriterra. This data aided in substantiating several of the claims made throughout the research. This was also the case for the Tropic and Care projects, whereby other documents became available via various sources throughout the course of the research, including: tour itineraries; tour descriptions; maps of tourist areas; tourist feedback forms; and reports on community-based tourism in Ecuador. Analysis of this secondary data, coupled with empirical evidence, facilitated sound arguments substantiated by varying sources of evidence.

## **3.5 Data analysis**

### **3.5.1 Systematic approach to analysis**

The evidence has been analysed systematically using several phases. Using a systematic approach meant that the researcher was less likely accidentally to omit any important data, and divided the analysis into sections rendering it far more manageable.

The approach to analysis must consider the interpretivist approach of the study, whereby 'the self' plays an important role in analysing and interpreting the data. Whereas a positivistic approach would not impose this, the interpretivist researcher believes that their own interpretation becomes part of the data itself (Denscombe, 2003). Although the degree of subjectivity which is inevitable has been recognised throughout this chapter, the researcher must also be careful not to allow this to result in prejudices. This supported the ontological approach of the research which adopted a relativist approach in order to appreciate the values of interpretation, yet maintain a relatively pragmatic approach to the analysis. The analysis started with organising the ranking exercises and interview field notes and quotes, collected whilst interviewing community residents. Interviews with project operators, project funders, and actors independent of the projects were recorded with a digital recorder, enabling the files to be easily transferred to a computer for transcription. These interviews were fully transcribed, but omitted any irrelevant information, such as interruptions. As the majority of respondents in Ecuador were not native English speakers, grammatical errors were prevalent in the transcriptions. These were left uncorrected in order to avoid making assumptions about what an interviewee was attempting to say.

### **3.5.2 Familiarisation, coding, and categorising the data**

The first stage of analysis was to read through all of the evidence in order to make the full content clear to the researcher. Due to the amount of evidence, it was crucial to remind the researcher of data which may have been collected several months before the analysis. By commencing with this familiarisation, the researcher gained an overall perception of themes, ideas and arguments which were referred to when analysing and presenting the data. Familiarisation was done by reading field notes, transcripts, and examining ranking exercises. Although research was not officially categorised at this stage, several key themes were noted.

In order to make the evidence more manageable, the interview transcriptions were, firstly, coded. This involved designing a colour coded scheme for key arguments,

which was then applied to the texts. By doing so, it was possible to see, at a glance, where particular information was. In many cases, themes overlapped in statements, and this was highlighted in the margin so as not to accidentally eliminate any evidence. Where this was true and the statement covered two or more themes, this section was printed a second time, and a further colour coding system used to analyse the data in further depth. It was subsequently more manageable to address each theme one by one by referring to the adhering colour within the text. This system was also applied to field notes and the same colour coding used to highlight the same themes within the notes. The result of this was a variety of sources being identified on the same issues, again, justifying the use of methodological pluralism.

### **3.5.3 Analysing and presenting the data**

To analyse and present the data, the researcher built upon notes made during the familiarisation stage by supplementing them with further thoughts which emerged from the coding and categorising. Notes were made on transcripts, next to field notes and in a separate notebook to collate the ideas. Recurring themes and conflicting arguments were prevalent at this stage, enabling comparisons with the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was then adapted to ensure that it covered all relevant areas and could act as a sufficient guideline for the remainder of the analysis and presentation of the findings.

Although the majority of research was primarily qualitative using a variety of techniques, in several instances quantitative figures were extracted from the data in order to provide a more holistic overview of an issue. Denscombe (2003) argues that “strictly speaking, the distinction between ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ relates to the treatment of data, rather than the research methods as such” (Denscombe, 2003: 231). He makes the case that the two methods of research are inseparable, and that it is often not possible in the real world of social research to segregate the two. These figures were often supported by qualitative data, but it is important to address the issue of extracting quantitative information for the purpose of substantiating an argument. Therefore, extracting percentage figures, creating charts, or citing the number of respondents who pertained to a particular standpoint, was commonplace throughout analysis of the data. Again, this relates back to the research approach which advocated methodological pluralism, and shows that through each stage of the research, from design to data collection to data analysis, the application of methodological pluralism can aid in presenting a far more robust discussion.

Analysis of the data was influenced and guided by the study objectives, the theoretical approach of the study, and the conceptual framework. This ensured that the study met

the objectives and maintained clear theoretical perspectives throughout. Interpreting the data against the study objectives is necessary to assess whether the objectives were realistic and accurate. Doing so resulted in slight alterations to the objectives as the results of the fieldwork unfolded and, in some instances, presented findings that were originally unexpected. This was also true when analysing the data against the theoretical approach and conceptual framework. Whereas the original perspective had been strongly based on political economy, analysis of the data revealed the power of agency within political economy. This resulted in a lesser focus on political economy, and strengthened the influence of structuration theory to aid analysis and draw conclusions from the data. Alterations were also made to the conceptual framework to coincide with changing theoretical perspectives, and to account for issues which became more important when carrying out the fieldwork than had originally been anticipated. For example, an original version of the conceptual framework, drawn up before commencing fieldwork, placed far more emphasis on government involvement and support for the projects. However, the three projects had very little involvement with the government, and the focus on government involvement and policy was reduced in the final conceptual framework to reflect this. Making such alterations throughout the analysis stage demonstrates the iterative process of analysing data and revisiting earlier assertions in order to improve the study.

After making initial reflections and extracting quantitative data from the research, it was then possible to refine the prevalent themes and relationships. This stage involved identifying “patterns and processes, commonalities and differences” (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 9), which extended beyond the core guideline of the conceptual framework to include sub-issues. Throughout analysis, the identification of the themes and relationships was constantly updated to take into account emerging themes which came from deeper analysis, and the ever-present intuition of the researcher (Miles & Huberman 1994). Due to the nature of the study and the comparative analyses being made between the three projects, this stage also aided in highlighting some of the key differences and similarities between the projects and the outputs and outcomes of these.

Presentation of the data is considered a form of analysis in itself. Whilst the researcher has made use of the coding and categorising and identification of themes and relationships, the constant intuition required for the study results in ever-emerging arguments. Furthermore, the interpretivist epistemology means that the researcher supplemented data with pre-existing knowledge, thoughts or reflections. The data was amalgamated from all sources and presented in a format which echoed the conceptual framework. By doing so, the study maintained a logical and coherent structure

throughout. Consistent references were also made to the literature review, showing concise linkages with theoretical arguments.

### **3.5.4 Evaluating the methodology**

#### **3.5.4.1 Trustworthiness in qualitative research**

Issues of reliability and validity have been much debated in the field of qualitative research. Whereas experimental research in the quantitative field can be tested numerous times and achieve identical results, the nature of qualitative research means that this is not always guaranteed. Several theorists have taken to dismissing the issue of validity and reliability in qualitative studies and to replacing it with a need for the assessment of 'quality' of qualitative research (Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001).

Seale (1999) argues that an attempt to assimilate reliability and validity in qualitative studies contradicts the qualitative research philosophy of creativity, flexibility and exploration. As a result, Seale (1999) promotes a different set of criteria for evaluating qualitative research, which was conceptualised by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Although these criteria are different they do, in some instances, parallel the traditions of reliability and validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed the importance of trustworthiness, which is comprised of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Applying these criteria to qualitative studies conforms to the interpretivist standpoint, as opposed to the use of reliability and validity criteria for positivist studies (Seale, 1999). These criteria are considered to be the most important to demonstrate the study's trustworthiness, as the research adopted a primarily qualitative approach. This section will now look at each of these criteria.

Firstly, assessing the trustworthiness of the study through credibility refers to evaluating the credibility of the sources and the information gathered. Silverman (2000) reveals that there are two main ways to achieve credibility: firstly, through respondent validation, whereby respondents are able to review the information they have provided, and /or review the findings of the research. The respondent can then confirm whether this corresponds with the truth. The problem with respondent validation is that respondents then have the opportunity to retract statements, which may have been crucial to the research findings. Due to this problem, respondent validation was not used in this present study but, rather, community residents were assured of anonymity so that they spoke openly about sensitive issues, without any potential repercussions and thus nullifying the need for validation. Respondents from organisations and companies were also given the option to remain anonymous, and two chose to do so to enable them to speak more freely. Respondents who were not

concerned with anonymity were believed to be credible enough sources, and provided their own interpretations of what they believed to be the truth. The second way to achieve credibility is through triangulation (Silverman, 2000), where information is checked and verified against other sources. This was achievable through asking a range of respondents the same questions. Varying methods were also used to substantiate arguments (refer to section 3.4).

Secondly, transferability in a quantitative research study relates to external validity which, according to Gill and Johnson (2002), is “the extent to which any research findings can be generalized or extrapolated beyond the immediate research sample or setting (Gill & Johnson, 2002: 162). This study, however, has studied three unique projects and contexts, and focused on depth rather than breadth of information (Bryman, 2001). Thus, the transferability of the study is based on ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973), which Lincoln & Guba (1985) claim enables others to judge whether or not the research methodology could be transferred to other settings. Although the research focused more on using stand-alone, idiographic cases to give an in-depth insight into the three projects, it is possible that results may be applicable to other cases.

Thirdly, dependability is ensured as documentation and field notes have been kept and are easily accessible to a potential auditor. Dependability relates to reliability, and essentially means that the researcher keeps documents and evidence of their research. This way, the documents can be audited by an external person if the trustworthiness is questionable. Full details of the how the research was conducted have also validated dependability.

Finally, confirmability has been assimilated as the researcher has supported conclusions in the research study with evidence. Although a certain degree of subjectivity was necessary, an auditor would be able to corroborate confirmability through the varying sources of evidence presented in the study. Overall, the study has demonstrated each of the criteria of trustworthiness, which was considered the most important evaluative framework for the study.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The methodology has sought to explain and justify the methodological choices which were applied to the research. The study was designed around the researchers own views of the nature of reality and knowledge, whilst appreciating the need for methodological pluralism. In such, the research approach was based around a relativist ontology which allowed for emphasis on interpretation by the subjects, and the

researchers own interpretation. This standpoint led to the adoption of an interpretivist epistemology which, again, places emphasis on interpretations whilst still recognising the differences between truth and interpretations of it.

The combined critical theory/political economy and structuration theory approaches employed methodological pluralism and complemented the design of the research, which detailed several different methodological choices to guide the research. Justifications were made for the adoption of critical theory, which is strongly linked to a political economy approach. However, in order to conform to the pluralist approach, and fulfil the aims and objectives of the research, the methodology also applied critical ethnography, although not in its normal longitudinal sense. The nature of presenting comparisons on three tourism projects also called for a case study approach in order to explore the study objectives within three specific contexts. The combination of these three techniques meant that each stage of the research (micro, meso and macro) was carried out using a variety of methods.

The methods, again, complemented methodological pluralism, as it was argued that using different methods facilitates a more robust study with varying viewpoints. The main method used was semi-structured interviews, although results from these should not overshadow data gathered from alternative methods. The chapter also justified the use of informal interviews, ranking exercises, participant and non-participant observation, and document analysis. Together, the methods used reflected a range of sources of evidence which substantiated many of the arguments made.

The chapter finally described the systematic stages in the analysis of the data, placing profound emphasis on the colour coding system used on interview transcriptions and field notes. This section also highlighted the importance of extracting quantitative data from qualitative research which, in many cases, has aided in strengthening arguments. Themes and relationships were identified from all sources, and presented in concise details and arguments which reflect facts and interpretations of both the subjects, and the researcher. Constant changes were made to the study objectives, conceptual framework, and theoretical perspectives in order to reflect the data, demonstrating the iterative process of the study.

## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter sets out the specific context of the research. Chapter 1 discussed the rationale for the study in the context of the lack of existing empirical evidence, particularly in the region of South America. This chapter explains the geographical context in detail and explains the environments in which the projects operate. The chapter begins by justifying the focus on South America, and it then provides a detailed overview of the Ecuadorian context. Chapters 1 and 3 provided overviews of the three case study projects, and the second part of the chapter describes these in further detail. Evidence for the chapter was gathered from document analysis, observations, and interviews.

## **4.2 Research area**

### **4.2.1 South American context**

There is a relative lack of literature and empirical studies within the English-speaking academic community conducted in South America on tourism and poverty reduction, compared with Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. While South America does not compare to Sub-Saharan African in terms of absolute poverty, it has been suggested that one in every twenty-five people on the continent is chronically poor (CPRC, 2005). The reasons for this are mainly attributed to inequality and distributive justice (Kay, 1999); two key areas relevant to pro-poor tourism policies.

The South American continent attracted 20.8 million tourists in 2008, which equates to 2.3% of the world total (UNWTO, 2009). Despite this, and the poverty levels in South America, academics continue to place a more pronounced focus on other regions. Although countries such as Argentina and Chile have witnessed economic growth in recent years, the gap between rich and poor in many South American nations is still a major cause for concern amongst academics in other disciplines (López-Acavedo & Tinajero, 2009; Widener, 2009; Janvry & Sadoulet, 2000; Kay, 1999).

### **4.2.2 Ecuadorian context**

Ecuador is situated in the northwest of South America, bordering Colombia to the north, and Peru to the south and east. The land is divided into three main geographical areas, as shown in Figure 4.1: the coastal region (costa); the Andean Mountains (sierra); and the Amazon Rainforest (oriente). Ecuador hosts Cotopaxi, the highest active volcano in the world, and the Galapagos Islands, a renowned World Heritage Site and tourist attraction. The mainland, however, has exceptional tourism offerings,

which are all too often overshadowed by the Galapagos Islands. The capital, Quito, is the main basis for tourism activity and the first port-of-call for the majority of tourists due to flight connections. The official language is Spanish, although it is the second language for many Amerindian native speakers, the majority of which speak Quechua.

**Figure 4.1 Geographical areas of Ecuador**



Source: [http://www.exploringecuador.com/maps/region\\_todas.htm](http://www.exploringecuador.com/maps/region_todas.htm) accessed 12/07/10

Ecuador has a population of around 14.5 million (World Fact Book, 2009), 66% of which inhabit urban areas. Reasons for the high urban growth rate, even by Latin American standards, are attributed to “unequal land distribution and small average farm size, combined with a highly imperfect capital market and limited off-farm employment opportunities” (Correia & van Bronkhorst, 2000: 44). The government and international development organisations working in the country recognise the need to maintain traditional rural industries and reduce the urban growth rate (López-Acavedo & Tinajero, 2009; Correia & van Bronkhorst, 2000). Rural to urban migration was also a

factor for each of the three project coordinators, who all believed that the development of rural tourism could vastly reduce the need for rural to urban migration.

Ecuador has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$54.6 billion and a GDP per capita of \$3,961 (US Department of State, 2009). The economy is significantly dependent on exporting petroleum, which was first discovered in the country in the 1960's. Around half of all export earnings are acquired from this industry, which has resulted in a plethora of disputes over land rights, particularly in the Amazon Rainforest (Widener, 2009). Oil companies wishing to harvest oil in certain regions are renowned for using bribery tactics with local governments and local people (Carvalho (Tropic); McNutt (ESTA); Garcia (Conservation International), 2008: personal communication). There are, however, certain communities which refuse to give up their rights to land, and constantly battle with local government and oil companies (Wesche & Drumm, 1999; Widener, 2009). The other main export earnings come from fish, timber, and textiles, again stressing the need to maintain rural industries. In 1999/2000 Ecuador suffered from a major economic recession; GDP fell by 6%, and the number of people living below the national poverty line of \$1.89 per day rose to 51%. Measures taken to combat the recession included the adoption of the Dollar as the official currency, which assisted in stabilisation by combating inflation rates, along with substantial increases in oil prices. By 2006, poverty levels had reduced to 38% and 2008 figures estimate the number living below the poverty line to be 35.1% (World Fact Book, 2009). Appendix 7 details incidences of poverty in Ecuador.

Although Ecuador has generally recovered from the economic recession which happened in 1999/2000, there are renewed concerns over the country's economic stability. Following a period of political instability between 1997 and 2006, where corruption was rife and protests frequent, President Rafael Correa took office in January 2007. Economic and political reforms were enacted from the outset, however, the US Department of State claim that "the overall direction of economic policy is unclear, creating uncertainty for the business community" (US Department of State, 2009). This is supported by Economy Watch (2010), which asserts that taxation increases and economic decisions, such as the termination of thirteen different bilateral investment agreements, are seriously deterring domestic and foreign investors. With this in mind, it is clear to see why the input of development organisations may be necessary to enhance and encourage development opportunities.

The country receives relatively high levels of foreign loans, and 2008 figures show external debt worth \$16.82 billion (World Fact Book, 2009), which can hinder the level of national investment and increase taxation. Several large-scale aid agencies and

development organisations also have offices based in Ecuador, including: the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV); the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), including Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (STEP) branch; Rainforest Alliance; and Care International (instigator of one of the three projects used for the purpose of this study). Each of these organisations has had involvement in some form of tourism initiative, either instigating projects or partly financing them. This shows the apparent propensity of tourism to be able to reduce poverty in the country, given that it is a focus area for such high profile organisations. The involvement of these organisations clearly demonstrates the need for further rural tourism development, again, justifying the rationale for adopting Ecuador as the research area.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) figures for 2009 indicate that tourism in Ecuador accounts for around 7.7% of GDP, and employs 378,000 people (WTTC, 2009). Between 2007 and 2008, international tourist arrivals grew by 7.2% to just over 1 million (UNWTO, 2009), and the WTTC forecast that the contribution of tourism to GDP will increase to 8% by 2020 (WTTC, 2009). Despite clear areas for growth on the mainland, the Galapagos Islands remain priority for the Ministry for Tourism. As a result, tourism infrastructure on the mainland is a hindrance to further development. The disused rail networks and high price of internal flights renders travel throughout the country difficult, lengthy and expensive. Bus companies, however, do run frequent services to popular destinations. The potential for rural tourism development is evident across the country, yet without adequate investment by the public sector, access could hamper this potential success. Other concerns for the tourism industry include the protection of natural resources. The oil industry has already decimated large sections of the rainforest, and illegal logging threatens to have similar irreversible effects. Furthermore, the narcotics trade infiltrating from Colombia and Peru, coupled with guerrilla groups, has led the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to advise against all travel to certain areas in the northern region of Ecuador.

The case for rural tourism development in Ecuador is clearly justified, which is recognised by the three project operators/funders who all share a desire to combat rural poverty and the associated problems. The World Bank (2000) made specific recommendations for Ecuador in order to address inequality and distributive justice, suggesting that “rural development programs should examine ways to promote the rural non-farm sector given the evidence suggesting the importance of this sector in reducing rural poverty, creating employment and decreasing migration to urban zones” (Correia & van Bronkhorst (World Bank), 2000: 60). Although tourism is not exclusively mentioned, the notion that non-agricultural industries can harness significant benefits

fits with certain aspects of pro-poor tourism, such as the promotion of traditional rural industries, working with marginalised groups, often in rural locations, and creating women's employment.

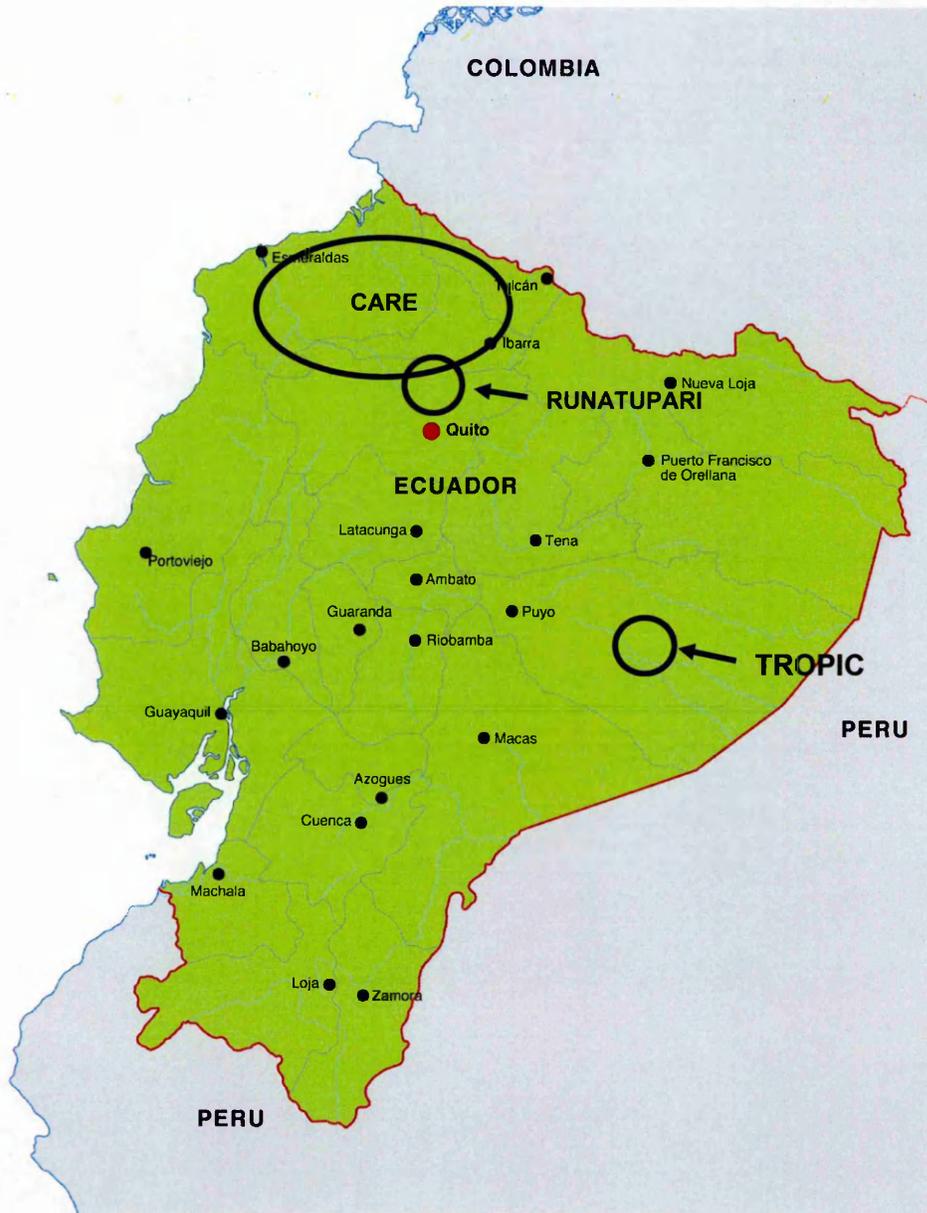
### 4.3 Project details

Table 4.1 summarises the details of the three projects, while Figure 4.2 shows their location. The Care project covers the largest geographical area in the north of the country, which partially overlaps the Runatupari project area, just north of the capital, Quito. The Tropic project is situated in the Amazon rainforest, and it is clear from Figure 4.2 that this is the furthest project to access from the main tourist city of Quito. Each project was described by the project operator as a 'community tourism project' as they all aimed to involve communities in planning and decision-making, which literature suggests is integral to the success of small-scale tourism development projects in LEDCs (Smith, 2003; Okazaki, 2008; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Tosun, 2000, 2002 & 2006). Across the three projects, pro-poor objectives were evident, linking to some literature which highlights the importance of pro-poor values in tourism projects, and claims that pro-poor tourism is increasingly recognised as a poverty reduction strategy (Ashley, 2000; Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Harrison, 2008).

**Table 4.1 Summary of project details**

<i>Name of project</i>	<b>Huaorani Eco-lodge</b>	<b>From the Snow to the Mangroves</b>	<b>Runa Tupari</b>
<b>Project initiator and operator</b>	Tropic Ecological Adventures	CARE Ecuador	Agriterra/UNORCAC
<b>Type of organisation operating project</b>	Private Sector Tour Operator	Development Organisation	Development Organisation/Local NGO
<b>Sources of funding</b>	Tropic Ecological Adventures, USAID, GTZ	CARE UK, ILO, DfID	Agriterra, UNORCAC, Ministries for Tourism and Housing
<b>Classification of project</b>	Private business	Community project	Donor/NGO/community project
<b>Main focus of project</b>	Eco-lodge, excursions, and cultural activities	Development of tourist trail, networking, and capacity building	Home-stay development, excursions, and cultural activities
<b>Average number of tourists per year (estimates)</b>	200	400	700
<b>Dates of project operations</b>	1994 – present (Lodge opened in 2007)	2007 – present (CARE involved until 2010)	2001 – present (Agriterra involved until 2005)
<b>Main beneficiaries within the communities</b>	Guides, lodge staff, artisan sellers	Home-stay owners, private lodge owners, artisan sellers	Home-stay owners, food suppliers, artisan sellers

**Figure 4.2 Location of the three projects**



Source: Adapted from [http://www.my-quito.com/images/ecuador\\_map.jpg](http://www.my-quito.com/images/ecuador_map.jpg) accessed on 12/07/10

The left column of Table 4.1 categorises the main details of the projects, which are then divided into three columns representing the three projects. Firstly, 'project initiator and operator' refers to the main organisation/company which started the project, and was involved in the planning, development and operation of the project. These 'operators' were key to the project and are discussed at length throughout the study; the aim being to compare the three and the impact they had. Secondly, the table indicates the 'type of organisation operating the project', showing that each project was operated by a very different organisation/company. The third category shows the 'source of funding' of the projects, again showing the differences between the three.

Fourthly, the table shows the 'classification of projects'. The Tropic project was classified as a private business, despite the community involvement and benefits, as Tropic own and operate the eco-lodge; the Care project was classified as a community project as Care did not own any tangible assets, and the project was based on the development of a trail of different projects; and the Runatupari project was classified as a collaborative venture between a development organisation, and NGO, and the community. The fifth row indicates the 'main focus of the projects', showing the differences between the tourist products on offer, and the sixth row states the average number of tourists per year for each, whereby Runatupari hosts the most tourists and Tropic hosts the least. Seventh, the table highlights the 'dates of project operation'. Despite the differing timescales of involvement by the project operators, the impacts of the project were still comparable due to the scale and intensity of involvement by the project operators. The final row summarises the 'main beneficiaries within the communities', which appear similar across all three. These will be analysed in more depth in chapter 5.

The following details of each project cover three main areas. Firstly, the project objectives are explained; secondly, the tourist product is discussed; and, thirdly, project funding is detailed.

#### **4.3.1 Tropic Ecological Adventures**

##### **Project objectives**

Tropic Ecological Adventures was founded in 1994 by Andy Drumm who, at the time, was a naturalist guide and diving instructor in the Galapagos Islands and Amazon Rainforest. His vision was to create a company which could offer tourists an alternative eco-tourism experience, contribute to conservation and the livelihoods of people they visit, and strengthen the community's case for refusing entry to oil companies. The vision claims to "integrate tourism with ecological, economic, socio-cultural and political objectives; thus tourism is one element in a holistic development concept" (Tropic, 2006: 33). The ideology of the company was based on the belief that too many destinations were becoming over-developed with little cultural or environmental sensitivity, and that indigenous communities were being exploited. Tropic's work with the Huaorani community commenced in 1994, originally as part of environmental protection through Drumm (Tropic). Since the discovery of vast oil reserves in the Ecuadorian Amazon in the 1960s, the Huaorani have been subject to exposure to foreign oil companies wishing to exploit them for the purpose of access to the land. Deforestation, increased pollution, labour migration, and increased health issues were

just some of the problems which they faced. They are also a very famous tribe and have been approached by tour operators in the past. However, Tropic, and also as conversations with the community revealed, claimed that these operators had little interest in benefiting the livelihoods of the community and offered them no participation in the planning and organising of tourism ventures. As one woman stated, “they came, they saw, they left...and what did we gain from it?” which is often the case with tribal regions hosting tourists and a prime example of Urry’s (1990) concept of ‘the tourist gaze’.

Tropic recognised that tourism which focused on communities in Ecuador was untapped potential, as Ecuador is renowned for wildlife tourism in the Galapagos Islands, which accounts for around 55% of tourism receipts (Epler, 2007). The aim was to diversify the industry away from wildlife tourism, and offer tourists a unique experience which benefited all parties in terms of knowledge and cultural exchange. Jascivan Carvalho, general manager for Tropic, similarly claimed that indigenous communities did not have enough opportunities to interact with other cultures and therefore were being segregated from what is an ever-globalising world. Although he cited that there is always a risk of commodification, he claimed that exposure to tourists and different ways of life could only enhance one’s own existence, and bring with it ideas and concepts to improve livelihoods throughout impoverished communities (Carvalho 2008: personal communication). Tropic’s pro-poor orientated objectives render them a suitable company to investigate for the purpose of this study. The key objectives include:

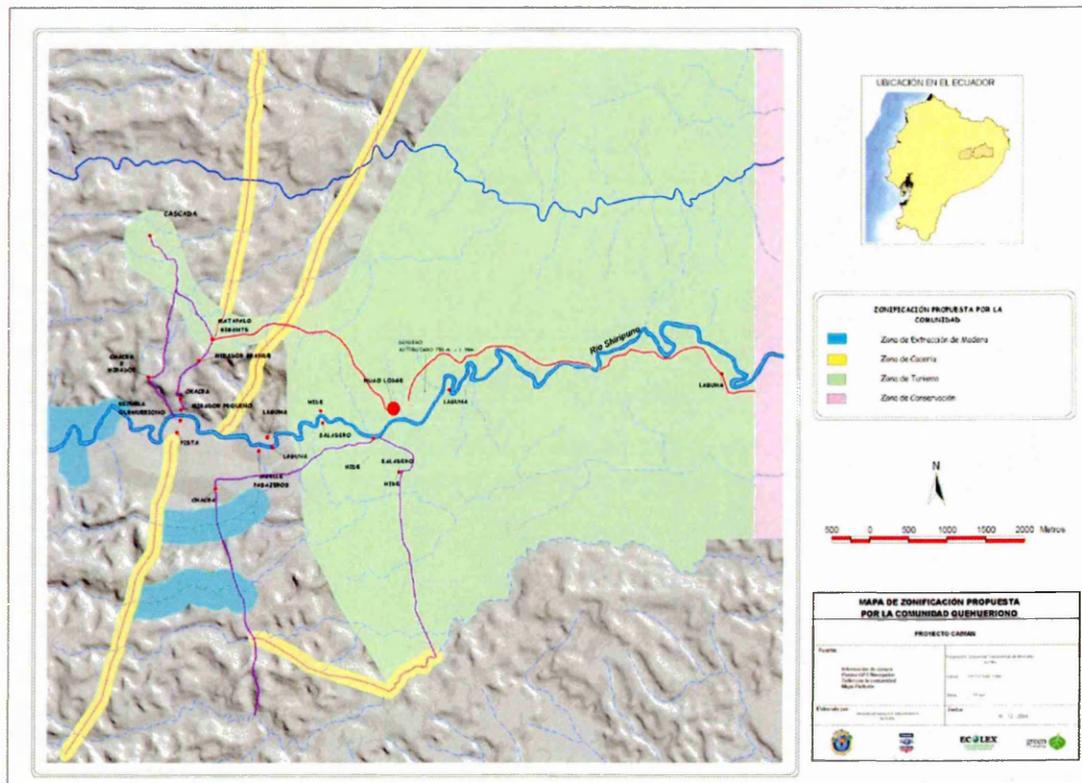
*“co-developing community based ecotourism operations with indigenous communities; promoting and marketing independent community-based ecotourism operations; creating business alliances with other responsible private companies in areas where Tropic and communities have no product; playing an active role in industry associations to promote policy change; providing financial support for Acción Amazonía” (Braman, 2001: 3).*

### **Tourist product**

Tropic developed packages which involved a visit to an indigenous community, whereby the community actually received livelihood benefits. Part of these benefits also included being involved in the planning, operations, and management of the tourism projects, as barriers to participation are viewed as a significant hindrance in community tourism development projects (Ashley, 2000). Tropic was able to provide the much-needed marketing for these communities and also offer technical assistance,

as few had the knowledge or background required to organise and operate a successful tourism project. Figure 4.3 shows the geographical coverage of the project. The area where tourists are guided through the Amazon is relatively large, however, all walks can be completed in a day, and tourists return to the Huaorani community each evening. Unlike the other two projects which spanned several communities, Tropic focused on one community, suggesting that operating the project and managing the needs and expectations of the community, could be more manageable.

**Figure 4.3 Geographical coverage of the Tropic project**



Source: Courtesy of Tropic Ecological Adventures (Copyrighted ©)

Tropic held several meetings and carried out research within the Huaorani community to identify what the problems and needs of the community were. A well-renowned independent researcher, Arnaldo Rodriguez of Green Consulting, was employed to facilitate the research and make recommendations based on the results. The community have since been involved in, and consented to, all tourism activities which have consistently been developed with this consultancy research in mind. Despite enjoying their relative isolation, they are keen to welcome outsiders and teach them about their traditional ways of living. Tropic's original research with the community to assess the feasibility of the project revealed that, while outsider views may anticipate that the men of the community would be the most involved, it was actually the women

who had far greater input into the proposed plans. This fits with the culture of the Huaorani, whereby the women actively participate in day-to-day decision making. Despite this, there is still a distinct hierarchy within the community, led by Moi Enomenga, who became a community leader based on his actions against the oil companies. The natural progression witnessed the elevation of a strong-minded proactive male to position of community leader, and subsequently, his family's position has been equally elevated. While Moi and his family are the primary gatekeepers for Tropic, it was clear from observation that several enthusiastic members of the community were equally respected by Tropic, and the company's efforts to be all-inclusive of community members were palpable. In 2007 Tropic built an eco-lodge (see Appendix 8) in the community in order to increase length of stay and cater to a wider market of tourists. It is anticipated that ownership and full management of the lodge will eventually be passed to the tribe, but at the time of research it is an asset of Tropic.

### **Project operations**

The Tropic project was primarily funded by Tropic themselves; however, they also received small grants from the United States Department for International Development (USAID) and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). These funds were primarily used to develop interpretative material for tourists, such as signage in the rainforest, and for training and capacity-building workshops, as opposed to funding construction of the lodge. At the time of the research, the lodge was still technically an asset of Tropic, and therefore unlikely to be funded by development organisations.

Tropics operations were targeted towards high-end travellers; those willing to spend higher than the average price for the purpose of unique, culturally and environmentally sensitive holidays. For example, a three night stay in the eco-lodge cost around \$600 for a twin room plus approximately \$250 per person for transportation from the capital. They also had limitations on the number of tourists and focused on high spend-low volume tourism so as to keep any negative impacts to a minimum. Originally, the lodge only hosted around 8 tourists per month, however this number increased to around 16 per month (around 200 tourists per year). At the time of research, the lodge operated at a loss for the company and was only supplemented by the profits they made from tours to the Galapagos Islands. This demonstrated Tropics' commitment to maintain low impact tourism, despite the fact that it was not making a profit.

Although it is not a focus of this study, it is important to note that Tropic donate at least 10% of their total profits to Acción Amazonía every year, which demonstrated another element of their responsible tourism policy. Acción Amazonía is a fund which assists

other community based projects with similar values to those as Tropic, and was partly established as a separate non-profit organisation by Drumm (Tropic).

This rendered Tropic a suitable example to illustrate the research objectives alongside the other case studies. Tropic was a ground agent for several international tour operators (primarily UK based tour operators), due to their commitment to responsible tourism, including Journey Latin America (JLA) who praised their activities and marketed them in the UK. Linkages such as these are also important to consider, and research into these will, again, aid in fulfilling the study objectives.

#### **4.3.2 Care International**

##### **Project objectives**

The second case study is a tourism project developed and funded by Care International. Care International was founded in America in 1945 as a means to channel care packages and basic food supplies to those affected by World War 2. Since then, the organisation has drastically expanded and is now one of the top three aid agencies in the world (<http://www.careinternational.org.uk/133/about-us/> Accessed 01/02/09), supplying basic necessities to those living in poverty and facilitating environmental, social and economic programs in an attempt to stabilise lives in developing countries. Their mission statement is as follows:

*“CARE International's mission is to serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world. Drawing on our diversity, resources and experience across the world, we promote innovative solutions and are advocates for global responsibility. We bring about lasting change by strengthening people's ability to help themselves; providing economic opportunity; delivering relief in emergencies; influencing policy decisions at all levels; and addressing discrimination in all its forms. Guided by the hopes and views of local communities, we pursue our mission with both excellence and compassion because the people whom we serve deserve nothing less.”*  
(<http://www.careinternational.org.uk/133/about-us/> Accessed 01/02/09)

The Care<sup>3</sup> project in Ecuador commenced in February 2007 under the name “From the Snow to the Mangroves”. The aim of the project was to facilitate alliances between communities, private sector and local governments, to aid in the development of responsible tourism and contribute to poverty reduction in northern Ecuador. Figure

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<sup>3</sup> Care International is the overall organisation, while Care UK is a branch of head office, and Care Ecuador is a country office. Reference to the ‘Care project’ throughout is that which was initiated by Care Ecuador and funded by Care UK, under the mandate of Care International.

4.4 shows the large geographical area included in the project, which expands from the Colombian border, to the coast and south of the capital, Quito. This area is significantly bigger than the coverage of the other two projects, demonstrating the scale of impacts which Care aimed for.

**Figure 4.4 Geographical coverage of the Care project**



Source: Care Ecuador Responsible Tourism Presentation, December 2007

The main focus areas consisted of alternative tourism development, promotion of micro and small enterprises, protection and conservation of tourism resources, and the enhancement of a responsible tourism network. The fundamental goal was to contribute to local economic development through promoting the benefits of alliances and the positive impacts of partnerships. A promotional leaflet for the Care project is detailed in Appendix 9. Maria Luisa Rendon, the Care co-ordinator for the project in Ecuador, believed that there was an abundance of divisions and secluded groups in the northern region, and the project was targeted towards alleviating these and contributing to poverty reduction. Care was also aware that this region was one of the most impoverished in the country, with two of the poorest cantons situated here: Río Verde and Eloy Alfaro. The official objectives of the project are explained in Care's project report (Care, 2006: 2):

- “Generate sustainable tourism enterprises with an awareness of citizen rights and responsibilities, building capacities and add value to local resources as a key condition for the development of the region.
- Give an impulse to the diversity of tourism resources and add value to transform them into quality products and services with a clear market orientation.
- Build consensus among local stakeholders connected through shared objectives which will make it possible to take advantage of and preserve tourism resources as well as promote long-term economic development.
- Guarantee the sustainability and continuity of the project activities by identifying local leaders, strengthening institutions and promoting partnerships.”

### **Tourist product**

In order to achieve these objectives, Rendon (Care Ecuador) presented several activities which they were involved in. Firstly, influencing the value chain and encouraging the purchase of local food stuffs was key. Care were working on alliances between private businesses and communities, encouraging purchasing from local communities, as opposed to sourcing from outside the region. Likewise, they were also emphasising the need for the private businesses to employ staff from the local areas. Secondly, they were creating alliances between the businesses and communities in order to enhance the number of visits to local communities where tourists could participate in daily activities and purchase arts and crafts, in an attempt to diversify tourists’ cultural experiences and supplement income in the communities. Thirdly, Care was providing technical assistance to private businesses to promote and develop their corporate social responsibility policies, and convey the importance of this. Finally, they were working with local governments to promote socially responsible tourism development and assist them in their tourism promotional activities for the regions. Furthermore, Care was also hosting several capacity building workshops with remote communities to aid them in developing an improved product offering (these workshops will be covered further in the following results chapters). Some of these workshops had better attendance than others. It appeared that communities which boasted community leaders who were enthusiastic about the project would be far more likely to attend workshops and become actively involved in the project. This demonstrated the hierarchical nature of many of the communities, whereby they would participate if those above them in the 'standings' were also involving themselves. However, in one afro-Amerindian community, Marisalle, it was the women who took leadership of the tourism project, with little interest coming from the community leader,

or elders. Overall, however, the general nature of the communities involved in the Care project meant that Care had to spend considerable time building relationships with 'gatekeepers'. Although exact tourist numbers could not be discovered due to the large geographical scale of the project, estimates, based on responses from communities and businesses, and estimates from the project operators, indicate that the trail attracted an average of 400 tourists per year.

### **Project operations**

Initial funding for the initiative came from Care UK, which granted \$130,000, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which granted \$250,000, and Tourism for Tomorrow, which granted \$100,000. The project was initiated in a response to combat the negative effects of guerrilla groups and narcotics, such as vulnerability and exposure to narcotics trading, migration, health and environmental problems and a general sense of insecurity, which has been infiltrating this northern area of the country. These problems came to light whilst Care was involved in a prior project in this region, which focused on democracy and government transparency. However Care realised that, although this was important, it required further pragmatic solutions to actually make a difference to people's livelihoods. With the diverse range of product offerings available in the northern region, including indigenous communities of Ecuador and marginalised Afro-Ecuadorian communities, along with numerous natural attractions and Cotacachi volcano, developing a responsible tourism network and trails appeared to be the most suitable and viable option (Rendon 2008: personal communication).

However, in February 2008 funding for the project ran out, and the Care office in Ecuador failed to immediately secure the remainder of the funds. Care UK also made attempts to secure the funding but consistently presented the Ecuador office with a plethora of delays. At the time of fieldwork in Ecuador, the funds had still not been secured. However, since this time, Care UK had managed to acquire the funding necessary to continue the project from the Department for International Development (DfID), and project operations had recommenced.

The repercussions of the break in project operations will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters. Here, however, it is important to note the different approach which Care opted for in an attempt to contribute to livelihoods. An investigation of this project therefore, is highly suitable for the purpose of the study due to its inherent links to reducing poverty by creating a sustainable project that can benefit many parties. Care also had important links with, and support from, other international organisations,

and their operations at the micro level were very much effected by external linkages at the meso and macro levels.

### 4.3.3 Runatupari/Agriterra

#### Project objectives

The third case study is Runatupari: a rural community tourism programme, jointly established in 2001 by the Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Cotacachi<sup>4</sup> (UNORCAC) and Dutch development organisation, Agriterra. UNORCAC was originally formed in 1977 by a group of men from different agricultural communities in the Cotacachi region as a response to inequality and lack of rights. As UNORCAC progressed it developed into a much larger scale organisation with over fifteen thousand individual members (Gualsaqui, personal communication: 2008), and it is now officially an NGO with paid staff. Their objectives have also changed over the years, but it is stated that their purpose “is to improve living conditions of its members through development projects and programs such as agro-ecological production, reforestation, environmental conservancy, legal assessment, indigenous healthcare, intercultural bilingual education, cultural revival and rural tourism” (<http://runatupari.com/en/about/> Accessed 01/02/09). They also aimed to improve community participation, empowerment and decision-making in order to build open social organisation and offer people the chance to prepare for a sustainable future. These objectives strongly correlated with those of Agriterra, who aimed to assist “organisations that represent the interests of rural populations develop themselves into strong and representative member’s organisations with a primary focus on providing services to people in rural areas” (<http://www.agriterra.org/en/text/mission-statement> Accessed 02/02/09). Agriterra had a firm mandate of assisting farmers organisations, and had vast experience in working in rural areas.

The commencement of a tourism project was a viable option in which Agriterra could assist UNORCAC in achieving some of their objectives. As with the two aforementioned projects, the organisers believed that they would be able to offer a diverse and unique tourist experience whilst contributing to the livelihoods of the communities involved. They were very critical of other so-called community tourism operators, and claimed that they were only exploiting the local communities and not passing on any significant benefits, which were starting to induce resentment amongst the people (Geert van Weert (Agriterra) 2008: personal communication). The concept for a rural tourism project emanated from a consultant working for Agriterra, despite the

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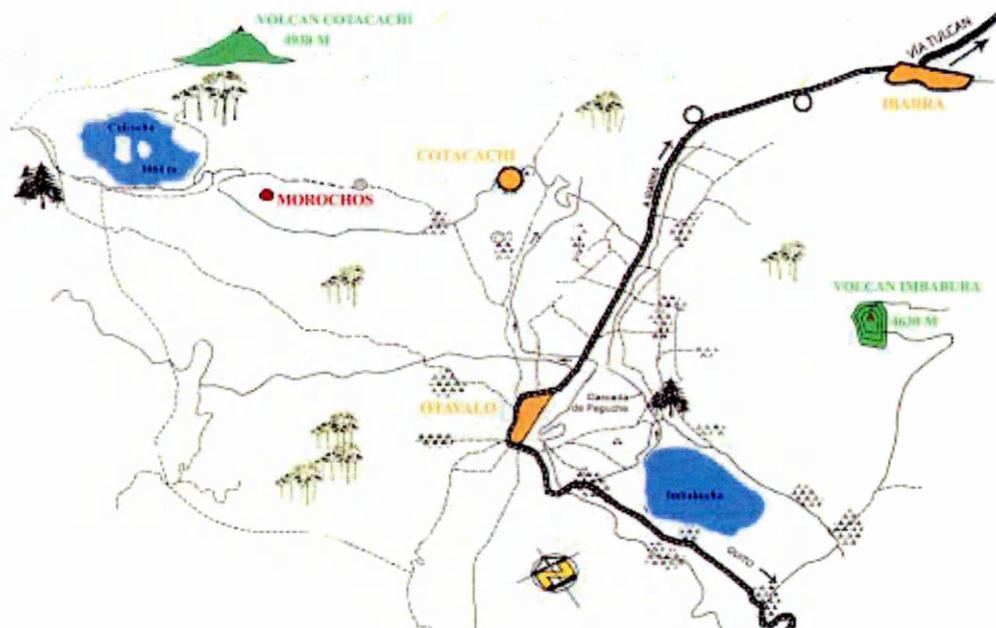
<sup>4</sup> English translation: Union of Rural Organisations of Cotacachi

fact that Agriterra had not been involved in a tourism project beforehand, and had little tourism expertise. The idea was to offer tourists an authentic experience whereby they would be able to participate in daily activities, exchange knowledge and understand and appreciate the struggles of rural communities. Appendix 10 shows a promotional leaflet for the Runatupari project.

### **Tourist product**

The name Runatupari means 'Meeting the Indians', and the communities involved were Quechan living in the Cotacachi region of the Andean Mountains, just north of Quito. Figure 4.5 shows the geographical coverage of the project which spans several different communities. However, unlike the Care project, the communities are all in relative close proximity and easy to access from Quito. Despite this, the communities involved in the Runatupari project appeared to maintain traditions far more than the communities of the other two projects, for instance, the commonplace traditional attire in comparison to the western influences witnessed elsewhere in Ecuador. The main focus of Runatupari was rural home-stays. Tourists staying in the home-stays shared meals and hospitality in the family home. The majority of the home-stays were operated by the women in the household, and most of the men had day-jobs. This appeared to contribute significantly to women's empowerment in the communities, as traditionally women only did agricultural work. As with the other two projects, however, the hierarchy of community leaders and community residents was evident. In the case of Runatupari, the primary community leader, Alfonso Morales, owned his own food distribution company and was considerably more financially stable than the majority of community residents. His involvement in the tourism project was key in terms of acting as a gatekeeper, yet the sense of resentment towards him from residents was audible, thus questioning whether or not his involvement may have actually hampered the involvement and inclusion of other residents (this will be discussed further in chapter 5). As well as the home-stay experience they also offered treks, community visits, walks in the cloud forest, mountain climbing, biking and horse riding, all for a supplementary fee. All bookings and payments were made through their office situated in Otavalo, which was a popular tourist town renowned for its market days. Since 2001, the average number of tourists staying in home-stays was approximately 700 annually; considerably more than the other two projects. This is assumed to be partly based on the projects close proximity to Quito.

**Figure 4.5 Geographical coverage of the Runatupari project**



*Source: Runatupari Tourist Information Leaflet (2008)*

### **Project operations**

Initial funding for the rural tourism project came from Agriterra, which provided \$100,000 in start-up funds. After feasibility studies, and research on suitable communities in which to initiate the home-stays, meetings were facilitated to identify which families would be interested in becoming home-stay hosts. At the outset, only four families expressed an interest, yet as others began to see the benefits of hosting tourists, more people from the communities became involved and, at the time of research, the project featured fifteen home-stays. Additional rooms were constructed in homes to make them large enough to host tourists, which were built with a \$500 grant per family from the Ministries of Tourism and Housing, a \$1,500 grant per family from Agriterra, and loans from the UNORCAC-founded bank, Cooperative Santa Anita, when required.

Agriterra withdrew from operations with a clear exit strategy after four years of involvement and financing. The organisation continued to provide sporadic technical assistance but no longer financed any operations. Runatupari also had technical assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development branch, but was now operating as a profit-making organisation which was capable of funding its own development. There appeared to be a lack of clarity with regard to whether the project was still a community tourism project or whether it was a

private tour operator. However, there was a community fund from which a percentage of profits were donated to assist small development projects in the communities.

Runatupari was classed by many people involved in tourism in Ecuador as an example of best practice. As a collaborative venture, which involved a local organisation, national Ministries, and a foreign development organisation, it was another suitable example to use for the purpose of the study.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter set out the context of the research in greater depth, providing an overview of the research area, and details of each of the projects. The details of the Ecuadorian context show that it is a suitable example and setting for the three case studies, in which to explore the aims and objectives of the study. Details of the three projects show that each was committed to contributing to poverty reduction in different ways. The Tropic project focused on a remote Amazon tribe and the company had constructed a lodge in order to supplement the product offering. The Care project approached its objectives in a different manner, with a focus on capacity building and developing a trail between several communities and small tourism businesses. Thirdly, the Runatupari project used the development of home-stays as a method for contributing to poverty reduction. All three present feasible rationales as to why these approaches were used. Further analysis throughout the study aims to demonstrate if these were the most feasible options, and assess how these projects have satisfied their aims and objectives. Analysing three projects, which all involve several stakeholders, will aid in assessing the theoretical basis of the research by exploring the input and power of agency and structure in the tourism development context.

## **Chapter 5 *Impacts of the Tourism Projects on Livelihoods***

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter compares the different outputs of the three projects. This meets the third objective of the study, which aims to assess and compare the livelihood outputs/outcomes of three differently funded and operated tourism projects. The empirical research carried out was based on part of DfID's (1999) sustainable livelihoods framework, which focuses on contributions to human, social, physical, financial and natural capital. These elements were included in the micro level of the conceptual framework, which was presented in Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2, and form the basis of this chapter.

In total, ninety-seven people from the communities took part in ranking exercises and follow-up interviews: thirty-two people from the Tropic project area, thirty-four from Care and thirty-one from Runatupari. In addition, participant and non-participant observation was carried out, and capacity building workshops were attended, providing different insights into the projects and the outputs. The chapter starts with the identification of basic needs, which were revealed by respondents during the ranking exercises. These needs show how important different aspects of livelihoods are for the communities surrounding the three different projects, and act as a basis from which to analyse their interpretation of the projects' outputs. Analysis of the project outputs are then divided into the above livelihood capital sections. Each of these sections also identifies which projects are having the most and least positive outputs from the views of the respondents. The chapter concludes with an overall comparison of the project outputs and it shows which projects are considered the most and least successful. The input and power of community residents is also discussed to explore the theoretical approach that both agency and structure can affect tourism outputs, rather than the pronounced focus on the power of structure, which is prevalent in traditional political economy studies in tourism (e.g. Britton, 1981; 1982; 1984; Clancy, 1999). It should be noted that the views expressed in this chapter are only representative of partial community views, based on the approach of purposive sampling of community residents.

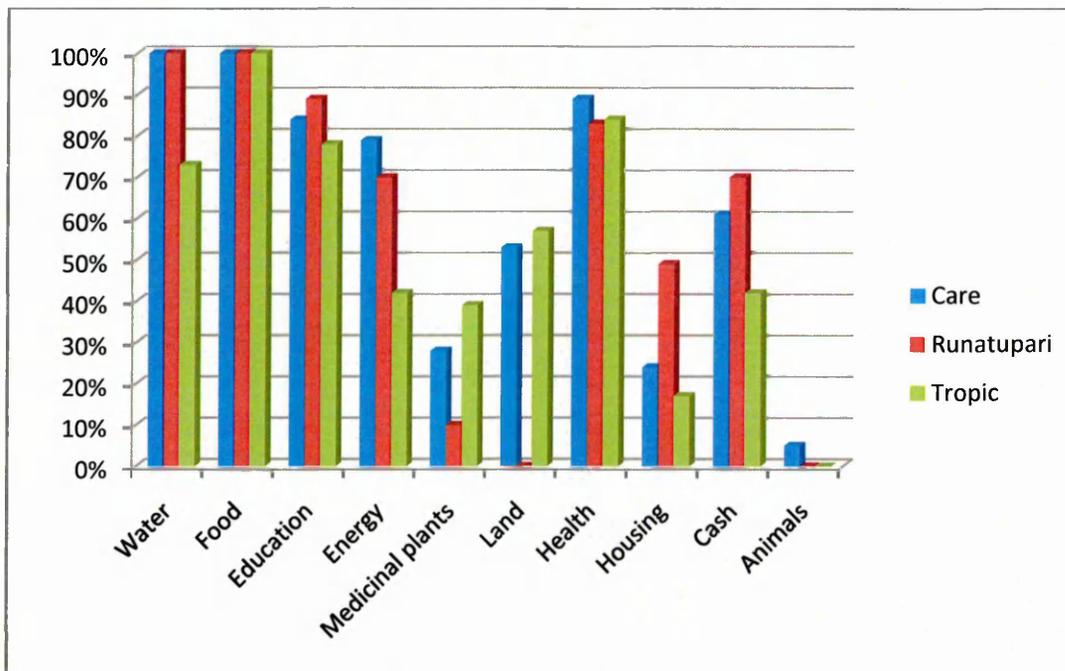
## **5.2 Respondents' identification of basic needs**

The identification of basic needs is an important basis from which to begin analysis of the outputs of the three projects. It is pivotal to evaluate these needs against the actual outputs of the projects, in order to assess the relative success of the operations from the perspectives of those affected. The livelihood outputs of the projects had a direct effect on how the communities viewed the involvement of an external organisation and the project success. The following analysis illustrates to what extent this has been

accomplished, based on what is considered most important by community residents. Ashley and Hussein (2000) advocated the identification of these needs by the respondents themselves in order to provide an accurate reflection of what the basic needs actually are. It is crucial, however, to appreciate that tourism projects, particularly those run by private operators, have much broader objectives than just contributing to basic needs. Furthermore, it must be stressed that the analysis of the following basic needs is to show community priorities and it does not necessarily reflect the priorities of the project operator.

As described in the methodology chapter, a ranking exercise was used to determine, firstly, what respondents believed were their basic needs. Respondents then ranked these needs in order of importance. Finally, they indicated next to each need whether tourism had a 'minor (if any)' contribution to make, a 'moderate' contribution, or a 'major' contribution. Following the completion of this ranking exercise, respondents were interviewed and asked to expand on their previous answers, provide examples and explain exactly in what ways the tourism project was assisting them or not. The ranking exercises, and a selection of the follow-up interview questions, have been used to understand people's basic needs in the three project areas, including any differences and similarities between these. Figure 5.1 summarises these basic needs, which were unprompted by the researcher. The bottom axis shows the main basic needs as identified by the respondents across all three projects. There are three columns for each basic need representing each of the projects. The left axis shows the percentage of respondents who listed the basic need during the ranking exercise.

**Figure 5.1 Respondents' identification of basic needs by project area**



The results of the ranking exercise showed that, generally, communities across the projects have similar basic needs with much of the emphasis placed on core needs such as food, water, health and education. This reflects literature on the topic which emphasises key basic needs which are a necessity to survive: basic needs “go far beyond income and include the need for basic health and education, [and] clean water” (Farrington *et al*, 1999: 2). In the majority of cases, respondents mentioned many of the same needs, and elements such as cash, housing, and medicinal plants were common responses. Another common trend was the lack of emphasis placed on animals or livestock, which demonstrates that these assets do not significantly impact upon their livelihoods, as much of the rural economy in the project areas is based on horticulture rather than livestock farming.

Despite the common trends mentioned, there were several differences between the three projects which exhibit the different outlooks of the communities. Although the general pattern showed that respondents had similar basic needs, the percentage of respondents who mentioned certain needs varied between projects. The ranking exercise showed notable differences in the Tropic project whereby participants held quite different opinions about many of the basic needs, compared with respondents from the other two projects. In both the Runatupari and Care projects, the top two basic needs were food and water with 100% of responses. However, Tropic respondents cited food and health as the priorities, with 100% and 84% of responses respectively. Due to the geographical location of the project, this community has very limited access to health care facilities, but conversely they had access to abundant water supplies in the Amazon Rainforest, which explains the reason for its lower inclusion rate at 73%. The inclusion of health as a basic need was similar across the projects and respondents explained different aspects of this need, such as the necessity for local, and well-equipped health dispensaries and hospitals, access to money for emergency treatment, and access to land for medicinal plants. This shows the overlap between many of the basic needs whereby one is required to satisfy another basic need. Many respondents, particularly in the Tropic and Care projects, mentioned health and medicinal plants as two completely separate basic needs since financial investment is not required for natural remedies. These respondents related medicinal plants more with environmental protection of the land to ensure the continuation of this resource. Land was stated by 52% of Care respondents and 57% of Tropic respondents as a basic need but not at all by Runatupari participants. This is partly associated with the low importance Runatupari respondents placed on access to medicinal plants, and evidence showed that the Runatupari project area was closer to road-networks and main towns where healthcare was more readily available, and the

use of medicinal plants was less than in the other two project areas. The other two project areas, however, were considerably more remote, particularly Tropic, and the use of medicinal plants was much more common. In this instance, respondents in the Tropic and Care projects were not referring to personally owned land, but access to communal land whereby they can access these medicinal plants. The dismissal of land as a basic need by Runatupari respondents showed that they placed more profound emphasis on personal land, which they considered to be a part of 'housing' as a basic need.

Another notable difference between the project areas was the number of respondents who viewed housing/shelter as a basic need. Nearly half of respondents in the Runatupari project cited this as a need, but only 24% of Care and 17% of Tropic participants included it. More so than in any other area, there was a sense that Runatupari respondents were very house-proud and enjoyed inviting tourists into their homes. Discussions with these people also highlighted that the opportunity to improve their homes through funding from the Runatupari project was the biggest motivation for hosting tourists. Coincidentally, many of those who spoke of cash for investment and maintenance as a basic need were those who wanted to develop their homes to host tourists, which could in turn supplement their income to satisfy other basic needs, like money for education. This suggested that this community wanted to supplement the tangible aspects of their livelihoods more than residents in the other two project areas.

The final discernable difference was the variation of inclusion of 'cash' in the answers provided. 42% of Tropic respondents mentioned this as a basic need, explaining that it aids with paying for education, emergency medical care, and additional clothing. The 58% of respondents who did not mention 'cash' explained that it was not vitally important because of their relatively self-sufficient lifestyles due to their peripheral location, abundance of available natural resources, and lack of exposure to more developed ways of living, which may improve livelihoods but which they did not consider a necessity. Again, access to these aspects was limited due to geographical location but shows that, even if they were readily available, they still may not be an important basic need for this community. A larger percentage of Runatupari and Care participants included cash, 70% and 61% respectively, a considerable increase on Tropic, although similar uses for the money were cited.

The basic needs examined in this section provide a basis against which to measure the success of the project outputs. Although the core needs were generally similar, differences between certain other needs, such as housing and cash, can help to explain different perceptions of the projects later in the chapter. Interviews following

the ranking exercises also revealed that residents placed great importance on issues relating to human and social capital. These discussions have significantly aided in providing evidence for the next section on the project outputs.

### **5.3 Project outputs**

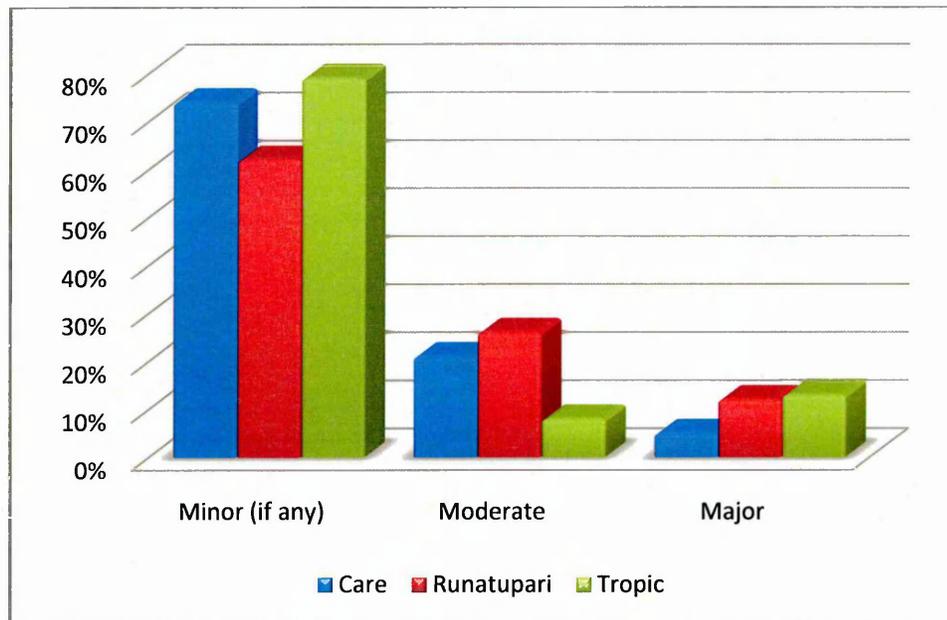
The evidence suggests that, in many instances, respondents assessed the success of the projects based on how they contributed to their livelihoods and basic needs. Due to this, and drawing on the conceptual framework, the outputs of the projects have been categorised into sub-headings, which correlate with headings used in DfID's (1999) sustainable livelihoods framework. The sustainable livelihoods framework enables the researcher to examine contributions to livelihood assets, and it stresses the need to consider the perceptions of varying stakeholders. DfID (1999) notes that "people require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes; no single category on its own is sufficient to yield all the many and varied livelihood outcomes that people seek" (DfID, 1999: 5). Thus, the next sections examine the impacts of the projects, as viewed by the respondents, including a comparative analysis of the three projects.

Due to the fact that the DfID framework is very general and not industry-specific, it is necessary to consider its components in relation to these tourism projects, and realise that not all elements are applicable. Therefore, the framework has been altered in order to highlight impacts which are seen as most important by the respondents themselves within these particular tourism projects. The categories have been placed in the following order to reflect the attention they were granted by respondents: human, social, physical, financial, and natural capital. Within these categories, it became clear that there were aspects of the framework which were not greatly important to the respondents. For example, questioning respondents on loans and, in some instances, savings was irrelevant due to the fact that they did not have any and simply lived day-to-day. Long term planning is also a prevalent theme throughout DfID's framework but respondents granted it little attention during interviews, despite the fact that the ability to save and plan beyond day-to-day living increases the chances of reducing poverty. Like many frameworks, the sustainable livelihoods approach has only been used as a guideline, but has helped to categorise the micro level outputs of the projects in the discussion that follows.

During the ranking exercise respondents were asked how the tourism project contributed to their basic needs. This was in order to gain an impression of the overall view before they were questioned on the detailed categories. Figure 5.2 shows the

average percentage of responses for the three projects and provides, at a glance, their opinions on the contribution to their basic needs.

**Figure 5.2 Contributions to basic needs by project area**



The majority of respondents stated that the contribution of the tourism project to basic needs was 'minor (if any)'. The average percentage taken from Tropic respondents showed that 13% believed there was a 'major' contribution to their basic needs, the highest of the three projects. Yet Tropic also shows the highest number of 'minor (if any)' responses, showing that there were few who felt a 'moderate' impact. This correlates with an argument presented by Reid (2003) in the literature, that only a select few 'elites' benefit significantly from tourism and the remainder feel little impact. Figure 5.2 also shows that it was Runatupari respondents who stated a 'moderate' contribution most frequently which could be a reflection of their local supply chain, which was having a positive impact on more livelihoods. The Care project demonstrated the least amount of 'major' impacts with less than 5% giving this response. This was a result of Care's focus on training and capacity building, which had yet to see more tangible immediate returns and was more focused on long-term objectives. This figure has sought to summarise the projects' overall contributions, and to visually demonstrate how respondents believed the projects were impacting upon their basic needs. These general opinions will be used to illustrate some of the discussions in the forthcoming sections, and the chapter now turns to the contributions of the projects to specific aspects of livelihood capital.

### 5.3.1 Human capital

During the ranking exercise, it became apparent that aspects of human capital, such as health and education, were profoundly important to the respondents. Other aspects of this category, such as access to information and training, were also considered as a means to achieving an improved standard of living, despite the fact they were not included in respondents' lists of basic needs. DfID (1999) describe human capital as a resource which "represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives" (DfID, 1999: 7). Health and education were ranked third and fourth respectively as basic needs, with averages of 85.3% and 83.7%. This provides a clear indication of what was important to the communities, consequently rendering any project that had a positive impact on these areas likely to be seen as a success according to the community residents. However, it was evident that many respondents failed to see that this was not the objective, or indeed responsibility, of the tourism project operators.

**Table 5.1 Respondent perceptions of positive and negative outputs on human capital**

<i>Human Capital</i>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI</b>
<b>MAIN POSITIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained construction workers (transferable)</li> <li>• Trained lodge workers (skills in hygiene)</li> <li>• Access to transport for emergency medical care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embroidery training (increase in sales)</li> <li>• Rise in disposable income (spent on further education)</li> <li>• Tourism training for communities not involved (improving knowledge to start a venture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained construction workers (transferable)</li> <li>• Rise in disposable income (spent on further education)</li> </ul>
<b>MAIN NEGATIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No education outputs</li> <li>• External labour rather than local training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education outputs limited to 3 respondents</li> <li>• No health outputs</li> <li>• Critique of the resources designated to training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No health outputs</li> <li>• Education outputs limited to families operating home-stays</li> <li>• No 'social fund' to contribute to schools or health dispensaries</li> </ul>

Access to information and training that aid improvement of livelihoods are other important elements of this category according to DFID. This resonated throughout the course of the research as these aspects were often discussed in the follow-up interviews. With the importance of human capital clarified, it was then possible to probe as to the ways in which the projects were or were not impacting on this livelihood asset. Table 5.1 above provides a brief overview of the main positive and negative outputs on to human capital for each project, as perceived by the respondents. These outputs are now covered project by project.

### **Human capital and the Care project**

Respondents provided some positive examples of the Care projects' contributions to education, although they were slightly limited. Of the thirty-four participants, three claimed that they have had an additional income after tourist numbers rose following Care's involvement. The interviewees, two fathers and one mother, professed that their first use for the extra money was to invest it in their eldest child's education. As a result, two children were attending college in Quito and the other had been granted partial funding at the Universidad Católica, the top rated in the country, on the basis of exceptional school grades and the fact that his parents were able to fund over a third of the required fees. Utilising the money to supplement a child's further education was viewed by these parents as "the best way I can provide for my family to make sure that they can provide for theirs when they have them." The parents also implied that they did not want their children to work in farming, the most common employment in the communities, as they believed a person could not make a substantial enough income to support a family. As an output of human capital, therefore, this is a positive aspect of Care's involvement, despite the fact that it was limited to less than 10% of the respondents.

Conversely, respondents believed that the tourism operation did not have a positive impact on healthcare. Care professed that the only way in which this basic need could be supplemented by the project was if people were earning enough money from it that would aid in paying for medical care. The majority of respondents agreed with the view of one resident, who asked "how is what Care is doing meant to benefit my health? If I earned a lot of money from it then maybe I could use this but this is not happening". As mentioned in the literature, some community projects inject part of the profits back into the community (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001), such as by improving health dispensaries. Yet Care claimed that this was not a feasible option at that time as the project was still in its incipient stage. Subsequently, asking respondents on the impacts of the project on health did not yield any positive impacts, but also

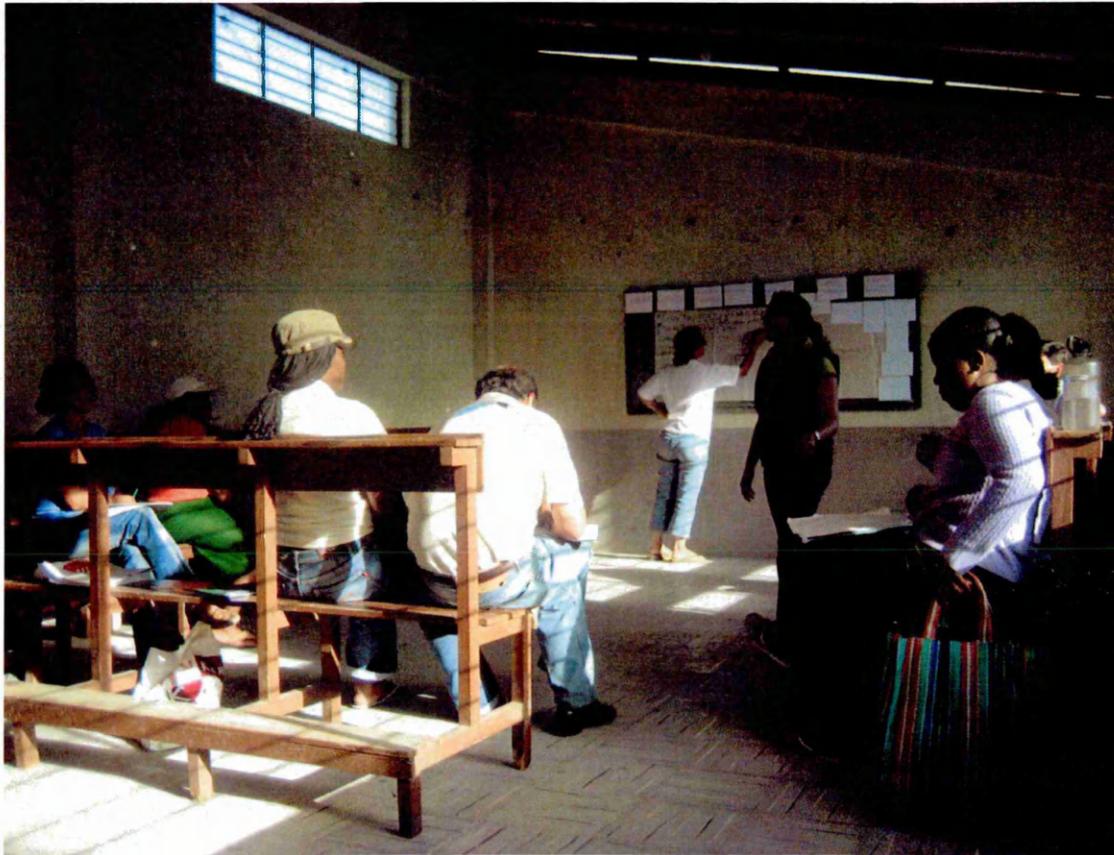
demonstrated the heightened expectations they have of the project, which were perhaps misleading since this is not specifically part of Care's objectives. In addition, there is often a stigma attached to development organisations that they will initiate a 'community fund' to widen the benefits (Harrison & Shipani, 2007), illustrating the pressures placed on such organisations based on their reputation.

Certain positive outputs were limited to elite members of the communities, as was discussed in the literature (e.g. Schillcher, 2007; Ashley *et al*, 2001). The respondents discussed above were those in three separate communities, who had the most significant involvement with Care from the outset, and provided home-stays for tourists. It was simply the rise in tourist numbers and the encouragement emanating from Care to increase their prices which supplemented their income (refer to section 5.3.4). From the evidence, it is clear to see that contributing to health and education are not at the forefront of the outputs and limited positive impacts were identified.

Despite this, Care's other human capital outputs, such as training and access to information, are more significant, and of the three projects demonstrated the greatest commitment to these elements. Respondents noted the effectiveness of Care's capacity-building workshops and commented on the approach Care utilised in order to deliver the training. Figure 5.3 shows a picture taken during a capacity-building workshop in El Juncal. The figure shows a community resident participating in a brainstorming activity focused on ways to attract tourists to the community, showing the participatory nature of the workshops. Judging the effectiveness of the workshops was problematic due to the time frame of the project so far. However, discussions with respondents revealed some of the positive ways in which the training had been put to use. A group of women who work as embroiderers in Zuleta claimed that Care's efforts to improve the standard of their work to a higher finish had helped them to sell more of their pieces. One woman stated that when Care initially asked how many tourists bought a piece from them, they deduced it was approximately one in every three people. She estimated that that figure now stands at more than 50%. The woman claimed that the group also felt increased pride in their work and were working on selling more of their pieces to retail outlets in nearby towns and cities. Yet there were also negative comments about Care's training, which were mainly concerned with the amount of time and effort Care was designating to it. Some respondents believed their energies and resources could be better focused on providing something tangible or concrete. For example, one woman queried "they can train me anything but if I do not have beds for tourists, or if I do not have a workshop to teach them then why train me?"

Although the human capital outputs are thus far rather limited, respondents have hinted at what can be accomplished by the training and capacity building, such as the additional skills acquired by the embroidery women. The impacts upon residents' health and education though were restricted, and this supports evidence in the literature that only the elite benefit in this way. Whether or not they are focusing too much of their efforts on capacity building and not enough on other aspects will be discussed in the next chapter, but here it is evident that there is substantial potential to positively impact upon this aspect of livelihoods.

**Figure 5.3 A Care capacity building workshop in El Juncal**



### **Human capital and the Tropic project**

Tropics impact on human capital was also limited but, again, respondents highlighted the outputs as key livelihood benefits. As with Care, there were positive and negative views expressed by respondents and, although people could see the potential, many were yet to witness anything concrete. In the initial phase of the project Tropic held various training workshops in the community that were free for all to attend. The main training areas were in cooking, customer service, and construction. When interviewing respondents it was the construction training which seemed to have had the most notable impact. Respondents who attended these recognised that these were

transferable skills which could be utilised in other aspects of life. For example, a group of six men who had attended stated in a group discussion that they already possessed the basic skills before the workshops, but the advanced level of knowledge they acquired had helped them to progress. Four of the men said they had since worked on other construction projects for which they had been paid. All of the men had also been asked by Tropic to use their acquired skills to help build the campsite which, at the time of the research, was still work in progress. As a human capital output of the project this shows how Tropics' assistance had helped residents acquire new skills from which they can command remuneration, and they also discussed that these were skills they could pass on to their children.

The other workshops targeted people who could work at the lodge in these job roles. Respondents who now worked at the lodge were very positive about the training they had received. One of the cooks revealed that her food hygiene standards had to be seriously improved, and this was something she was taught in training. Cleaning staff made similar assertions and believed their training aided them in improving standards and understanding the level of service which tourists expect when they are paying considerable sums of money to stay in the lodge. However, one of the objections echoed by a small proportion of the respondents was the external labour which had been brought in, which equated to the general manager of the lodge who came from Coca. Certain residents voiced their concerns that a number of people in the community, with the adequate training, could have been suitable for the job. Tropic responded saying they felt they required someone with more knowledge and experience to get the lodge up and running. Tropic also held workshops on tourism business and marketing, and informed the community how the project was progressing (Figure 5.4), which the respondents felt was a good way of including them and keeping them updated. Training residents in the business aspect of the project also demonstrated Tropics' commitment to transferring ownership of the lodge in the future (refer to section 6.6).

According to certain residents, contributing to health and education took second precedent. Respondents were critical of Tropics efforts to direct additional resources into improving these areas and, in most instances, did not appear to understand that this was neither Tropic's objective nor responsibility. The notion that "their concern for the community should be reflected in their actions in improving our schools, not just employing a handful of people at a lodge" was echoed by nearly 22% of respondents and also arose in informal conversations with others. All of these people had no direct, or even indirect, involvement with the tourism project and generally appeared critical of most aspects of Tropics involvement. Their responses demonstrated that they did not

appreciate the objectives of the project and felt it should be personally benefiting them in more ways. One element of Tropics involvement that could not be criticised was the access they had provided to emergency medical care. The small five-seater aircraft, which is used to transport tourists from Shell to the rainforest, is also available for use by the community should an emergency arise. This positive output was recognised and appreciated by the majority of respondents. One mother stated, “this is our home and we would not leave our land but if someone is very sick then we worry that we cannot give them the care they need”. The availability of the light aircraft appeased many respondents, and had a significant impact on their valuation of the project’s outputs. The access to transportation for emergency medical care was something so positive that it overshadowed some of the negativities expressed by residents.

**Figure 5.4** A Tropic capacity building workshop with the Huaorani



### **Human capital and the Runatupari project**

The Runatupari respondents did not discuss impacts on human capital to the same extent as the other two projects and were least positive about the outputs. The general view among these respondents was that a proportion of the profits could be used to enhance local schools and health dispensaries, and that they were angered by the proportion of money retained by the Runatupari office. One woman, who was indirectly

involved through supplying additional food to the local home-stays, echoed this opinion, stating that “I do not understand why they cannot use some of this money for the good of the community”. Thus, again, health and education were seen as neglected outputs, despite the existence of a community fund which had yet to be utilised for any developments other than home-stay construction.

However, as with the Tropic project, the training and capacity building that Runatupari had initiated since the commencement of the project had resulted in certain human capital benefits for a select few. The construction of additional rooms for home-stays was carried out by the families with the aid of trained workers from the umbrella organisation UNORCAC. Respondents stated how they were trained in building techniques and able to put this into practice whilst constructing the additional housing. This training had resulted in their property development, which enabled them to earn income from tourism. One resident, who happened to already work in construction in the nearby town, claimed that for him the training was not essential but it did teach him about how to cater for tourists in terms of space and design. He said that without the input of UNORCAC he would have designed the rooms quite differently, which he now believes would not have been satisfactory for tourists. Discussions with a group of men in one of the larger villages revealed that five of the nine men who had been trained had since put these skills to use in the nearby town, where they have been employed on small-scale contracts. In another village, the wife of one man stated he had since been employed by the Provincial Council, as the training had provided him with a background in construction. These transferable skills obtained meant that he then worked on projects such as road reconstruction and housing. His wife spoke highly of the training, and she claimed that their income had increased from when he held his previous position as a delivery driver. As with the Tropic project, respondents who were operating home-stays spoke of the training they had received with regards to cleanliness and hygiene, and improving standards in order to cater for tourists. As a result of this, the women stated that tourists were very satisfied with their experiences and would convey this to others.

The Runatupari project, although offering the least in terms of human capital outputs, still illustrates the knock-on effects of tourism projects such as these. The construction training was definitely the most substantial impact and, although limited in numbers, made significant differences to certain residents' lives. The other two projects were also limited in their spread of benefits and there is evidently room for improvement and further enhancement of benefits, particularly in the areas of health and education. However, it was clear that the communities had high expectations in terms of livelihood outputs. This was also apparent when discussing the social impacts of the projects

and elements of social capital were frequently mentioned by respondents, highlighting the priority they gave to associated livelihood capital.

### 5.3.2 Social capital

The second aspect of capital to be discussed is social capital. When community residents were interviewed, issues relating to networks, community organisation and empowerment, relationships within the communities and with project organisers were granted considerable attention. These were also integral topics throughout the literature (e.g. Simpson, 2008; Ashley, 2000). DfID (1999) suggest that social capital entails three broad categories: networks and connectedness, membership of more formalised groups, and relationships of trust, reciprocity, and exchanges. On the whole, these issues were covered in discussions with residents (see Table 5.2), but the most significant focus was placed on 'relationships'. This was the area where people possessed the strongest opinions, both negative and positive, whereas being part of a formalised group for example was irrelevant for many respondents.

**Table 5.2 Respondent perceptions of positive and negative outputs on social capital**

<i>Social Capital</i>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI</b>
<b>MAIN POSITIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalising of women's group (empowerment)</li> <li>• Strengthening position of community (fight for land protection)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of tourism action groups (community cohesion in working towards a common goal)</li> <li>• Empowerment for home-stay operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building of relationships within communities through supply chain</li> <li>• Empowerment for home-stay operators</li> </ul>
<b>MAIN NEGATIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only working with elite members of community</li> <li>• Negative alteration in social dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the positions of the existing elites</li> <li>• Action groups not well facilitated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created an elite group of home-stay operators</li> <li>• Isolates other community members</li> </ul>

As with the training element of human capital, social capital was not something listed in the basic needs section. In the follow-up interviews, when they were asked to explain in more detail, it was participation, decision-making, and a desire to accomplish something as a community that appeared to hold more prominence than initially revealed in the ranking exercises. The tourism projects were viewed as a strategy which could aid in accomplishing a sense of empowerment and, although they may not have stated it as a basic need, the general consensus reflected the following view that

“it is possible having a thing which we can all be part of will change the way we unite in the community, and I think that people can achieve more together than as one man”. There was a general view that relationships between the communities and all parties affected the operations of the projects, which could be detrimental or beneficial to basic needs. Again, these issues of social capital will be explained for each project in turn.

### **Social capital and the Tropic project**

The evidence suggested that the Tropic project was having the most positive outputs in terms of social capital. Firstly, respondents from a women’s group, who made and sold arts and handicrafts, told of their lack of confidence in producing their work for tourists before the involvement of Tropic. One respondent stated that “for us, this was really a hobby and we traded them [their works] amongst ourselves and only occasionally sold to a tourist in Shell”, but the women claimed that the encouragement of Tropic had drastically changed this. The discussion revealed that the women were reluctant at first when Tropic suggested a more formalised way of working and they were unsure as to what the return would be. Yet with Tropic’s technical expertise and contacts they now had fifteen women working in one group to produce various pieces to sell in a shop in Shell. They also sold to tourists who visited the community, and following their initial responses as to the benefits whereby they detailed the finances, they revealed the social outputs resulting from Tropic’s involvement. One respondent told of how they were now running their own enterprise, which instilled them with a great sense of pride and ownership. She stated that “it is possible that as women we should be in the home caring for the husband and the children, but this has given us, I don’t know...freedom? Influence?” The other women confirmed that it strengthened their position in the community. Women’s employment and empowerment are integral topics within pro-poor tourism literature and this evidence suggests that this particular output is a credit to Tropic’s involvement in the community. It also strongly contradicts another argument made by Tearfund (2002) that tourism is failing in its attempts to contribute to social obligations. This argument of empowerment encapsulates Giddens’ (1984) concept of actor knowledgability, a key element of structuration theory. The empowerment and knowledge acquired through the project led to a belief among the community that they were able to influence, and benefit, from surrounding structures.

Yet not all respondents were so positive about the social effects of the project. Several respondents contended that Tropic was only working with the elite in the community, such as with Moi Enomenga, who is a well respected community leader. Moi has led the long-running campaign to protect Huaorani land from oil companies and illegal

loggers and, according to Tropic, he was an easy choice as a coordinator and liaison person. Certain respondents felt that this restricted their inclusion in the project as Moi preferred to work with his existing acquaintances, which alienated others from taking a leading, proactive role in the project. Tropic refuted this and argued that the meetings and discussions had always had an “open door policy”, whereby everyone is welcome and all opinions are treated with equal respect. It is possible that the allegations of these select respondents are the result of a long standing feud or even jealousy of Moi, but their concerns were nevertheless important to consider when reviewing how the project has altered the social dynamics of the community. Indeed, over half of respondents actually praised the way in which the project had united the community and given them something they could all be proud of. As an output of human capital there is, again, further room for improvement, but this project has superseded the other two in terms of how it has positively affected dynamics within the community.

### **Social capital and the Care project**

The Care project also shows signs of promising social capital outputs. Respondents talked of the formation of tourism action groups in the communities which have been facilitated by Care. As a result of these, several explained the new dynamics which meant people were working towards a common goal and sharing enthusiasm for a project that could potentially and, in some cases did, harness significant benefits. Participants who viewed Care’s involvement positively agreed that “we compete to sell our food, our handicrafts and other produce between ourselves and when we go to market...having tourists here is something we can do together so we work together and don’t compete”. This insight into how the project has altered the social relationships between community members reflects Care’s aim to involve as many community residents as possible. Conversely, around three quarters of respondents criticised this alteration of social dynamics and viewed it in a more negative way. Some residents claimed that Care had identified or “chosen” members of the communities who had better paid jobs, better education, nicer houses, etc., echoing Britton’s (1980) argument that certain structures confine the actions of communities. Critics claimed that Care consequently worked with these people and this was how decisions were essentially made, and not through the tourism action groups which they had facilitated. It was observed that this was relatively accurate, as visits to some of the communities only entailed a visit to what Care identified as their “contact”. Yet it is difficult to ascertain how Care can liaise with the community if they do not have a point of contact, since it would be impossible to consult with all community members on every issue (Ashley & Roe, 1998). When asked how many times the action groups met, one man said there had only been the first meeting and since then he had not met with anyone from Care

but he was aware they had been to the community to meet with this contact. The vast disparities from respondents relating to the social outputs left some unanswered questions. However, Care blamed their relatively short-term involvement thus far, and lack of resources. The evidence shows that Care's involvement is clearly creating animosity amongst the communities, with some feeling alienated and under-valued. Although it cannot be said that Care have essentially created a group of elites to run this project, they do appear to have strengthened the position of the existing elite, which has been negatively received. Mowforth and Munt (2003) claim that elites have to be incorporated and effectively utilised, but the evidence shows that the existing animosity may seriously hamper such a goal. Despite this, the networks Care are creating between small businesses and communities are considerably more positive, and support literature which advocates the building of these relationships (Reed, 1997; Meyer, 2008).

### **Social capital and the Runatupari project**

As with the Care project, several respondents from Runatupari criticised the outputs of the project in terms of its contribution to social capital. It is true that the project has succeeded in empowering certain families in the communities, particularly those who now operate home-stays, but there exists a considerable amount of animosity due to the financial gain these families are reaping. Select respondents claimed that it had not aided in building relationships within the communities, but rather, it had facilitated a network between the organisers and the home-stay providers whereby everyone else is eliminated. This view was echoed by several respondents. In total, twelve of the thirty-one respondents suggested that if they were not operating a home-stay then they had no involvement and no say in further developments. In this sense, it can be said that Runatupari had created an elite group rather than just adding power to an existing one like the other two projects.

Despite this, discussions took place with six respondents who were suppliers of food to these home-stays, and this involvement meant their views were not so critical. For instance, one respondent explained how, "[the home-stay operator] approached me to ask for yucca when he has tourists...he does not grow it, so I am making a little extra money". When asked if he knew the man previously, the respondent stated that he did not know him well but now they share an interest. Runatupari respondents were also very proud of their local produce, and respondents indicated that they enjoyed teaching tourists about their produce, agricultural, and horticultural backgrounds (see Figure 5.5), which is a form of social capital through knowledge exchange. Although these examples are slightly isolated, they do show how relationships of exchange can be built

and this particular example shows that the project can have a positive effect on social outputs, and the overall sense of empowerment was palpable. Another example was provided by a home-stay owner in the Runa Tupari project, who stated that “now this is my business I go to meetings [public and open council] to be a representative and try to protect what we have”. His reference to being a representative of community views demonstrated a distinct link between a sense of empowerment and the knowledge that he was able to influence and partake in decision-making, again illustrating Giddens’ (1984) concept of actor knowledgeability.

**Figure 5.5** Tourists learning about local produce in the Runatupari project



In conclusion, there is a lack of agreement over the social outputs of all three projects and it is evident that all three require further attention to improve this aspect. However, discussions with communities did demonstrate just how important they felt these elements were in terms of what the projects were capable of delivering. The emphasis that was placed on issues of relationships and networks during the interviews may not have echoed the listed responses in the basic needs, but obviously they were a high priority and an output which they believed could contribute to their livelihoods. The alteration of social dynamics and the strengthening of elite positions are obviously creating animosity, and it is an issue which requires addressing in all three projects. Yet the preceding evidence has highlighted the how each of the projects has strengthened actor knowledgeability, and enabled certain community residents to become more influential.

### 5.3.3 Physical capital

Generally, respondents in the Care and Runatupari projects struggled to identify any positive impacts in terms of contributions to improved infrastructure and facilities. It is true that this is neither a priority nor an objective for any of the projects but, in the eyes of the communities, the operators have the resources and abilities to accomplish considerably more than they are currently doing. Although they do outline some positive outputs, the attention they granted this issue during discussions conveyed how important it was to them, but on the whole they were critical of the lack of outputs. However, when the respondents were probed more on these limited outputs, it revealed that they may be only a few, but their impacts were significant. In the Tropic project, the physical outputs were more abundant and respondents were considerably more positive about the impacts. Table 5.3 provides a brief comparison of these outputs, clearly showing that Tropic is the most successful in this area.

**Table 5.3 Respondent perceptions of positive and negative outputs on physical capital**

<i>Physical Capital</i>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI</b>
<b>MAIN POSITIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canoes for access to market</li> <li>• Plane for access to emergency medical care</li> <li>• Eco-lodge (ownership to be transferred)</li> <li>• Campsite (ownership to be transferred)</li> <li>• Laundry facility (easier for washing clothes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of prickly pear production plant (increased production and sales)</li> <li>• Influence on more frequent buses (easier access to market for communities)</li> <li>• Potential for road improvements (more bus routes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-stay construction (financial gain for families)</li> </ul>
<b>MAIN NEGATIVE OUTPUT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodge ownership eventually may cause conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only improved two bus links</li> <li>• Just one facility in one community</li> <li>• Critiques of lack of tangible benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No 'social fund' to improve facilities</li> <li>• Physical evidence limited to home-stay construction</li> </ul>

Physical capital encompasses a variety of infrastructure, including shelter, water sanitation, transport and transport links, and energy, and also tangible facilities which aid the communities, such as community centres, schools, etc. DfID (1999) also include producer goods, which equates to equipment that is required to support a

person's livelihood, altogether showing the extensive range of elements within this category. As previously mentioned, there are aspects of DfIDs framework which were irrelevant during the research and, in this instance, water sanitation and energy did not appear to be high priorities. Interviews with the project operators regarding other physical capital outputs discovered that they feel it is problematic to contribute to physical capital due to the direct investment required. Without the existence of a substantial 'pot of money' earned from tourists that can be used for infrastructural projects, the usual scenario occurs whereby the few benefiting are those who earn enough to develop their own properties, not facilities for the whole community (Blackstock, 2005; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Physical capital outputs will be now be discussed project by project.

### **Physical capital and the Tropic project**

Of the three projects it is Tropic again which was considered to have the most positive physical capital outputs. Responses provided when asked about these elements were generally very positive and the participants were able to clearly identify the project outputs. It is noted that this could be due to the visible, tangible nature of these outputs which, when asked about the impacts of a project, can be the first thing which comes to mind. Firstly, Tropic has constructed the eco-lodge which not only provides employment, but will eventually become a community-owned lodge when Tropic transfers ownership (refer to section 7.2). This asset is invaluable in the eyes of the community because the profit from it will further aid in infrastructural improvements in the community. The majority of respondents agreed it would also aid them in protecting their land from oil companies and loggers due to its business value. It is unclear at this time whether the running of the lodge will create disputes amongst the community, and perhaps a further negative change in social dynamics.

In addition to the lodge, Tropic is constructing a campsite further down the river which will provide alternative and/or additional accommodation for tourists (see Figure 5.6). As is the case with the lodge, ownership will eventually be passed to the community. The construction of a laundry facility in the village centre was viewed by respondents as a significant output of Tropic's involvement. Tropic has invested in a water supply system and constructed a concrete block with four sections specifically designed for washing clothes (Figure 5.7). A group of three women, who were using the facility, were asked about the difference it had made to them: "of course we have always washed our clothes in the river but now we have this I could not wash my clothes in the river again". The women agreed that, although it was not a necessity or something which affected their basic needs, it was something which made their lives easier and, in

turn, meant that they have more time for other livelihood activities. They commented how the facility had brought them together more regularly, as prior to this they would wash their clothes in a stream close to their homes, whereas now they tend to congregate in the village. Although this may appear to be a relatively small output, to the people involved it was a very positive result of the project, and it demonstrates Tropic's commitment to improving livelihoods in the area.

The women also discussed the benefit of the motorised canoes, which was echoed by other respondents. Although these canoes are mainly for the purpose of transporting tourists, the community were able to utilise them for their own purposes at other times. Respondents told of how they can now use them to take people upstream to the nearest road leading to Coca, so that people were able to go to market for trading and supplies. They also visited other communities to trade goods, and respondents revealed how their trading relationships with other communities in the area had vastly improved since the availability of easier transport. As a livelihood benefit, this is significantly beneficial for the community and the attention it was granted during discussions conveyed just how much of an impact this had. Nearly all respondents mentioned their access to the small plane for emergency medical assistance. Again, although its main purpose is to transport tourists to and from Shell<sup>5</sup>, Tropic has made the community fully aware that it is available should they need it in an emergency. Not only is this a significant contribution to physical assets, it is the only project to have any notable healthcare output. In conjunction with the aircraft, Tropic has also invested in a radio to maintain contact with Shell. Although its main purpose is to communicate weather conditions between the community and airport, it can also be used to summon the aircraft in case of an emergency.

Respondents in the Tropic project were obviously appreciative of these physical outputs and it was interesting that the majority of interviewees knew of all of these outputs, which demonstrates sound communication and inclusion by Tropic. It also appears to contradict some research literature, which claims that the development sector, and not the private sector, is far more likely to contribute to such assets (Harrison & Schipani, 2007). However, here one could say that because Tropic is a private enterprise they have significantly more financial resources to enable them to contribute to livelihoods in this manner.

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<sup>5</sup> Shell is the closest town from where tourists can be transported to the community by plane

**Figure 5.6 Construction of campsite in the Tropic project**



**Figure 5.7 Laundry facility constructed by Tropic**



## Physical capital and the Care project

Respondents in the Care project struggled to discern any notable outputs in terms of infrastructure and facilities. However, the one physical output that was discussed was in the village of Marisalle and, to the respondents here, it was certainly noteworthy. Together with Innocent, Care is part-funding the construction of a prickly pear<sup>6</sup> plant for production and as a tourist attraction (see Figure 5.8). Prickly pear is grown in abundance and the plant will be used to produce soap, shampoo, make-up and also to turn it into a drink. The men working on the project discussed how much easier the plant would make life for them: “we have always produced these items, but in that shed [he points to a shack]...we will have more space, light and equipment so we can make more to sell”. The group disclosed that having a proper plant also made them feel like they would be operating a more credible business, and they discussed plans to export the goods in the future. It was abundantly clear that to the community here, this was Care’s most significant achievement, which overall gave them a very positive view of the organisation. Furthermore, if it were not for the tourism project it is highly unlikely they would have been involved in this project, as they were not familiar with the community beforehand.

**Figure 5.8 Construction of a Prickly Pear plant in Marisalle (Care project)**



<sup>6</sup> Prickly pear is known in Ecuador as 'tuna' and is a multi-purpose fruit

But for respondents from outside of this community, the view was not so positive. A common outlook was reflected in a question posed by one respondent: “what have they done here? They talk of training and networking but there is nothing to show me that they are really involved”. However, this was disputed by some of the more remote communities who commended the improved transport access. Between three villages, Care has petitioned local bus companies to increase the bus frequency to cater for tourists. From the respondent’s point of view this has had a noteworthy impact as it is now easier for them to travel to buy and trade produce. According to Care, they are also in talks with local authorities to improve many of the road links. Respondents were hopeful that this would render safer travel and more open access for tourists to reach remoter communities. Bus companies may also be inclined to operate more regular services in these peripheral areas, and create new routes to places which are currently impassable for them. In return, the participants stated they would be able to travel more freely and sell more goods at markets, which is a substantial output of the project. Overall, Care’s physical capital outputs could be significant for the communities according to evidence gathered from respondents, but they are limited as to what they can do by a severe lack of resources. Such evidence supports Mowforth and Munt’s (2003) argument that such projects have yet to distinctly demonstrate what they have contributed to poverty reduction.

### **Physical capital and the Runatupari project**

Respondents relevant to the Runatupari project expressed the least positive attitude in terms of their resulting physical capital outputs. The majority of participants, who were not operating home-stays, claimed that there had been no physical outputs of the project. They were adamant that Runatupari could do a lot more to contribute to facilities and infrastructure, arguing that they had the resources to do so. One woman, who embroiders towels, shirts, napkins and other items in her spare time, claimed that there were several women in the village who were capable of doing this. She explained that, if Runatupari were to use some of the money from tourists to supply these women with extra resources for thread and needles, then they would be able to formalise a group to sell their produce to more tourists and at market. As it is, Runatupari apparently have a ‘social fund’ which is meant for projects within the communities, but as yet nothing tangible had been accomplished. Some of these respondents were very critical of how Runatupari had only developed home-stays, which had isolated the rest of the community. Conversely, those operating home-stays who had received funding and training from Runatupari had a very different outlook on the physical outputs. They discussed the development to their personal property, which for them was a considerable output of the project (Figure 5.9). The fifteen

houses which have been developed to cater for tourists account for a considerable financial investment by Runatupari, and the knock-on benefits for these families have been substantial. However, these families also understood the view of other respondents who were critical of the development. Figure 5.10 shows a picture of a family kitchen in close proximity to one of the Runatupari home-stays and, when comparing it with Figure 5.9, it is clear to see why some residents may be annoyed at the home improvements received by home-stay hosts. One home-stay operator stated “it is possible they are not happy because they have not received money...[but] having tourists here can help them in other ways”. These other benefits have been detailed in the previous sections, but it is clear that, in general, the physical outputs of this project have created animosity and jealousy amongst community members.

Although the respondents did not grant physical outputs as much attention as human and social, the communities were definitely optimistic about the future potential of the projects to contribute even further to those assets. The financial investment required to make noteworthy contributions to this aspect of capital is substantial, hence it was of no surprise that the private sector operator was the most successful organisation. In other livelihood aspects, however, it is not always the ability to invest money that reaps the most benefits, as the following section will show.

**Figure 5.9 Runatupari accommodation**



**Figure 5.10 Family kitchen in Runatupari project (not home-stay)**



#### **5.3.4 Financial capital**

Respondents associated with each of the three projects stated that a key part of their objective was to increase community incomes through tourism. The literature, however, illustrates that it is regularly the case that only a select few individuals who benefit financially, and that project outputs can often be more significant in other categories of capital (Ashley & Hussein, 2000). This has been the case with each project, where the aforementioned categories were seen by respondents as more profound outputs than financial capital. DfID (1999) categorises financial capital into two types: first, DfID identifies available stocks, within which they include savings, cash and liquid assets; and, second, they look at regular inflows of money. However, when carrying out the basic needs exercise the only elements mentioned were cash and, in a small number of instances, animals (liquid assets). Savings, access to loans or pensions were not considered as needs, and such aspects were virtually dismissed during interviews. Yet when respondents were probed further, it became apparent that many of them did save, particularly for their child's education, which shows the manner in which they were attempting to reduce poverty in their lives. Table 5.4 details the main positive and negative outputs for each project in terms of financial capital.

**Table 5.4 Respondent perceptions of positive and negative outputs on financial capital**

<i>Financial Capital</i>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI</b>
<b>MAIN POSITIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant financial outputs for 22% of respondents</li> <li>• Money used to invest in houses, support families, save for college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant financial outputs for 11% of respondents</li> <li>• Money used for education, food, clothing</li> <li>• None of the home-stay fee retained by Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant financial outputs for 38% of respondents</li> <li>• Money used for education, food, clothing, investment in livestock</li> <li>• Effective local supply chain which is spreading financial benefits</li> </ul>
<b>MAIN NEGATIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees are not employed all year round- only work when there are tourists</li> <li>• Supply chain does not appear to be very prevalent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least amount of respondents benefiting financially</li> <li>• Significant income generated for home-stay operators but very limited out-with this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 50% of fee retained by Runatupari-respondents could have been earning a lot more</li> </ul>

**Financial capital and the Runatupari project**

Comparing the financial outputs of the projects revealed that the Runatupari venture had a more positive economic impact than the other two, although only marginally. Respondents in this project who were directly involved, mainly those operating home-stays, disclosed the amount of additional income they were receiving as a result of the project and how they were utilising this extra money. Respondents were asked how much over and above their previous earnings they were now receiving due to the home-stay. Despite seasonality, the average figure taken from the six home-stay operators interviewed was around 25%, although no exact figures were divulged. For each of these families this was an average of \$1250, and with the project now operating fifteen home-stays, this totals approximately \$18,500 per year on accommodation alone in this region. A proportion of this money is injected back into the local communities for buying additional food, clothing, house ware, etc., which demonstrates how this income can benefit more than just those directly involved. Furthermore, one family questioned in Santa Barbara said they were sending their eldest daughter to university with the money they had earned from hosting tourists. The mother stated that this would not have been possible without the extra income.

However, Runatupari takes a percentage of the fee, which is around 50%, to cover a variety of costs such as marketing, staff, office fees and transport, and the home-stay operator is only given what is left, which equates to around \$12. One family argued that Runatupari retain too large a share of the \$25 fee paid by tourists for accommodation, meals, and guide. They claimed that if the families were given a larger percentage then there would be more money to send all of their children onto higher education, rather than just the eldest: “we do not earn enough money to pay for university for all of us”. Unless the number of tourists increases and the families receive a much more regular income from the home-stay, then this trend is likely to continue.

Due to indirect employment, such as people supplying food for home-stays and those selling arts and crafts, several others in the communities were making additional income. Of the thirty-one respondents, six claimed that they supplied produce to home-stays. The estimated figures from these respondents ranged between an extra \$10 and \$30 per month depending on seasonality. This equates to roughly an increase of between 3% and 9% above their regular earnings, which to these respondents was a significant increase. The general uses for the money were stated as “travelling further to larger markets” which means they are able to sell more produce, “planting extra crops”, and one man had purchased two goats to produce milk and cheese which he could also sell to the home-stays. Although the figures may appear limited, they had a considerable impact on their livelihoods, a feature also highlighted in the research literature: “while in absolute terms the scale of benefits may appear small, they can be relatively very significant when viewed from the perspective of the beneficiary groups” (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 273). This reflects Runatupari’s goal to encourage the supply of local produce and, according to these respondents, this aspect of the initiative had been a success.

For Runatupari respondents, those operating home-stays and those supplying produce received an increase in income which was, to an extent, helping contribute to poverty reduction. It is also interesting to note that it is the Runatupari communities which are reaping the most financial benefits since they placed the most emphasis on ‘cash’ and ‘housing’ during the basic needs identification. This shows that, for several of the respondents, the Runatupari project is significantly impacting on some of the basic needs which they classed as very important.

### **Financial capital and the Tropic Project**

The main financial benefits of the Tropic project were limited primarily to those employed in the lodge and those selling handicrafts. Financial capital to respondents here was not greatly important to them. Due to their relative self-sufficiency, any

additional money was considered a significant amount, but around two thirds of Tropic respondents acted very casually when asked about what the financial gains were. For example, one man stated “I do not think this is as much about the money...If we receive some then this is good, but if we do not then we have not lost”. However, the few individuals who were benefiting from this output were very positive about the way in which it had affected their lives. Three of the respondents worked in the lodge and were earning roughly between \$400 and \$600 per year. These salaries were considered good wages by the respondents since they only worked when tourist groups were due and throughout their stay. The groundkeeper for the lodge told of how this income was sustaining a “comfortable life” for him and his family. One of the assistant cooks stated that she wanted to save the money to go to college in the city, but that currently she was using the majority of it to support her mother and siblings following the death of her father. Of the thirty-two respondents, another four claimed to be financially benefiting from the project, although not always to the same extent. One of these respondents worked as a guide who accompanies the Tropic guide, which earns him approximately \$20 per day when there are tourists. On average he works three or four days per month which generates up to approximately \$960 a year, which he is using to build a house. Another interviewee who made blow guns used for hunting described the impact of selling these. He professed that he manages to sell at least one blow gun to every group of tourists who came to the region (see Figure 5.11).

**Figure 5.11** Tourist trying a blowgun before purchasing



Depending on size, the price ranged from \$15 for a miniature version to \$60 for the full size version. The man declared that, since the frequent arrival of tourists over the last three years, the money he has earned has enabled him to build an extension to his family home. He also paid another two men in the community to help with the building, which shows the knock-on benefits for others not involved in tourism.

In total, seven of the thirty-two respondents spoke of their additional income as a result of the project, which is almost 22% of the interview participants. As with the examples above, these were people who worked at the lodge and those who sold arts and crafts to tourists. Although this figure is not as high as for the Runatupari project and the income is not as high, the benefits for the people involved have nevertheless been significant and contributed to an improved standard of living for them and their families.

### **Financial capital and the Care project**

Respondents in the Care project spoke with the least enthusiasm about the financial outputs of the project, although as with the others, they could see the potential for the future. There were isolated cases of significant financial gain, with only four respondents disclosing additional financial income, and with three of these being home-stay operators. However, these were only people who were interviewed and it is likely that many more are financially benefiting. As a sample percentage, however, it shows that almost 12% are receiving additional income from the project. For example, in a home-stay in San Clemente, the operator charges \$25 per person per night which includes three meals. In 2007 he and his family hosted 82 tourists, mostly throughout June and July and November and December, which totalled an income of \$2050. He disclosed that this is almost 50% more than his income as a casual labourer. This figure is almost a third of the country's per capita income (<http://cia.gov/countryfiles> Accessed 12/06/10). As a livelihood impact, this additional income had significant benefits for his family. His wife, who worked as a nursery teacher in the village, had been able to reduce her hours to three days a week to have more time to look after their six children. She claimed that it was simple benefits such as having more (and better) food for the family, and being able to buy extra school books and clothes, which made a substantial impact.

Another woman in the same village who worked on a farm also did embroidery, which she occasionally took to market to sell. She claimed that the increase in tourists had netted her an additional average income of around \$40 per month, which is roughly 20% of her other earnings. She stated that she was saving this money to send her eldest son to college. This was an interesting point as it was previously noted that living for each day as it came was a priority for the majority of respondents. The only

exception appeared to be when parents were planning further education for their children, and for this they were willing to plan far in advance and save whatever money they could.

Overall, the Care project has witnessed the least outputs in terms of financial capital, but for those who were benefiting the amount is significant and has a very positive impact on contributing to reducing poverty. It is possible that with the further progression of this project the financial benefits may prove to be the most prolific of the three projects, based on the almost 50% increase in tourist numbers in San Clemente alone since the start of Care's involvement.

From the limited evidence available it is possible to conclude that, as suggested in the research literature, only a select few benefit financially from the projects to the extent where they drastically improved their livelihoods and contributed to the basic needs which they first listed. Runatupari respondents appeared to be receiving the greatest financial outputs but, as previously discussed, the animosity surrounding the project is perhaps the most profound of all three. It is also interesting to note, however, that economic gains were on the whole seen by respondents as the second least important output of the projects, despite the fact that many research papers often place financial gain at the heart of project outcomes (e.g. Saville, 2001; Stoeckl, 2008; Hampton, 2005).

### **5.3.5 Natural capital**

The final element of livelihood outputs to be presented is natural capital. Throughout many tourism studies the environment is often at the forefront of discussions (Kalisch, 2002) but, in these projects, it was granted the least amount of attention by respondents in the communities. However, the terminology can be slightly confusing and it was observed during the course of the research that for many respondents natural capital simply meant the effect that the project was having on the surrounding environment. They did not relate it to their land, how they accessed clean water, or food produce until prompted to do so. DfID (1999) states that there are two ways in which natural capital can be directly affected which can impact on people's assets: firstly, they identify the need to "conserve resources and biodiversity (through technology and direct action)" (DfID, 1999: 11); and, secondly, they advocate "the provision of services/inputs for forestry, agriculture [and/or] fisheries" (DfID, 1999: 11). For the three projects these were secondary issues, and the previous categories remained more at the forefront than natural capital. However, the respondents discussed some very positive natural capital outputs and Table 5.5 summarises these along with the main negative impacts.

**Table 5.5 Respondent perceptions of positive and negative outputs on natural capital**

<i>Natural Capital</i>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI</b>
<b>MAIN POSITIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in river pollution (health benefits)</li> <li>• Land protection (food and water access)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in organic produce (higher sell rate for producers)</li> <li>• Acquisition of land for communal crops (more food for families and to sell)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaner surrounding environment (more attractive for tourists)</li> </ul>
<b>MAIN NEGATIVE OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of the lodge</li> <li>• Widening forest trails</li> <li>• Scaring animals so limiting hunting prospects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited to organic food produce</li> <li>• Organic food may not always be in demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No discernable outputs</li> </ul>

**Natural capital and the Tropic project**

It is interesting that once again the respondents’ positive outlook on the outputs of Tropic’s involvement in terms natural capital was more marked than it was for the other two projects. Firstly, around a quarter of participants made reference to the laundry facility constructed by Tropic. They recognised that the reduction in the number of women washing clothes in the river would decrease the amount of chemicals from washing soap being released into the river. This practice polluted the river and the respondents also spoke of the benefits for all people who drank the water. Although they do boil it, they stated that occasionally someone, often a child, could become ill from the water: “It has not fixed the total problem because there are still a lot of people in other parts washing clothes in the river...[but] this is a good start that will stop people being sick from the water”. This view was shared by several people who had listed water as a high priority in their basic needs ranking. Yet there was one respondent who claimed that the community was lucky to have access to water and that there were more important things to worry about. He talked of health and education as being more pressing matters, and only after probing did he accept the link between water sanitation and health.

The other main issue raised by the respondents was the ability of the lodge, tourism, and Tropic to help them in their long-running fight to protect their land from loggers and oil companies (see Figure 5.12). Moi Enomenga (community leader) claimed that “it is harder for them [oil companies] now to try and invade our land because it is an

enterprise...We are making money and we are an attraction". The general view of respondents was that they now had "more protection" with having a tourism industry. They explained how important the surroundings were as natural capital, and here they identified hunting, fishing, collecting firewood, washing, bathing, collecting wood for production of handicrafts, and medicinal plants. The emphasis placed on hunting and fishing was the strongest as food was listed in the basic needs as the top priority and thus, for these respondents, protection of land was pivotal. This conflicts with a notion highlighted in some literature, which claims tourism cannot be pro-poor due to its negative impact on environments (Chok *et al*, 2007).

**Figure 5.12 Section of forest near the Tropic project**



Yet this evidence shows that the tourism project is assisting in protecting the land, which is the most significant resource for the community. There were two respondents, however, who criticised the building of the lodge, claiming that this had meant that trees were cut down and it had spoiled the pristine land. These interviewees also spoke of the widening of trails through the forest, which they said was beginning to show the signs of overuse by tourists. It is possible the tourists may scare animals as well and the two men believed they would have to go further afield to hunt. This final concern is something which could be amplified as tourist numbers continue to rise, and the detrimental effects on food access could potentially be severe as this is their only

source of meat. Overall though, the current outputs discussed by most respondents were positive and reflected Tropic's ethics as an environmentally-friendly company.

### **Natural capital and the Care project**

Respondents in the Care project only identified one area where Care had contributed to natural assets: through growing organic produce. For certain respondents, it was a significant output of the project and in one community Care had managed to negotiate with the local council to acquire a piece of wasteland to carry out this objective. Training community members in the cultivation of organic produce was received well and five of the thirty four respondents interviewed said they had been involved in this process. As a result, they told of how they were able to sell this produce for more money at market to higher-end buyers. Respondents were aware of Care's aim in this respect and knew that the objectives were, firstly, to enhance the supply chain in order to ensure that more of the benefits remained local and, secondly, to encourage people to utilise the land and resource base they have in the most beneficial way possible. As an environmental issue, the cultivation of organic produce reduces the need for chemical fertilisers, thus having a positive impact on the environment, and respondents conveyed a sense of pride that they were taking a proactive role. For the community, who now had a communal piece of land for growing organic crops, the effect on their natural capital was very important to them. One woman stated "I do not have any land with our house; it is only the building so to be able to use this area for crops is good". Respondents told of the additional food they were able to produce which Care encouraged them to sell to home-stay operators as well as at market. With food being top priority on their basic needs evaluation this was a significant output, and one man illustrated this by explaining how he now has space to grow peas, which he traded for extra rice for feeding his family. From the perspective of the home-stay operators it was also beneficial as two of the families acknowledged that they can now obtain more of the food for tourists locally.

Overall, Care's outputs in terms of natural capital are not far reaching, but, to the people involved, they have had a significant impact on their ability to provide additional food for their families, and sell and trade more at higher prices due to their organic nature. Yet besides from the technical training and the acquisition of this one piece of land, respondents were unable to proffer any other benefits.

### **Natural capital and the Runatupari project**

It was a similar scenario in the Runatupari project whereby respondents generally struggled to provide definitive answers as to the project's natural capital outputs.

UNORCAC, Runatupari's umbrella organisation, claimed that they seek to promote environmental preservation and utilise natural resources in a sustainable manner, but there appears to be a disparity in their tourism activities. Although the respondents did not speak of any adverse impacts, there was only one significant positive output which was mentioned. Several respondents discussed that the project had informed people about caring for the surrounding environment and as a result "there is not as much litter as before". One respondent also said he had been made to realise that "as a resource, our land is the most important to attract tourists and now people are beginning to realise that there are alternative uses for it". He was referring to attracting tourists who would use the land for hiking, which in turn would mean higher tourist numbers and increased knock-on effects. At this stage, it was difficult to identify the actual outputs of this, but it does show how integrated different elements of livelihoods are. However, since Runatupari respondents did not rank communal land or medicinal plants high in their basic needs list, it is understandable why they have not granted natural capital much attention.

In brief, it is evident that the Tropic project is harnessing the most significant natural capital outputs. The respondents talk positively of the way this affected their livelihoods and even the construction of the eco-lodge has strengthened environmental awareness in the community. The Care and Runatupari projects, though, are seriously lacking in natural capital benefits, and generally respondents struggled to identify how any such outputs had impacted on their livelihoods.

#### **5.4 Comparisons of outputs**

It is clear that from the perspectives of the communities certain projects were doing well in some areas of contributing to livelihoods, and not so well in other areas. In accordance with past research studies (Murphy & Roe, 2004; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007), the perceptions of the capital outputs were directly linked to people's perceptions of the overall success of the projects. Therefore, to conclude the analysis of these outputs the following sections summarise these comparisons of these in terms of main positives and main negatives.

##### **5.4.1 Main positive outputs**

Table 5.6 combines the main positive outputs from each of the capital output sections above, and it clearly shows the differences and similarities in the way in which the projects were impacting upon livelihoods. Overall, despite the fact that the three projects were operated by very different organisations, it is possible to see trends in terms of their core strengths.

**Table 5.6 Comparisons of perceived positive project outputs**

<i>Positives</i>	<b>TROPIC OUTPUTS</b>	<b>CARE OUTPUTS</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI OUTPUTS</b>
<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained construction workers (transferable)</li> <li>• Trained lodge workers (skills in hygiene)</li> <li>• Access to transport for emergency medical care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embroidery training (increase in sales)</li> <li>• Rise in disposable income (spent on further education)</li> <li>• Tourism training for communities not involved (improving knowledge to start a venture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained construction workers (transferable)</li> <li>• Rise in disposable income (spent on further education)</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalising of women's group (empowerment)</li> <li>• Strengthening position of community (fight for land protection)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of tourism action groups (community cohesion in working towards a common goal)</li> <li>• Empowerment for home-stay operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building of relationships within communities through supply chain</li> <li>• Empowerment for home-stay operators</li> </ul>
<b>PHYSICAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canoes for access to market</li> <li>• Plane for access to emergency medical care</li> <li>• Eco-lodge (ownership to be transferred)</li> <li>• Campsite (ownership to be transferred)</li> <li>• Laundry facility (easier for washing clothes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of prickly pear production plant (increased production and sales)</li> <li>• Influence on more frequent buses (easier access to market for communities)</li> <li>• Potential for road improvements (more bus routes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-stay construction (financial gain for families)</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCIAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant financial outputs for 22% of respondents</li> <li>• Money used to invest in houses, support families, save for college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant financial outputs for 11% of respondents</li> <li>• Money used for education, food, clothing</li> <li>• None of the home-stay fee retained by Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant financial outputs for 38% of respondents</li> <li>• Money used for education, food, clothing, investment in livestock</li> <li>• Effective local supply chain which is spreading financial benefits</li> </ul>
<b>NATURAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in river pollution (health benefits)</li> <li>• Land protection (food and water access)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in organic produce (higher sell rate for producers)</li> <li>• Acquisition of land for communal crops (more food for families and to sell)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaner surrounding environment (more attractive for tourists)</li> </ul>

For example, the training of construction workers in the Tropic and Runatupari projects conveyed very similar outputs in terms of transferable skills for future employment. Also, Runatupari and Care respondents both placed emphasis on the empowerment felt by home-stay operators and the increase in income the project had resulted in. Using this additional income to pay for higher education for children was a prevalent theme throughout and, even those who were not as directly involved, were aspiring to this. The other key pattern was the respondents' knowledge of the tourism project in all three cases. All participants appeared to have sound knowledge of the project aims and, although they sometimes disagreed with them, they were at least aware of its operations, even if they were not involved. This demonstrates a very positive attribute of all three projects as they have obviously made a conscious effort to make their presence known, and to explain to communities what they were trying to accomplish. Although it is clear to see that patterns exist, there are also some very different outputs which may be a result of the operations adopted by the organisation, and these will consequently be addressed in the next chapter.

Tropic's outputs were most prominent in the areas of social, physical and natural capital. These livelihood outputs were judged to be the most positive of the three projects and, despite certain criticisms from respondents, the impact on poverty reduction was voiced by the majority. For example, according to the participants, the Tropic project has been quite successful at technically aiding and encouraging the formation of more formalised women's groups to sell arts and crafts.

Although the Runatupari project has not had such an output, it has had an impact on the local supply chain and encouraged the purchasing of food for tourists from local people, which is building relationships of exchange within the communities. Runatupari was the most successful in contributing to financial capital. As well as the supply chain, they have fifteen home-stay operators who have supplemented their income by an average of 25% per year, which is a considerable increase. Yet this was the only area which in Runatupari was considered the most successful in terms of its outputs, and in other areas of capital the respondents did not discuss as many positive outputs as for the other two project areas.

Evidence presented by respondents for the Care project indicated the organisation's success in impacting upon human capital. Their focus on training and capacity building has ultimately resulted in this, and examples showed that these had knock-on effects on financial gain and had contributed to improving education for certain families. Although Care's outputs were often limited to a few individuals, it was clear that for these respondents the effects were significant, such as the communal land that they

now have access to for growing crops. If these outputs were echoed across other geographical areas involved in the project, it is likely that the benefits will be much more obvious, but the sheer geographical scale of the project would require significantly more resources for this to happen.

#### **5.4.2 Main negative outputs**

All three projects were criticised by some respondents across all aspects of livelihood capital. In accordance with the literature which recognises that it can often be only a select few who benefit from tourism projects (Mowforth & Munt, 2003), these criticisms were perhaps to be expected. Table 5.7 compares these negative outputs, and it is suggested that these are linked to the way the projects were operated. Generally, all projects showed significant weaknesses which could be altered to contribute to livelihoods in a more positive way. It is evident that where some points were noted as strengths, they are also highlighted as weaknesses for other members of the communities, depending on how involved they were and how they were benefiting. This demonstrates that, despite the relative success of all three projects, there still exists a divide between beneficiaries and more isolated community members. Furthermore, it is interesting that where there are very limited strengths, such as for natural capital in Runatupari, there are also limited weaknesses, since Runatupari respondents could not discern any negatives either. This does show that a project may not always be detrimental, even if it is not beneficial in certain aspects.

Although human capital was discussed as one of the most positive outputs of all three projects, it was also seen to be the most important for many respondents. Consequently, the negative outputs here raised serious concerns for the communities. In all three projects, the table shows the weaknesses relating to health and education. Despite the fact that those who have benefited financially are able to improve their children's education, the majority see no discernable educational outputs. Tropic is the only project to show any healthcare outputs, through the availability of the aircraft for emergency use, but there were none offered as responses for the other projects. Table 5.7 also clearly shows that all three projects have weaknesses in the way they are altering social dynamics. Each project has either strengthened the position of the elite, or else created a group of elites, who now hold the most power in decision making related to the tourism projects. These trends demonstrate that social animosity, no matter who is organising the project, can be an inevitable negative output. The level of animosity may be determined by pre-existing factors in the community, but it is evident that the tourism projects are not aiding this in any way. The remaining negative outputs are different across the projects, which could be a

result of the different ways the projects are operated and managed. Consequently, this will be discussed in the next chapter (refer to section 6.5).

**Table 5.7 Comparisons of perceived negative project outputs**

<i>Negatives</i>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>RUNATUPARI</b>
<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No education outputs</li> <li>External labour rather than local training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education outputs limited to 3 respondents</li> <li>No health outputs</li> <li>Critique of the resources designated to training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No health outputs</li> <li>Education outputs limited to families operating home-stays</li> <li>No 'social fund' to contribute to schools or health dispensaries</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only working with elite members of community</li> <li>Negative alteration in social dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening the positions of the existing elites</li> <li>Action groups not well facilitated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created an elite group of home-stay operators</li> <li>Isolates other community members</li> </ul>
<b>PHYSICAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lodge ownership eventually may cause conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only improved two bus links</li> <li>Just one facility in one community</li> <li>Critiques of lack of tangible benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No 'social fund' to improve facilities</li> <li>Physical evidence limited to home-stay construction</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCIAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees are not employed all year round- only work when there are tourists</li> <li>Supply chain does not appear to be very prevalent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Least amount of respondents benefiting financially</li> <li>Significant income generated for home-stay operators but very limited out-with this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 50% of fee retained by Runatupari-respondents could have been earning a lot more</li> </ul>
<b>NATURAL CAPITAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of the lodge</li> <li>Widening forest trails</li> <li>Scaring animals so limiting hunting prospects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very limited to organic food produce</li> <li>Organic food may not always be in demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No discernable outputs</li> </ul>

## 5.5 Conclusion

The chapter has identified and compared the outputs of the three projects at the micro level. This correlates to the third objective of the research, which provides an important analytical basis for the remainder of the study. Through analysis of basic needs and different categories of livelihood impacts, the chapter has sought to assess exactly what are the outputs of the projects and how this affects community capital, based on

partial community representation. The chapter has also identified which projects are most successful, according to the respondents, in each of the livelihood categories. As a result, the chapter was able to conclude that the Tropic project was considered most successful overall in terms of its outputs, despite the lowest number of tourists.

The chapter commenced with an identification of the basic needs as perceived by respondents in each project area. This was done using a ranking exercise and the categories were specified by the respondents themselves and were not prompted by the researcher. There were some important differences between the project respondents in terms of needs. For example, water was not as important as health in the Tropic project, and cash was considerably more important for Runatupari respondents than for the others. This helped to determine what was important to each of the groups which was subsequently used to help evaluate their responses.

In several cases the chapter has shown that, despite their focus on tangible assets during needs analysis, it was aspects of human and social capital which were granted the most attention during the follow-up interviews. Across all three projects these were the most substantial impacts, as perceived by the respondents, and the areas which respondents spoke most positively about. Respondents identified how the training they had received, such as construction, had become transferable skills, which they were able to apply elsewhere. Men in the Runatupari and Tropic projects told of how they had worked construction in other areas following this training, and a few had even secured permanent jobs in the industry. This demonstrated what training can accomplish, as these men were providing an improved standard of living for their families. However, health and education were listed as top priorities when identifying basic needs but, as yet, these aspects have been neglected outputs. It is recognised that it is not the job of tourism projects to contribute to all aspects of livelihoods (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001) and health and education, in some instances, were seen by respondents to be the responsibility of the government. However, others believed that the project operators could have designated a social fund to help with these facilities. Despite this, there were notable outputs including the access to an aircraft for emergency medical care in the Tropic project.

Overall, impacts on social capital were viewed positively by respondents, and the formation of women's groups and tourism action groups was seen as a considerable output that had strengthened positions and created empowerment. Social capital outputs specifically illustrated Giddens' (1984) concept of actor knowledgeability, and the growing influence and input of community residents was evident across all three projects. Although the next chapters will discuss structural constraints for the projects

in greater depth, here it is important to recognise the extent of community influence within the structure of the tourism projects, and how this influence has resulted in several key positive outputs. However, certain respondents were very critical and spoke of the alteration of social dynamics which created elite groups, which is highlighted in some literature as a detriment to tourism projects (Schilcher, 2007).

Respondents from the Tropic project discussed the natural capital outputs of the project and the project's potential to achieve more in the future. Whereas respondents from the other two projects only discussed one or two discernable outputs, to which they granted minimal enthusiasm. The Tropic project had accomplished considerable physical capital outputs which had knock-on benefits to their livelihoods. Yet the physical outputs of the other two projects, although limited, had very noticeable impacts for the respondents involved. For example, the construction of the prickly pear production plant for the residents in Marisalle (Care) was going to aid them in higher financial income, better organisation, and future prospects for expansion, such as exportation. Likewise, the home-stay construction funded by Runatupari had provided these families with higher levels of income, increased their liquid assets, and elevated their positions in the communities.

The chapter presented an array of conflicting opinions on the livelihood impacts, supporting literature which dismisses the existence of a homogenous community (e.g. Mason & Cheyne, 2000; Ryan, 2002; Tosun, 2002). Throughout the chapter there were controversial statements made, and evidence showed animosity towards those who were the main beneficiaries of the projects. Others, who were part of the supply chain and felt the benefits of the projects, were more positive and understood that it was often not possible for tourism to benefit all, reaffirming conclusions drawn from the literature. In contrast, however, some literature suggested that reducing poverty through tourism should be based on the concept of equity, and was relatively critical of growth (Rodrik, 2000; Schilcher, 2007). But in each of the projects the room for growth was substantial, and the limited tourist numbers hindered the potential spread of livelihood benefits. The concept, therefore, that equity should outweigh growth is perhaps exaggerated.

Each of the livelihood categories were linked together by several respondents. For example, respondents stated that training and capacity building could create more employment meaning a rise in earnings, showing how outputs of social capital lead to financial capital. Likewise, an increase in income resulted in improved education for their children which highlights the link between financial capital and human capital. Conversely, the linkages between different aspects of capital were not always positive,

and respondents who were annoyed at the development to people's personal properties (home-stay development) linked this to a change in social dynamics, thus demonstrating a negative link with social capital.

The potential of the projects to achieve more was recognised across all three projects. Respondents often used the phrases "perhaps in the future..." and "eventually it is possible this could benefit..." This shows that, despite respondents' criticisms, they do see the advantages of having a tourism project and external assistance. Several respondents were aware that these types of projects compete with Ecuador's main attraction, the Galapagos Islands, but they had a positive outlook with regards to the future of the projects.

In conclusion, the chapter has shown that the Tropic project had the most significant positive outputs. This contradicts the general consensus of the literature which asserts that the private sector is driven by profits (Miller, 2001; Simon, 2005), and unlikely to harness significant livelihood benefits in the way that the development sector is. However, the development sector was criticised in the some literature for their lack of accountability and contribution to poverty reduction (Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Lewis, 2002). Yet the evidence has shown that there are significant benefits of their involvement, and many respondents spoke positively of their operations and outputs. Each of the projects had different methods of contributing to people's livelihoods, which affects the local outputs. Consequently, it is important to analyse the management and operations of the projects to demonstrate the links between meso level operations and micro level impacts, and explore the relationships between structure and agency within the context of these three projects.

## 6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to fulfil objective four of the study, which proposes to analyse the meso level operational environments of the projects. As per the conceptual framework, the meso level environment is related to the operational activities, the barriers and challenges faced by the project operators, and actor networks surrounding the projects in Ecuador. Chapter 5 specifically focused on micro level outputs of the projects, whereas this chapter focuses on the operational environments of the projects at country level. This will present evidence as to how networks, operational activities and challenges impact upon the livelihood outputs, and will also assess the links to the macro level environment. Giddens' structuration theory has been considered throughout to explore the duality of structure and agency at the meso level.

In order to achieve this aim, the chapter addresses five areas which were drawn out of the conceptual framework, with a particular focus on network theory and the challenges surrounding tourism and poverty reduction. These issues also had a direct impact upon the livelihood outputs, thus demonstrating the link between how projects are operated at the meso level, and how outputs are translated at the micro level. Firstly, the chapter discusses the operational activities and management of the projects, and assesses how the project operators address certain barriers and challenges in day-to-day management. These include: operational activities, for example, the project typologies and the challenges these bring; access to the market and product offering; location and transport access; and the capacity to meet tourist expectations. Secondly, an analysis of networks surrounding the three projects at the meso level is presented, which is important due to the effect on the levels of cooperation, technical expertise, and financial resources available. Furthermore, it demonstrates the relationships of exchange and power of agency within the tourism projects. Thirdly, alternate agendas for supporting the projects are discussed, as many respondents believed that the organisation/company had an ulterior motive for being involved, and they stressed that this directly affected the way the projects were operated and managed. Fourthly, the chapter analyses how this was often linked to raised, or different, expectations of collaborating with an external organisation on a local project. The communities had preconceptions of both development organisations and tour operators, and this also affected the way in which they perceived the successes and failures of the projects. Finally, issues of project longevity are discussed, as many questions were raised about the level of commitment of the different project operators. Respondents from the communities, and interviewees from other organisations, queried just how successful the projects could actually be because of this issue.

The evidence was gathered from a variety of sources, including: responses given by community respondents, interviews with the project operators, interviews with other organisations and individuals familiar with the projects, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Tourism Organisation Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (WTO-STEP) programme, Rainforest Alliance, and the Ecuadorian Sustainable Tourism Alliance (ESTA), other tour operators in the area, and Arnaldo Rodriguez (Green Consulting), a local sustainable tourism consultant. The variety of respondents has facilitated a robust discussion, considering different opinions, stakeholders and agendas. Combined with secondary data in the form of reports and other documentation on the projects, the chapter discusses the differences and similarities in the project operational activities, and their subsequent successes and failures.

## **6.2 Operational activities and management of the projects**

Each of the three projects is operated in a different manner and, although each project operator is attempting to contribute to livelihoods, they have all selected very different types of projects. In addition, they all manage them in different ways, and each has certain barriers which affect their ability to contribute to livelihoods. Bennett *et al* (1999) asserted that “numerous projects that have tried to develop local tourism enterprises have failed due to, for example, short-term approaches, insufficient attention to project viability and marketing, and internal community divisions” (Bennett *et al*, 1999: 28). These examples are also included in Ashley’s (2002) methodology for assessing PPT case studies. Ashley (2002) identifies several barriers to participation of the poor in tourism, which are applicable to the projects in question to demonstrate logistical barriers that hinder the likely success of the projects. Thus, Ashley (2002) states that it is important to analyse, firstly, the operational activities of the projects; secondly, access to the market and the product offering; thirdly, the location of the projects and the difficulties associated with transport access; and, finally, the capacity to meet tourist expectations. Due to cooperation agreements, and exchange of technical and financial resources, it is not only the project operators which stipulate how they are run, but the other stakeholders as well. This section aims to detail the main differences and similarities between the operations of the projects and assess whether this affects the outputs.

### **6.2.1 Operational activities**

The operational activities of the Runatupari project primarily focus on home-stay operations, and they provide funding and training to families wishing (and eligible, in

terms of the condition of their current property) to become involved in tourism. Its operations are managed by the Runatupari office in Otavalo, and not by the actual community. Despite certain livelihood outputs, the project does not contribute to community empowerment to the same extent as the other two projects. Their approach focuses on empowering certain families, which the previous chapter showed to cause animosity and tension within the community.

Care has such a profound focus on capacity building and networking that criticisms were made about the lack of concrete, tangible results. Other organisations, such as USAID and STEP, criticised their approach and questioned their ability to contribute to livelihoods. It was suggested that all Care were essentially doing, was uniting certain tourism products together under the 'Care umbrella'. This approach to fulfilling their objectives was viewed by some to be a failsafe option, as it did not require any physical construction, funding to improve tourist facilities, or the technical knowledge necessary to start from scratch. However, in theory, the idea of creating such a network whereby small businesses and communities are collaborating should be a fruitful option (Ashley & Haysom, 2005; Halme, 2001; March & Wilkinson, 2009). Care's approach to bridging the gap between community development and private enterprises goes some way to enforcing theories suggested by proponents of pro-poor tourism: that creating linkages between the private sector and communities is pivotal in the development of tourism in LEDCs (e.g. Ashley, 2005; Meyer, 2008). This demonstrates the power of agency to promote a change of structure, represented in a shift from community-based tourism, as an alternative to main-stream tourism, to the recognition that tourism requires the assistance and input of the private sector if it aims to contribute to poverty reduction (Ashley & Haysom, 2005; Meyer, 2008; Gordillo *et al*, 2009). Yet the outputs discussed in the previous chapter showed the limited livelihood benefits thus far, which was suggested to partly be a result of the operations and management of the project.

The Tropic project is, again, operated very differently. It was suggested by Jorge Fabre, an ex-Tropic guide, that the project would have been much more beneficial for the community if they had concentrated on home-stays, rather than the construction of the lodge and pending campsite. As it is, the lodge can only employ a handful of people, and there are no plans for further expansion. Choosing this type of operation in order to fulfil their objectives required considerable financial investment, more than what would have been required for home-stay development. However, Tropic must be able to compete with other products in the Ecuadorian Amazon, which equates to several luxurious tourist lodges. Coupled with supplementing their physical assets, it is understandable why a lodge was constructed instead of focusing on home-stay

development, as Tropic wanted to provide the community with a tangible asset which they collectively own, rather than individual improvements for home-stays.

### **6.2.2 Access to the market and product offering**

The introduction to the study highlighted that the focus on the Galapagos Islands by tourism stakeholders in Ecuador was so profound, that it caused mainland tourism to be neglected. There is a serious lack of attention and resources placed on mainland community-based tourism or small-scale tourism projects. Ashley (2002) cites inadequate access to the tourism market and lack of “product” as barriers to participation of the poor in tourism and, in the case of Ecuador, competing with the Galapagos Islands product and the market share it occupies, is a distinct challenge for the three projects in question. As a consequence, the operators of all three projects viewed them as supplements to Galapagos Islands tours, rather than stand-alone products which would encourage people to visit the mainland, which Journey Latin America (2009) describe as a country “with staggering geographical diversity” (Journey Latin America, 2009: 90). However, with the cost of embarking on a Galapagos Islands tour increasingly on the rise<sup>7</sup>, the markets that these projects are aiming at are vastly reduced. Tourists must have additional financial resources to afford another element to their holiday, and also, the time to embark on such ventures (Carvalho (Tropic) 2008: personal communication). Unlike a safari holiday in Africa, whereby the safari element may only consume two or three days, Galapagos Island tours can last up to two or three weeks, leaving very little disposable time for other activities. Several tourists interviewed in Quito, stated they were just stopping over for a night on their way to or from the Islands, and did not have time to do anything else on the mainland. One tourist stated “the only way I would have time to visit one of them [the projects in question] would be if I was travelling for a few weeks...but I’m on a two week holiday from work, so it just isn’t feasible”. It was also argued that marketing these projects as add-ons is simply not feasible, as it is the wrong tourist segment. Hamilton McNutt, sustainable tourism specialist for ESTA, stated that “for the Galapagos tourists, these are the people that can afford \$4000 for a five day trip. They don’t care about social projects and home-stays. The majority of them are scared of the developing world, they don’t like it and they don’t want to deal with it” (McNutt 2008: personal communication). This view supports the notion that the projects should be promoted as stand-alone attractions, and not just supplements to Galapagos Island tourism.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, a 20 day Galapagos Island trip with Exodus Travel in 2007 cost £3,569: in 2010 the same trip costs £4,249, which is an increase of more than 19% in a three year period.

All three projects claim to offer a unique experience in terms of cultural interaction, knowledge exchange, and sense of being off-the-beaten-track. Yet some interviewees raised the fundamental question of whether or not these types of holiday would ever be able to compete with the world-renowned Galapagos Islands, or indeed any of the number of luxury lodges in the Amazon Rainforest, such as the Kapawi Lodge or the Napo Wildlife Resort. Care offers tourists an amalgamation of many different activities and cultures, which were covered in the project backgrounds (refer to section 4.4). Essentially, this should mean that there is such a diverse range of options that the project caters for a broad market and offers an attractive package for tourists. Runatupari claim to offer a unique experience of Andean community life, which engages people in the day-to-day life of its residents, as well as various activities. Tropic, again, claims to offer a completely unique experience with the Huaorani, where tourists learn and participate in the daily activities of a remote tribe. The fact remains, however, that to become attractions in their own right, they require much more concerted efforts towards marketing. It was also observed that many tourists visit mainland Ecuador for its abundance of adventure-based activities. Developing the projects to attract more adventure tourists may be one method which would aid in supplementing tourist numbers, and cater to market desires. For example, one tourist stated, "I come to Ecuador nearly every year, but I always go to Baños because it has the best range of activities". It is suggested that marketing these projects as add-ons, rather than stand-alone reasons to visit Ecuador, belittles their value, and reduces the likelihood of accessing the largest possible share of the market. There is vast room for product development, and adventure tourism could be emphasised more as part of the projects, which would cater for the wants of many mainland tourists. Visitor numbers are relatively low, meaning the livelihood outputs of the projects are not maximised. Developing the product and increasing marketing efforts could play a crucial role in rectifying this problem.

Comparing the projects shows that the Tropic project is far more advanced in terms of product development and diverse itineraries. They also market the project as much as possible, and attend travel fairs to increase the profile, including the World Travel Market in London. It is suggested, therefore, that the private tour operator is once again, better equipped and has more resources to drive the success of a project such as this. Again, it is questioned whether the other two projects have the support which would enable them to achieve similar recognition in the future.

### 6.2.3 Location and transport access

Another barrier detailed by Ashley (2002) was the projects location and transport access. Müller and Jansson (2007) state that peripheral communities are at a major disadvantage because of their location, and additional time taken to reach them. For both the Tropic and Care projects, this issue was raised by the operators and communities as a hindrance which ensues lower tourist numbers, and fewer repeat visits. The Tropic project is very difficult to access, and requires almost a full days travelling from Quito, involving a five to six hour drive from Quito to Shell<sup>8</sup>, and a forty-five minute flight from Shell to the Huaorani territory. It was observed that adverse weather conditions are a regular occurrence, rendering the flight from Shell impossible due to decreased visibility. If this is the case, tourists must spend a night, or sometimes more, in Shell where there are few attractions. If tourists are on a time schedule, or the lodge is fully booked, then they are unable to make up for their lost day at the end of their trip, resulting in valuable time wasted. Although Tropic do compensate for this, it remains a frustration for tourists since the average length of stay is between three and four nights: a relatively short timeframe to complete all of the activities. A Canadian tourist, who experienced this delay due to weather conditions, stated "I know it's not their fault but I can't help feeling like there should be an alternative...you get so excited about something and then it's delayed and we miss a day of our trip". This view was echoed by Fabre (ex-Tropic), who revealed "we ask for feedback...if they have had a delay because of the weather then the feedback is not so good" (Fabre 2008: personal communication). Appendix 11 details the questionnaire given tourists at the end of their trip. He also discussed that, although many tourists say the experience is worth the effort of getting there, that it deters potential tourists when they realise it is far away. The Napo Wildlife Centre, one of the eco-lodge's main competitors, is easier for tourists to access from Quito, and Fabre believed that the Tropic lodge would consequently "never be able to compete" (Fabre 2008: personal communication). In contrast, one couple who had visited the Tropic lodge, found its location to be part of the attraction, and felt they were venturing further off-the-beaten-track, making the whole experience "more unique", supporting research literature that remoteness can be an advantage for communities (Wang, 1999; Urry, 2002). Transport access for the Tropic project though, was generally viewed by the community as a barrier which limited the number of tourists and the subsequent livelihood outputs for the local people. This is not to say that Tropic should have selected a different location, as they have a long relationship with the Huaorani and the project was part of

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<sup>8</sup> The town, Shell, was named after the oil company due to the abundance of oil in the area and the company's heavy presence.

the company's vision when it was first established. However, other access routes could rectify this barrier.

Campaigning for improvements to the roads, and petitioning to increase the bus frequency in some of the more remote areas of the Care project, was viewed by community respondents as a positive physical capital output in the previous chapter. However, there was still frustration at the lack of infrastructural improvements in relation to transport access, and some respondents believed that this was drastically reducing their tourist numbers. A respondent in Marisalle, one of the communities furthest from Quito, stated "we are too far away from Quito and the roads are dangerous...the buses are infrequent and slow so why would tourists decide to come here when they can get to easier places?" Although she discussed the uniqueness of their product offering, many community respondents were cynical of the potential of their tourism offering to entice tourists to such remote areas. Without improved access, the Care project operators also agreed that tourist numbers were unlikely to grow, although they still maintained that a tourism project was the best livelihood option. Furthermore, the communities and businesses involved in the Care project cover a wide geographical area which, firstly, makes it difficult to amalgamate these into a trail for tourists, and, secondly, makes it difficult for the Care project operators to visit them on a regular basis. The result of this was a lack of contact with Care, reduced capacity-building workshops, and difficulty for the community representatives to attend meetings, which Care held in Quito. Consequently, questions were raised as to the likelihood of involving this community to the same extent as others which are closer to the Care Ecuador office in Quito. It is suggested that raised expectations have contributed to the disappointment in this scenario, and therefore this topic will be covered further in section 6.5.

Location and transport access is of less concern for the Runatupari project. The office where tourists organise their trips is based in Otavalo, a one hour bus ride from Quito, which is frequently serviced every half an hour during the day. From Otavalo, all of the home-stays are located within a ten mile radius: a minimal fare in a local taxi. Furthermore, Otavalo itself is a major tourist attraction and hosts the largest daily market in northern Ecuador. Therefore, the Runatupari office benefits from frequent passing trade, although as previously discussed, still suffers from over-supply and under-demand.

#### **6.2.4 Capacity to meet tourist expectations**

Ashley (2002) refers to key issues that result in a failure to meet tourists' expectations. It was discussed in the research literature that managing tourists expectations of

community tourism projects is far more challenging than, for example, a five star hotel. Butcher (2003) and Uriely, (2005) argue that it is usually because tourists are seeking an existential experience, which is unique to every person, therefore making it very difficult to anticipate what expectations may be.

The foremost issue, which was prevalent in all three projects, was the language barrier. The lack of English education was profoundly evident in all communities visited. Many tourists stated that they do not venture off-the-beaten-track as they are unable to communicate to an extent which enables them to effectively enjoy or learn from the experience. McNutt (ESTA) also expressed his concerns about the lack of English: "they would improve the product so much more if they spoke English...I'm worried about home-stay programmes, the thing is you go there to be immersed but if there's no English then its hard" (McNutt 2008: personal communication). Those who had visited one of the projects in question confessed that they did find it frustrating, but simultaneously felt guilty for expecting people to speak English, especially in such remote areas. Furthermore, it should also be noted that for, many communities in the Care and Runatupari project areas, Spanish was their second language after Quechan, and it is therefore Spanish which they are taught at school and not English. The same applied for the Tropic project where the community speak Spanish as a second language after the Huaorani dialect. A couple who had stayed in one of the luxury lodges along the Napo River, and also in a home-stay in the Runatupari project claimed they had enjoyed the very different experiences. However, after discussing the relatively high standard of English language ability at the lodge, they conveyed that they "loved the home-stay but our Spanish isn't that great and we found it difficult to understand each other sometimes...I got so irritated having to mime things!" The tourists stated that they had simply expected that English would be spoken, and that the manager in the Runatupari office had not informed them that it would be any different. Yet they also confessed that they had not thought to enquire.

The evidence shows that this was an aspect of failing to meet tourist expectations. Although it could also be argued that tourist expectations are too high and/or misled, since there was actually no reason for tourists to believe or assume that people will speak English. When members of the communities were questioned on English education, the majority of respondents confessed that it is essential in order to improve their tourism product. One woman, who shows tourists how to spin wool, explained that she had to convey instructions through a translator, and she was not certain they were being translated properly. She stated that the whole experience would be enhanced for both parties if she was able to speak their language. However, there were also some positives derived from the language barrier. One girl in Santa Barbara

in the Runatupari project, who was learning the basics of English, told of how some tourists who came to stay at the home-stay would help her with her homework, demonstrating transferral of knowledge and another impact on human capital. Other members of communities noted that it often made them practice their English if tourists were unable to converse in Spanish, whereas otherwise they “would be lazy and never try to speak English”.

A second issue with meeting tourist expectations was the standard of accommodation. It would be reasonable to assume that tourists planning to stay in a home-stay would expect to live as the family do, and not have luxuries or home-comforts. However, several tourists interviewed, who had visited home-stays in the Care and Runatupari projects, said they were happy they had tried a home-stay, but in future were more likely to opt for a hotel. Reasons for this included uncomfortable beds, lack of hot water (or, in some instances, any water), feeling uncomfortable in someone else’s home, cold and draughty rooms, and a dislike for the food. Others would say however, that these reasons are the exact motives why people stay in home-stays: to experience the lives and conditions of the family they are staying with and “to take you out of your comfort zone”, as described by one backpacker. For the Care and Runatupari projects, in particular, managing expectations was viewed as a problem which both are failing to adequately deal with. In order to satisfy the tourists and encourage word-of-mouth marketing, it is critical that this issue is addressed. The Tropic project succeeds better at this, as tourists are provided with a pack before they arrive, which gives detailed information about the accommodation, the language barriers, environmental and social considerations, and clear outlines of the itinerary (see Appendix 12). It is suggested, therefore, that a private operator is far better equipped to control tourist expectations, hence reducing the likelihood of disappointment, and increasing the chances of word-of-mouth marketing. Generally, the tourism expertise and increased understanding of tourist satisfaction plays a considerable role in this, and this lack of understanding by the development sector presents a prime example for encouraging cross-sector collaboration, which is also advocated in recent studies (e.g. Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008; Zhao & Brent Ritchie, 2007; Stronza, 2008; Gordillo Jordan *et al*, 2009).

Overall, the issues within this section have sought to clarify some of the challenges facing the project operators, and assess how they have dealt with these. Location and transport access were obviously considerable problems for the Care and Tropic projects, and less-so for the Runatupari project. Yet the Runatupari project has difficulty accessing the market and with product development, due to the lack of expertise. The manner in which each of the project operators has approached these problems still leaves much to be questioned. Concerns were rife amongst the

communities and other organisations, and it is evident that these issues must be addressed in order to further develop and improve the projects.

### **6.3 Analysis of actor networks**

The way in which networks impact upon project outputs was raised in the research literature as a key issue (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008; Tosun, 2002). As the DfID (1999) sustainable livelihoods framework was used as a guideline for the previous chapter on outputs, it is important to assess how it correlates to areas discussed within this chapter. Actor networks are linked to what DfID (1999) describe as “the organisations, both public and private, that set and implement policy and legislation, deliver services, purchase, trade and perform all manner of other functions that effect livelihoods” (DfID, 1999: 19). Additionally, network analysis extends beyond this to include the way in which actors interact, the level of information exchange, power relationships, and the level of shared values (Dredge, 2006a; Bramwell, 2004). The study draws upon these ideas, and shows how the actors are connected, for what reason, on what level, and what the impacts of this are. In line with Giddens’ structuration theory, exploring these networks will aid in showing whether knowledgeable and reflexive actors can lead to the duality of structure and agency within the context of these three projects. Due to the inter-relationships and power balances within them, network connectivity and shared (or non-shared) values can affect the way projects are operated and managed, subsequently impacting upon their outputs. All three project operators worked closely with other organisations, which affected the way they operated and the funds and technical expertise they had available.

#### **6.3.1 Networks and relationships**

In order to analyse the networks, it is important to consider the relationships between actors and how they are connected. Dredge (2006a) classes this as one of several dimensions of network analysis and, in this case, it is considered the most important of these dimensions. By conveying the strength of relationships, and also which organisations and individuals are linked independently of the projects, it is clear to see the density and reciprocity within the networks. Dredge (2006a) asserts that dense networks suggest higher levels of cohesion and reciprocity, whereas sparse networks demonstrate a lack of cooperation and isolation, lending itself to little innovation or support. Relationship strengths have been categorised into; ‘strong’, meaning there is a consistent working relationship with knowledge exchange, shared values and sincere understanding between the organisations/individuals; ‘medium’, equating to an exchange of financial and/or technical resources, with a relative consistency of contact

and involvement; 'weak', meaning a 'token' cooperation agreement, with little or no involvement; and 'relationship independent of the project', which shows relationships between organisations/ individuals for other projects and purposes. The network diagrams do not propose to illustrate all of the complexities, or claim to be a full analysis of actor networks within the three projects as this is not the sole focus of the study but, rather, they aim to be used as a visual aid to explain how such organisations and companies are linked to, and influenced by, other actors.

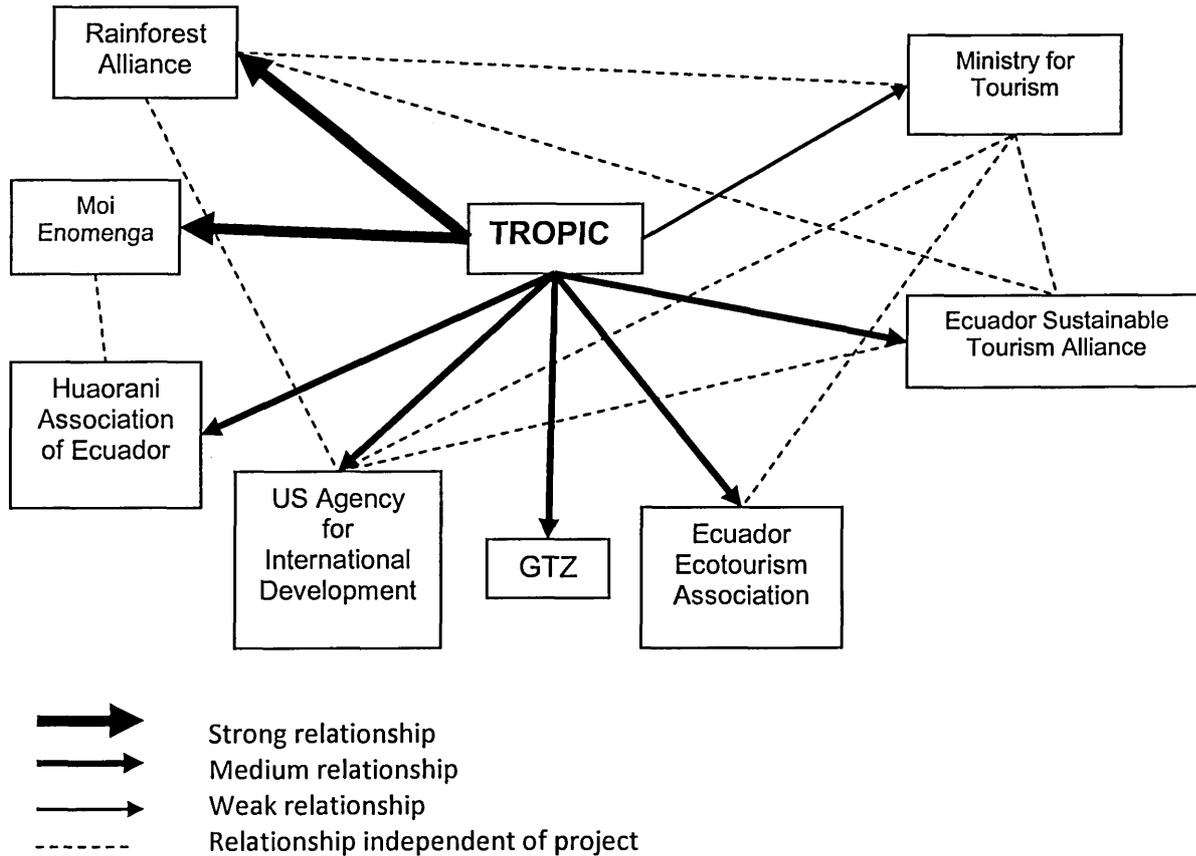
Overall, Tropic is the most well-connected organisation, with strong and medium strength relationships between several organisations, who also work with each other. Care appears to be the most isolated organisation, with few strong and medium strength relationships. Care has several weak relationships with different organisations that, incidentally, have relationships with each other independent of the projects. Runatupari have the fewest number of actors in their network, and although this is not a negative reflection, the relationships within the network are not predominantly strong either. Although Runatupari does not appear to be as isolated as Care, it does not possess the same depth of connectivity as the Tropic project. The following sections now look at each of the project networks in turn.

### **Tropic project**

Figure 6.1 shows the relative density of the network surrounding the Tropic project. They have strong relationships with Rainforest Alliance, with whom they cooperate, exchange technical expertise, and receive partial funding. The relationship with Moi Enomenga (Huaorani community leader) is also one of strength, as he is effectively the gatekeeper to the community, and provides Tropic with invaluable local knowledge, raising key concerns when they occur. The medium strength relationship with the National Huaorani Association of Ecuador (ONHAE) is mainly based around finance, as Tropic give 5% of profits to the association. ONHAE again, provide invaluable local knowledge, but they are not heavily involved in the planning or operations of the project, thus it is not classed as a strong relationship. The relationship with the Ecuadorian Ecotourism Association (ASEC) is one mainly of cooperation and shared technical expertise, with whom they have many shared values (refer to section 6.3.2). GTZ, USAID and ESTA, which was formed and funded by USAID, operate on the basis of cooperation, and they have also provided Tropic with a small amount of funding for their community projects but, again, they are not heavily involved in planning and operating the project, as is the case with Moi Enomenga and Rainforest Alliance. As a self-proclaimed agent of 'change', Tropic's relationships with these organisations, particularly, GTZ, USAID, ESTA, and the Rainforest Alliance, challenges the ordinary

patterns of institutional divisions between development organisations and the private sector (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008; Fadeeva, 2004). It is evident that Tropic are working towards altering the structural divisions between these two groups of actors, based on the number of non-private sector actors in the network surrounding the project.

**Figure 6.1 Networks and relationship strengths within the Tropic project**



The only actor with which Tropic has a weak relationship is the Ministry for Tourism, which is solely one of cooperation, equating to a ‘token agreement’ signed by both parties. These cooperation agreements are essential in Ecuador with any Ministry department for such projects, and therefore do not equate to an actual working relationship but, rather, more of permission grant to carry out project activities. The indications of relationships independent of the projects between the actors in this network, demonstrate that Tropic works together with a close-knit group of actors, many of whom have shared values irrespective of the Tropic project. This is in line with Reed (1997), who argues that having such inter-relations within networks leads to improved shared vision and similar objectives about a particular project.

However, having such links with so many organisations, results in what Dredge (2006a) describes as hostility towards innovation and changes, and difficulties with

appeasing all parties. In Tropic's case, there was a certain amount of animosity between the company and Moi Enomenga (and the community), due to the new focus on the Secoya project<sup>9</sup>. There was also tension between Tropic, USAID, ESTA and Rainforest Alliance, which Tropic were attempting to acquire additional funding from. Tropic stated that receiving money from such organisations instantly intensifies the relationship, and can lead to the funders dictating terms and conditions (refer to section 6.3.3). Tropic questioned the amount of report writing and monitoring that was involved with being linked with these organisations, and cited the bureaucracy as a strain on their working relationship. Such tensions show that, despite the benefits of a dense network with varying organisations, it also brings challenges, and suggests that such organisations have the power to influence smaller organisations to work within their own institutional structures. The way in which these networks and their tensions affected the outputs of the projects were mainly related to time. It was observed that Tropic spent a great deal of time maintaining these good relationships, often to the detriment of the project, as they were unable to focus as much attention on its operations and marketing. However, having the input of such technical expertise from the different actors could potentially contribute to further development and improvement, thus justifying the efforts made in networking. Furthermore, despite the dense network, some believed Tropic was still not receiving enough support and recognition for the work they were doing, particularly from the Ministry for Tourism. The Ministry for Tourism continually rejected applications from Tropic for assistance in funding or help-in-kind, despite claims made by several interviewees that the Ministry had large sums of money which were being unutilised. In response, Rodrigo Salas, project coordinator for the Ministry for Tourism, stated that “we know of Tropic’s good work...unfortunately the Ministry cannot provide funds for private tourism business” (Salas 2008: personal communication). Although it is understandable that a private business should not be funded by the government, Arnaldo Rodriguez, a sustainable tourism consultant and founder of Green Consulting, argued that “Tropic, to me, has the potential to change the way the industry works here...But nobody wants to support them enough because they are ‘evil’ just because they are private sector” (Rodriguez 2008: personal communication).

### **Care project**

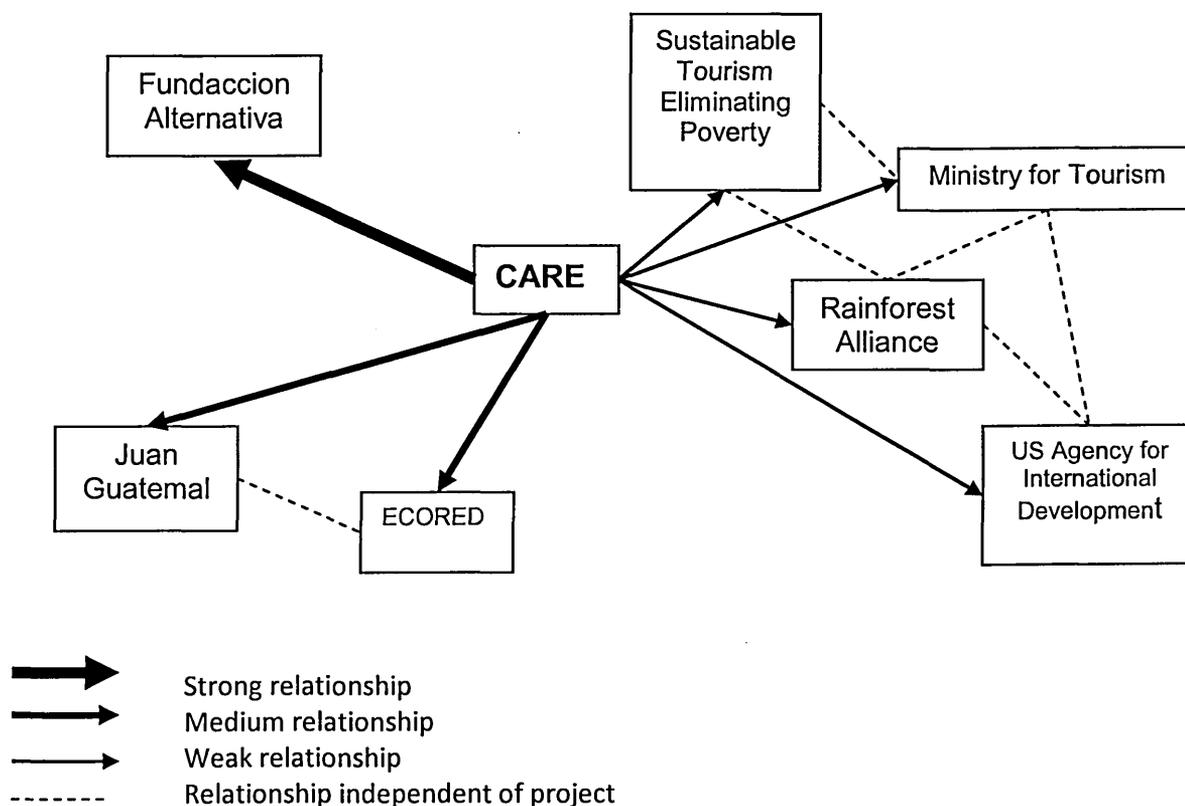
Figure 6.2 shows the relative isolation of Care, in comparison with the Tropic project. Care has one strong relationship with Fundacion Alternativa, which provides micro-

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<sup>9</sup> The Secoya project is a new community-based tourism project with another tribe, with whom Tropic are working to build campsites and develop itineraries for a new tourism product to add to their portfolio.

financing to communities and businesses within the project, based on Care's technical knowledge. Their relationship with Ecored is defined as medium strength, as it focuses on cooperation and technical expertise exchange, but contact is sporadic, meaning the relationship is not as strong as it is with Fundaccion Alternativa. Juan Guatemal is one of the key gatekeepers to the San Clemente community, one of the most popular communities on the trail, and Care have a medium strength relationship with him based on technical knowledge and cooperation, as he provides invaluable local knowledge and helps to organise community meetings in San Clemente. He also works with Ecored, and is currently trying to acquire further funding assistance from them to develop their tourism product further, showing his support for the Care project.

**Figure 6.2 Networks and relationship strengths within the Care project**



Based on discussions with Care and the other actors in the network, the remainder of the relationships are described as weak, as Care's relationships with STEP, Rainforest Alliance, USAID, and the Ministry for Tourism are solely based on cooperation which, again, equates to the signing of 'token agreements'. These cooperation agreements, which are signed by both parties to show they will collaborate and exchange technical knowledge, do not appear to be beneficial for the project, as the aforementioned organisations indicated that they do not hold the Care project in high regard, and do not offer any technical assistance. Tatiana Calderon, programme coordinator for STEP in Ecuador, confessed that "yes, we do have an agreement...really, these agreements do

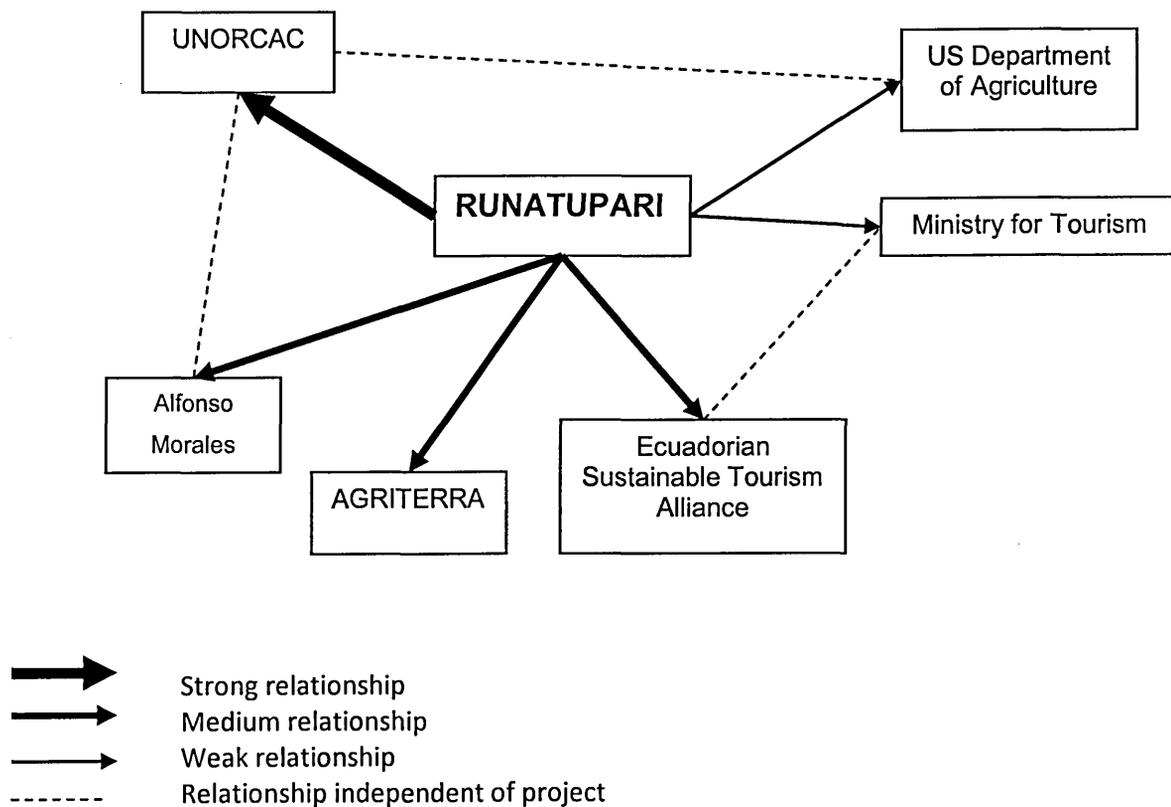
not count for much” (Calderon 2008: personal communication). However, the indicators also show that these four organisations have working relationships with each other independent of the project, and are part of a close network. This reiterates the argument that Care is relatively isolated as an organisation, as they appear not to be part of this ‘clique’. Such institutional structures and patterns of interaction seemed to reduce the power of Care as agency, as they failed in several attempts to acquire assistance from the above organisations.

Care’s isolation stems from a belief by many that the project will not be successful in the long-term. Thomas Rhodes, the director of the Economic Development, Growth, and Environment Office of USAID, disclosed his doubts over the credibility and likely success of the project. USAID were approached by Care to assist them with the current funding problem, to which USAID stated “we don’t really work with Care [on this project]...we’re not sure that the project can sustain itself in the long-term” (Rhodes 2008: personal communication), despite the existence of a signed cooperation agreement. Interviews with these organisations suggested a general feeling that the nature of the project, in terms of the large geographical scale, focus on capacity building, and lack of funding and collaboration, rendered it difficult to plan, monitor and control: all intrinsic elements of project involvement for organisations such as USAID, Rainforest Alliance, and STEP. A representative of STEP, for example, questioned “it’s just so huge...where do you start when you want to evaluate the project?” (Portillo 2008: personal communication). However, having stronger working relationships with such organisations would also cause problems for Care, in terms of altering their strategies or having to work to the institutional structures of other organisations, and consume more of their time being involved in bureaucratic processes, as is the case with Tropic. Although the benefits of having input from USAID, STEP or Rainforest Alliance may outweigh any bureaucracy, Care are accepting that they will manage with the resources they have, and Rendon (Care project) claimed that “we have already achieved some of our objectives...we can carry on doing this with or without support from others” (Rendon 2008: personal communication). This showed the confidence Care has on the project and, despite the criticisms, the strong and medium strength relationships they do have are with local organisations and individuals, which show their commitment to working within the local structure and seeking local advice, which Milne and Ateljevic (2001) argue is the only way to satisfy the demands of local communities.

## Runatupari project

Figure 6.3 shows that the Runatupari network is the least complex of the three projects, as there are fewer actors involved. On the one hand, this means they have fewer parties to appease, and avoid the bureaucracy of involving several international institutions, as Tropic do. Yet, on the other hand, the level of technical expertise and advice available to them is vastly reduced. A representative of ESTA stressed this problem, stating “the reason they are having problems is because they don’t have enough people who know about tourism and tourists...they do everything as a development organisation instead” (McNutt 2008: personal communication), and Agriterra admitted that working in tourism was a “learning curve” (van Weert 2008: personal communication). If they did have more technical knowledge available to them through networking, the project may be more beneficial for the community livelihood outputs. Furthermore, there are only three indications of relationships independent of the projects between the different actors, thus demonstrating a less dense network. This shows that the actors generally work independently of one another, meaning there is not as great an understanding mandates and objectives.

**Figure 6.3 Networks and relationship strengths within the Runatupari project**



The only strong relationship is the one shared between Runatupari and UNORCAC, as this is the organisation which established it, and continues to run the project. Agriterra,

who provided initial part-funding, is shown as a medium strength relationship, as contact between the two is no longer financially based, and is sporadic at best. Agriterra no longer believe they need to be involved in the day-to-day running of the project. Alfonso Morales is one of the key gatekeepers representing the communities, and was integral in the set-up of the operation. Evidence suggested that he is now far more concerned with his own personal gain, and was referred to by several community respondents as the 'elite' of the community, who was one of the few beneficiaries. Despite this, the relationship between him and Runatupari is still evident in terms of cooperation, and Alfonso helps to organise community meetings. Runatupari's new relationship with ESTA has also been classified as medium strength, as ESTA plan to provide the project with new innovative ideas and technical expertise regarding "long-term sustainability of the project" (McNutt 2008: personal communication). There are two weak relationships, one of which is with the Ministry for Tourism, which is the same scenario as the other two projects, showing a clear lack of involvement by the government body. Although the Ministry is aware of the Runatupari project and praised their operations, they provided no indication that they knew of their current problems, or that they would be willing to offer any assistance. Salas (Ministry for Tourism) argued that Runatupari was an established project, and that there were far more new initiatives which required assistance from the Ministry. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) also reflects a weak relationship, due to the lack of contact they actually have, despite cooperation and technical knowledge exchange agreements.

Runatupari was viewed by many of the organisations interviewed as "a good example of a community tourism project" (Calderon (STEP) 2008: personal communication), but there was also recognition that its operations had stagnated, as voiced by McNutt (ESTA). He believed that one of the main reasons for the lack of livelihood outputs was based on their lack of tourism expertise, which could be acquired from other organisations (McNutt 2008: personal communication). This lack of network connectedness could be influential in the criticisms they received from community respondents in the preceding chapter, which showed the Runatupari project to be the least successful in community participation. Without the aid of technical knowledge, it is difficult for them to be proactive in rectifying this problem, and thus, the power of agency to adjust structural constraints is reduced. However, several interviewees recognised that working with large-scale organisations also has its disadvantages, as McNutt (ESTA), stated "there's always the giant bureaucratic NGO's like USAID and TNC [The Nature Conservancy] and Rainforest Alliance; thousands of fiery hoops that you have to jump through to get things rolling, just even to get things started" (McNutt 2008: personal communication). In this sense, Rendon (Care) argued that avoiding

involvement with such organisations essentially nullifies the potential bureaucracy, leaving the project to operate more freely.

Overall, the networks and relationship strengths have different impacts on the projects. Network connectedness can be advantageous in certain situations, but cause animosity and leave projects tied up in institutional bureaucracy in other cases. In the case of the three projects discussed, it is concluded that the strength of the network relationships surrounding the Tropic project contribute to its overall success. The depth of technical knowledge Tropic is able to draw upon from various institutions, certainly contributes to the relative high degree of livelihood outputs. For the Care project, it is clear that their isolation from other organisations is hindering further development as they were unable to acquire additional funding from any of their cooperative partners when they required it in 2008, or indeed, any valuable technical support, such as product development. The Runatupari project has apparently coped well by working with local organisations and individuals, but recently, the lack of technical knowledge available to them has started to become an issue, and threatening improvement of their product offering. This in turn, hinders their tourist numbers, and subsequent livelihood outputs of the project, supporting assertions that strong networks are pivotal for successful tourism development (Gibson *et al*, 2005).

### **6.3.2 Shared and non-shared values within the networks**

Shared values between the actors involved in the projects represents network connectedness, whereby the actors are working towards a common goal (Dredge, 2006a). Figures 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 display shared and non-shared values within the three networks in matrix format, where the horizontal rows show the core values of the corresponding organisation/individual, and the vertical columns show which organisations/individuals these values are shared between. In this study, values relate to areas which the actor(s) are committed to improving and promoting. The values have been categorised into tourism, governance, business, community, and environment, which collectively reflects the core interests of the bodies involved. Tourism, as a value, refers to the actor(s) commitment to using tourism as a development strategy. The inclusion of governance as a value means that the actor(s) is involved in some form of governance in the community. The business value shows that the actor(s) is committed to promoting business opportunities, and community as a value shows a commitment to community development. The environment value shows that the actor(s) is actively involved in promoting environmental sustainability. Based on the number of shared values between the actors in each project, the matrices

indicate that the Tropic network is the strongest, followed by the Runatupari network, and that the Care network is the weakest.

Figure 6.4 shows the Tropic network, where the highest proportion of shared values can be seen in the matrix. Chapter 5 concluded that Tropic was the most successful in contributing to livelihood outputs, which is further explained by shared values shown here. These shared values indicate that even very different institutions with differing mandates share similar core ideologies, particularly their commitment to community development and environmental sustainability. This results in the collective network working towards common goals, which Dredge (2006a) claims “gives rise to opportunities for the transfer and sharing of knowledge, which are important attributes for developing innovation and competitiveness” (Dredge, 2006a: 270).

The difference between the Care project (Figure 6.5) and the Runatupari project (Figure 6.6) is negligible, where the proportion of shared values between organisations/individuals in each matrix is roughly the same. Both lacked certain aspects of livelihood outputs, such as physical and environmental capital, and this is reflected in the lesser number of shared values in their networks. In each of the three projects, the most commonly shared value is the community. All organisations within the Care and Tropic networks share this as a core value, and all but one in the Runatupari project do also, which shows that despite some failings in livelihood outputs, the community remains the central value which unites the organisations to contribute to poverty reduction and community development.

**Figure 6.4 Shared and non-shared values within the Tropic network**

	TOURISM	GOVERNANCE	BUSINESS	COMMUNITY	ENVIRONMENT
TROPIC	■	■	■	■	■
NATIONAL HUAORANI ASSOCIATION OF ECUADOR (ONHAE)	■	■	■	■	■
ECUADOR ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION (ASEC)	■	■	■	■	■
MOI ENOMENGA	■	■	■	■	■
US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)	■	■	■	■	■
RAINFOREST ALLIANCE (RA)	■	■	■	■	■
MINISTRY FOR TOURISM	■	■	■	■	■
ECUADOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ALLIANCE (ESTA)	■	■	■	■	■

**Figure 6.5 Shared and non-shared values within the Care network**

	TOURISM	GOVERNANCE	BUSINESS	COMMUNITY	ENVIRONMENT
CARE	■	■		■	■
RAINFOREST ALLIANCE (RA)		■		■	■
MINISTRY FOR TOURISM	■	■	■	■	
US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)		■	■	■	
ECORED	■			■	
FUNDACCION ALTERNATIVA			■	■	
JUAN GUATEMAL	■			■	■
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ELIMINATING POVERTY (STEP)	■			■	■

**Figure 6.6 Shared and non-shared values within the Runatupari network**

	TOURISM	GOVERNANCE	BUSINESS	COMMUNITY	ENVIRONMENT
RUNATUPARI	■		■	■	■
AGRITERRA				■	■
UNION OF RURAL ORGANISATION (UNORCAC)		■	■	■	
US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)				■	■
ALFONSO	■		■		■
MINISTRY FOR TOURISM	■	■	■	■	
ECUADOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ALLIANCE (ESTA)	■		■	■	■

**6.3.3 Relationships of power**

The discussion of networks has highlighted the importance of power balances within the projects. Relationships of power between the project operators and communities were also discussed in the previous chapter, hence it is important to analyse whether or not the communities have become dependent on the organisations and their assistance as a result of the project. Novelli and Gebhardt's (2007) study of

community based tourism in Namibia concluded that the ardent involvement of development organisations in various projects was a cause for concern, due to the dependency on the organisations for finance and technical expertise. Dependency is likely to occur wherever an external organisation is involved with a community project (Brohman, 1996; Scheyvens, 2007), reiterating the structuralist view that the dependency is the central argument when discussing tourism in LEDCs. However, the overall argument made by respondents conveyed dependency in a different manner. It was generally agreed that communities may well be dependent on financial aid and technical expertise from the external organisations/company, but the organisations/company were equally dependent on the communities, demonstrating a strong degree of actor knowledgability. This argument was particularly strong when discussing dependency with respondents in the Tropic project. As was cited by one member of the community, "Tropic needs us as much as we need them...in our own right, we have something to offer to tourists and if Tropic were not here to help then we would find an alternative way". This comment was echoed by one of the Huaorani guides, who noted that other tour operators are always interested in working with the Huaorani, due to the uniqueness of their offering: "we are in demand, so we control it to the extent we wish", and they work with Tropic, rather than other operators, as they believe Tropic value their input, and have a genuine concern for the community (Enomenga 2008: personal communication).

The communities which appeared to be the most dependent on the project operator were those involved with Runatupari. It was discussed in the previous chapter that inclusion in decision-making was seriously lacking for Runatupari communities, and that the UNORCAC have almost complete control of it. Almost a quarter of respondents believed they were already dependent on the project operator, or were in danger of becoming so, and they realised that without UNORCACs assistance, the project would not be operational. They voiced concerns that UNORCAC dictate who is eligible for home-stay development, how many there should be, how much is charged, and which home-stays tourists are encouraged to visit, meaning they had very little say in project developments.

It was also observed that there was a distinct lack of knowledge of tourism and business operations in all three project areas, which suggests that some level of dependency must exist. Given that the three organisations provide capacity building and training, it actually predates that they have a level of control, as they are the ones transferring knowledge. This appears to be in line with traditional structuralist interpretations of tourism development, whereby dependent relationships mean that communities are reliant on external actors (e.g. Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Britton,

1982), and if such actors withdraw from the project, the project cannot be operated by the community alone. However, responses from the communities effectively rendered the issue of dependency insignificant, despite its prevalence in the research literature (e.g. Schilcher, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007; Brohman, 1996), showing a gap between theory and practice.

The networks and power balances discussed have attempted to illustrate how these relationships at the meso-level affect the outputs at the micro-level. It is evident that Tropic is involved in the strongest networks, suggesting this is one of the reasons for their general success in contributing to livelihoods which were detailed in the previous chapter. This is mainly due to the amount of technical expertise they have available to them. However, it is not only the networks which influence the outputs of the project, and the following section will elaborate on some of the other main challenges facing the project operators.

#### **6.4 Alternate agendas for supporting the projects**

Some respondents associated the lack of willingness to tackle the aforementioned issues with potential alternate agendas for supporting the projects, resulting in a lack of commitment or different priorities. The research revealed that there were disparities between what the organisations stated as their motivations for supporting the project, and what the communities and other stakeholders believed them to be and several respondents referred to this as an 'alternate agenda'. For the purpose of the study, it is important to analyse this issue, as those who discussed alternate agendas strongly related them to how the projects were operated and managed. The alternate agendas of tour operators were a prevalent theme in the research literature (e.g. Wearing & McDonald, 2002). Critics (e.g. Andriotis, 2003; Carey *et al*, 1997; Wearing & McDonald, 2002; Mosedale, 2006; Dieke, 1991; Sinclair, 1992; Tapper, 2002) argue that private operators are motivated by profits, and only embark upon social or environmental projects to improve their marketing capability, compete with other tour operators, and warrant charging higher prices to tourists. However, it was concluded that although this may be the case, it does not suggest that they cannot be socially responsible in conjunction, as studies of tour operators have shown (e.g. Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). Wearing and McDonald (2002) also suggest that there may be ulterior motives, and Christian Aid (2004) criticise socially responsible activities of private companies for being solely a public relations technique. Yet it is better than if they were not engaged in any responsible activities. With regard to development organisations, there were isolated criticisms in the literature, claiming that they show no real concern for development and simply fill their quota with projects (Lewis, 2002).

Further criticisms suggested they do not possess the expertise to engage in such projects and their short-term nature could be more damaging than not being involved at all (Arora, 1994). Although the majority of respondents were willing to believe that each of the three project operators were genuine in their willingness to aid communities, the criticisms from a select few render it important to discuss.

The Runatupari project was established to diversify employment opportunities, reduce poverty in the region, and contribute to environmental sustainability. However, several criticisms were made by respondents in relation to each of these objectives, which brought their motives into question. Firstly, the previous chapter concluded that employment opportunities were minimal, and isolated to home-stay operators and a small number of food suppliers. Secondly, although the Runatupari project was deemed to be the most successful in terms of contributing to financial capital, it was deemed to be the least successful of the three projects in contributing to livelihood capital overall. Hence, its contribution to poverty reduction is debateable. Finally, contributions to environmental assets were virtually non-existent, and communities claimed there had been no efforts to train them in such matters. These three issues led some to believe that these objectives were not at the forefront of Runatupari's ethos, but rather, it was a profit-making business, with little regard for the community or environment. One respondent stated "there is nothing here to show me they have done what they set out to do...greedy people have forgotten what this project was supposed to do". He believed that the initial idea for the project was well-received by community members and that they had high aspirations. Yet he now wishes they had not become involved: "because we have this project, other [development] organisations do not think it is necessary to work here". Another respondent agreed with this assertion, and claimed he would rather have "a proper tour company" working in the area, which would at least mean higher tourist numbers and increased possibilities of employment. The evidence brings into question Runatupari's motivations for initiating the project. The office manager insisted that "we are a community-based tourism project with strong regard for the local people, and the purpose is to benefit them". Yet the lack of use of profits for community development, and the profits which are filtered to UNORCAC, suggest that this is not a community-based tourism project, but a privately operated venture with the sole purpose of making money for its umbrella organisation. In this sense, the project has not accomplished the objectives which were initially set out, which were primarily to create a community tourism project that was run by the community.

Care's motivations for initiating the project were originally based around providing an alternative industry and employment opportunities to combat the narcotics trade

infiltrating from Colombia into the northern region of Ecuador. However, the research showed that rather than creating a new product, they were combining several existing projects into one. Although it is recognised that developing routes and marketing several communities and businesses together can be a strong strategy for success, in this situation it did not appear to coincide entirely with their objectives, since they were not actually facilitating an alternative industry. Van der Duim and Caalders (2008) suggest that development organisations often add tourism activities to their portfolio as an easy option, and also discuss that development organisations lack the tourism expertise in order to carry out their proposals. In the case of Care, this does not appear to be the case, as they outsourced the project operations to a consultant, in order to ensure the technical knowledge required. The debate over whether tourism is viewed as 'easy' for development organisations will be discussed in the next chapter, but here it is clear that this tourism project was perhaps not the best option to carry out their objectives. In terms of having an alternate agenda, many respondents believed Care was simply filling their quota of projects, and that amalgamating these tourism projects was, indeed, the easy option. Another view of development organisations in general was that "they move because of political interests, they want to keep their image in their countries" (Grey (Rainforest Alliance) 2008: personal communication), echoing structuralist perspectives that there is little that agents can do to alter this. Others disputed this, and one community respondent stated, "they have done a lot of training, and they hope that it will help more people become involved in tourism, so for me, they are doing what they set out to do". Another respondent claimed that they may have a quota to reach, but he would rather that his community were part of one of their projects than somebody else's. Therefore, while quotas may have to be reached, it does not suggest that the project operator is any less enthusiastic about the project; it simply means they may have to achieve their objectives within a shorter time-frame.

The motivations of the operators of the Tropic project are quite clear and fully admit their main objective is to make a profit, and add another product offering to their portfolio to supplement their Galapagos Island tours. The ethos of the company stipulates that they accomplish this whilst following responsible tourism guidelines and the heavy involvement with the Huaorani proves that they do take responsibility a step further. There were heavy critiques of the private sector's alternate agendas, and Jackson and Morpeth (1999) stress that the private tourism sector is unlikely to be able to contribute to poverty reduction due to their focus on profits. Yet out of the three projects, it was Tropic who was found to be the least criticised by community respondents, and other organisations, for having an alternate agenda. Indeed, most organisations and other operators, who were asked if they could suggest a tour

operator in the area who was an example of best practice, stated 'Tropic'. For example, Grey (Rainforest Alliance) revealed that "there are some people who are really interested in the preservation of the biodiversity of the place, for instance Jascivan from Tropic; I think he is one of the exceptions, most of the tour operators they do it for the money" (Grey 2008: personal communication). This was supported by McNutt (ESTA), who stated "they are the only tour operator that have genuinely bought in and are involved with community tourism" (McNutt 2008: personal communication). Although this conflicts with the negative literature on the private sector (e.g. Dieke, 1991; Carey *et al*, 1997; Wearing & McDonald, 2002), there were a select few who voiced concerns about their ulterior motives. Some community respondents viewed Tropic as solely a profit-making company who did not have any real concerns for the community: "of course they are here to make a profit, but they make a profit from telling tourists they are helping us...[is] that fair when we do not make a profit?" But is also questionable as to whether they do make such a profit, as was stated by Fabre (ex-Tropic) "there's no money involved in CBT projects, but people use it to advertise" (Fabre 2008: personal communication).

In the case of Tropic, it is perhaps not an alternate agenda which is the problem, as they clearly stipulate that they are a profit-making company, and stress that they have emphasised this to the community. Criticisms from certain members of the community are unwarranted in that Tropic has not set out with a malicious alternate agenda, and therefore it is more a case of raised expectations of what they can accomplish. This is also true in the other two projects, whereby communities expect certain results and clearly expect them in relatively short time periods. In many cases, it was these raised expectations, and the fact that they were not being met, that resulted in critiques that they have alternate agendas for being involved.

The possible alternate agendas discussed here are a strong concern for the people involved. But although other agendas may take priority, the fact that these projects exist and are, to a certain extent, contributing to livelihoods, is far more favourable than if the projects did not exist at all. Therefore, despite the criticisms, and the relation to the impact on project outputs, the efforts of the project operators must be appreciated. It could also be argued that it is not technically the job of Tropic to contribute to livelihoods, but for the other two project operators, it is what they have set out to accomplish.

## **6.5 Raised expectations of collaboration**

Having the assistance of an outside organisation appeared to give the impression that it would solve all development problems, and in this sense, gave communities raised

expectations of what the organisation or company would achieve. Despite clear objectives which were conveyed to the communities, it was evident that more was always expected. This correlates with the research literature, which suggested that the involvement of an outside organisation was often viewed as a cure-all. Poultney and Spenceley's (2001) study of Wilderness Safaris revealed that the community had unrealistic expectations of how much the company could contribute to social services and infrastructure. In addition, it was also concluded that the development sector could accomplish considerably more in terms of livelihood benefits than a private tour operator could (Miller, 2001; Sofield *et al*, 2004). The evidence echoed this assertion, whereby a large proportion of respondents said they would rather have support from a development organisation. However, the data suggests that some respondents believed that working with the private operator was more fruitful, and supplied rational reasons for this. Hence, this section of the chapter proposes to challenge the literature on this matter, and convey the difficulties both sectors have in living up to the expectations of communities.

Some of the main criticisms of the Care project were the length of time taken to apply actions, the lack of funding to carry out their objectives, and the general presence of 'broken promises'. Care had delivered their objectives to the involved communities and businesses at the outset of the project, which essentially raised their expectations. Care's status as a global development organisation, which has operated and funded thousands of projects, presented an exciting prospect for those who were to be involved in the project. The status instantly heightened expectations, and respondents admitted they had high hopes for the project: "Care are internationally renowned and I know they have done a lot of good work...I found it exciting that we were going to get a chance to work with them" (Saabe 2008: personal communication), explained Piet Saabe, who owns an orchard and lodge involved in the project. He revealed that, if the project had been initiated by a smaller, local non-governmental organisation (NGO), then expectations would have been considerably lower, as people are aware that technical knowledge and financial resources are far more limited.

Tropic has been involved with the Huaorani for over sixteen years, and has spent this time building a strong relationship. However, this term of involvement means that the community are now expecting to see results. As with the Care project, respondents were also critical of the length of time taken to carry out objectives, such as the construction of the lodge. The Huaorani also view Tropic as "a rich company", which again means they had high expectations of how much money Tropic were able to inject into the project. Subsequently, meeting these expectations is problematic for Tropic as they are essentially a small, independent tour operator, which funds the community

projects using profits from the Galapagos tours (coupled with the small grants from USAID and GTZ for start-up capital). They are not, as the community often alluded to, a multi-national corporation (MNC) with limitless funds. Fabre (ex-Tropic), stated that it did not matter how many times they would try and convey the small-scale nature of the business, the community continued to view them as a much larger corporation (Fabre 2008: personal communication). In this sense, being a private operator has its disadvantages, compared with being a development organisation renowned for having fewer funds available.

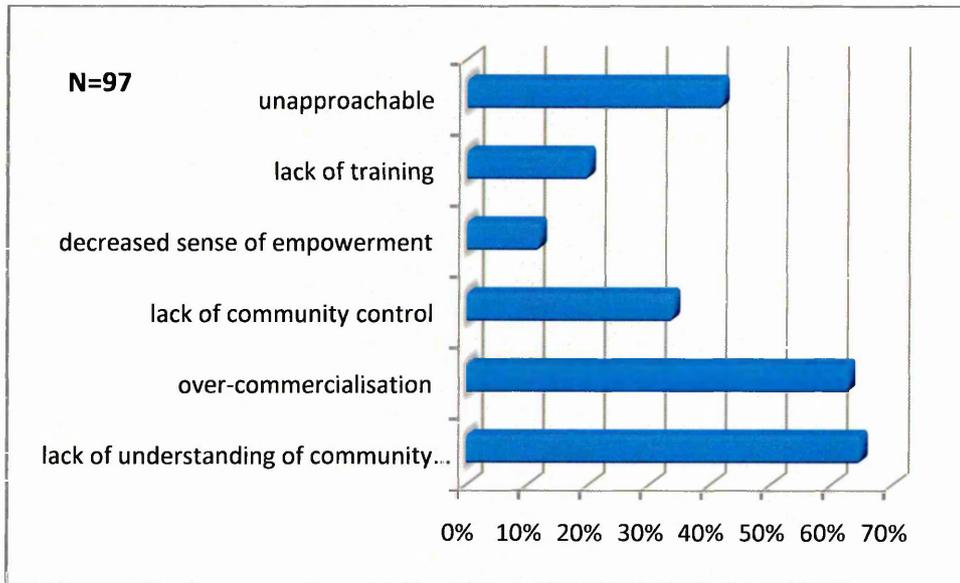
Expectations in the Runatupari project were initially relatively realistic, and many respondents understood the time necessary to initiate the project, and how it would operate. However, they also felt that they were promised more development other than the home-stays, and higher tourist numbers, which would increase the knock-on benefits for the remainder of the community. As with the Care project, respondents felt that had been subjected to 'broken promises'. Furthermore, several of the home-stay operators were aware that Runatupari had secured funding from a foreign development organisation, Agriterria, which they believed would supply limitless funds. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was a case of misguided interpretations or false promises, but never-the-less, the heightened expectations only appear to make some members of the community feel as if the lack of livelihood outputs is even worse.

With a historical generalisation suggesting that the development sector was 'better' than the private sector in harnessing benefits to the poor (Miller, 2001), community respondents were questioned on the subject. Respondents were asked if they would prefer to receive the assistance of a development organisation or a private tour operator. For the purpose of generalisation, the responses from all three project respondents have been combined. The results showed that 72 of the 97 respondents (74%) would rather receive support from development organisations, and only 25 respondents (26%) would prefer to collaborate with a private sector tour operator. There were several reasons provided as to why private sector collaboration was less-favoured, which have been detailed in Figure 6.7. Phrases used in the figure have been generalised from responses given to an open-ended interview question, which enabled respondents to identify the issues themselves, as opposed to being prompted. The bottom axis shows the percentage of respondents which gave the response.

65% of respondents discussed a lack of understanding of community needs, and this was the most common reason for avoiding involvement with tour operators, although several admitted this was an assumption. Interestingly, this was suggested by several respondents from the Tropic project community, who stated that "they try to understand

what the people here need and what helps us in life, but sometimes they cannot because they are not from here". More cynical members of the community stated that they are relatively self-sufficient, and that the introduction of an outside body only facilitated changes in a way of life which had succeeded for generations. However, given that Tropic conducted a needs analysis before commencing the project, it is suggested that they made a sincere attempt at trying to understand the community's needs.

**Figure 6.7 Reasons for not wanting to collaborate with private tour operators**



Over-commercialisation, or words to that effect, was also a frequent response. Participants explained that they did not wish to become insignificant in a commercial enterprise where they are simply a product for tourists to enjoy. One respondent from a community involved in the Care project, stated that tour operators “just want to make money...we would become something that they sell and I do not see how we would benefit”. Of course it is true that a private operator needs to make a profit, but the sharp cynicism showed that many people believe private operators are incapable of being socially responsible in conjunction. 42% of respondents also believed that the private sector would be very unapproachable, and felt they would not be listened to in the same way that a development organisation would. Relating to this, 34% further explained that they would have little or no control over the operation, which would seriously limit their opportunities of benefiting from it. Just under one fifth claimed that they would be unlikely to receive any form of training or capacity building, and that external labour would be brought in as opposed to using local people<sup>10</sup>. Again, they believed this was another reason that a private tour operator would fail to contribute to

<sup>10</sup> In the case of Tropic, only one member of staff was external to the community, although he was brought in as manager of the lodge (refer to section 5.3.1).

their livelihoods. All of these responses are important in understanding what Juan Carlos García (TNC) describes as “the stigma of the tour operator...[they] are seen as evil” (García 2008: personal communication). Some respondents, however, confessed that these views were not based on first-hand experience, but rather on the generalisations made by others. Care was also questioned as to why they do not work with private tour operators, and their response was based around the communities fear of exploitation, which again, is another generalisation. Rendon (Care Ecuador) stated “we have also tried to involve them [tour operators], but that is quite difficult for us because there is a resistance in the majority of communities... They have traditionally seen private operators as people that want to exploit them, or make them do something that will not benefit the whole community” (Rendon 2008: personal communication). It is apparently this ‘stigma’ that is a significant barrier for private tour operators to overcome.

These 72 respondents were also questioned on their reasons for favouring the involvement of a development organisation. Responses were virtual opposites of those reasons given for not working with a tour operator. For example, one respondent from a community working with the Care project claimed “an organisation such as this needs to care about what the community needs and wants; it is what they do”. There was also the view that because development organisations do not intend to be involved forever, that they are more likely to grant the community more control over the project and give them a much higher say in its operations. Although this may be true, those who were opposed to working with development organisations, cited the lack of long-term involvement as one of their criticisms. Some felt that such organisations have so many projects that they cannot be fully-committed, and that they are not interested in the longevity of the project as it is only their responsibility for a relatively short period of time.

The 26% of respondents who claimed they would prefer to work with a private sector tour operator, as opposed to a development organisation, provided fairly logical reasons, such as the ability to provide more funding, more opportunities for employment, the likelihood of achieving faster results, and the potential to attract higher tourist numbers, due to more effective and well-financed marketing capabilities. Many of these reasons were provided by community respondents in the Tropic project, but some were also given by the other two project areas, particularly the notion of attracting more tourists. These responses were distinctly different from those provided by respondents who favoured working with a development organisation. They were considerably more focused on a business approach, whereas the latter were more focused on community development in the long-term.

In conclusion, it is clear that the majority of evidence supports the research literature, which asserted that development organisations are viewed as being the most successful in terms of improving the livelihoods of the poor (Salamon, 1994; Lewis, 2002). But evidence has also been presented which supports more recent arguments touched upon in the literature, which suggested that the private sector is capable of harnessing much more significant benefits (e.g. Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Harrison & Schipani, 2007). However, these few arguments were often unsubstantiated with empirical data. The results presented here have sought to demonstrate what the communities believe the advantages and disadvantages of working with each sector are. In such, this section has shown that, despite the majority still opting to side with development organisations, the 25 respondents who praised the private tour operators provided logical reasons for this. It also showed that respondents believed there were more chances of long-term business success when working with a private operator.

## **6.6 Issues of project longevity**

Due to the short-term nature of development assistance, and commitments to other projects, respondents in all three projects raised issues which could affect their longevity and success. Observations and various interviews with other stakeholders showed that none of the projects would continue to operate at their current level if assistance was withdrawn. Hence, it is important to consider how these impact upon project operations and, subsequently, how this impacts upon the livelihood outputs. Project longevity may also be associated with external factors, and not solely decisions made by the organisation or company. This is, in part, what DfID (1999) refers to as the 'vulnerability context', claiming that "people's livelihoods and the wider availability of assets are fundamentally affected by critical trends as well as by shocks and seasonality – over which they have limited or no control" (DfID, 1999: 3). Although this statement is referring directly to livelihoods, it is also adaptable to projects which impact upon livelihoods, since project operators are affected by these trends, shocks, and seasonality. This section seeks to analyse the issues specific to the three projects which threaten their longevity and success.

As was discussed in the research literature, there is a stigma attached to development organisations in relation to their long-term commitment to projects (Buckland, 1998; Ebrahim, 2003; Brown & Moore, 2001). Due to institutional structures, they often have a quota of the number of projects which need to be 'completed', meaning their length of involvement is relatively short-term, often only one to three years. This is the case with the Care project, which had a target of project completion within three years, after

which they would withdraw and leave the project to its own devices. However, as stated in the case study description, funding was exhausted after just one year, and in February 2008 Care ran out of money to progress with the project. As a result, the communities and businesses involved questioned Care's commitment to the project, and further development of tourism activities ceased for over a year. Other interviewees, such as tour operators and other development organisations, suggested that Care was failing to adequately equip communities and businesses with the skills to continue the project successfully, regardless of the funding issues they experienced.

The stagnation in aid from Care was a form of shock, as described by DfID (1999), due to the unforeseen economical problems, and the implications for the parties involved. Following discussions with Care, however, it is clear that this was not an unforeseen event, as suggested by the communities and businesses. It was revealed that, from the outset of the project, Care had only been awarded funding for one year's operations, and was advised to procure the remainder of the money from an alternative source. The result of this break in project operations was a lack of trust in Care's abilities and commitment, increased animosity towards businesses in the project emanating from local communities, lack of marketing of the project, and a lack of clarity as to what the next stage of the project would be. Diana Chiriboga, owner of a private lodge which is part of the project, echoed these concerns and claimed that, for her, it was not such an issue as she had other marketing channels, but it was a serious concern for the local communities. She explained that people "feel like they have had a hope taken away" (Chiriboga 2008: personal communication), which she understood fully and described Care as offering "empty promises". It is therefore understandable, as discussed in section 6.5, that communities often have raised expectations which turn out to be under-fulfilled. In addition, there were questions raised as to who would continue overall operations of the project when Care withdrew in 2010. Animosity already exists between businesses and communities, as many members of the communities fail to understand the need to support local private enterprises as well. This suggests that unless this issue can be rectified, and people made to realise the benefits of linkages between private enterprises and community projects, then Care's withdrawal could witness the collapse of the project entirely. Creation of an umbrella organisation, with representatives from each community and business, is clearly the only option, but conflicts of interest may take control, and the potential success of such an organisation is debateable.

The Runatupari project is facing similar challenges financing further developments. Although it is a different scenario in terms of funding and operations, the project has reached stagnation and the lack of available money emphasised the vulnerability of the

project. As discussed in section 6.2, they have recently called upon the assistance of ESTA and are hoping to develop a new strategy which will enhance the livelihood benefits for the communities and, of course, increase the profits for UNORCAC. The project also suffers from a serious case of over-supply and under-demand. Occupancy rates in the home-stays are low, with 2007 showing an average occupancy of 46%<sup>11</sup>, and seasonality is causing concern for the families operating them. Again, Runatupari is seeking advice on marketing strategies in an attempt to rectify this problem, but it leaves the question as to why they constructed so many home-stays when demand was not high enough.

The other main problem observed with the Runatupari project, is the distinct lack of leadership and innovation. The project is controlled from a central office in Otavalo, where tourists book and pay for the home-stays. The manager of the office appeared relatively unenthusiased and, when questioned on his ideas for improving or expanding the project, his response did not echo that of a motivated project operator: "well, we can build more home-stays and widen our promotions...but if people do not want this type of tourism then what can we do?" He further stated that the communities are "not really involved" in suggesting new ideas, which reiterates arguments made by community respondents in the previous chapter. These concerns were echoed by Geert van Weert, who worked for Agriterria and initially aided in the set-up. Although he is no longer directly involved, his affiliation to the project has urged him to explore avenues which may facilitate a new strategy. One of his main concerns was the lack of a 'social fund' acquired from tourists which could be used to fund non-tourism related community projects, as previously discussed. He professed that, eventually, the communities would tire of this and begin to resent the few families which are benefiting from home-stays. As the previous chapter disclosed, this was already happening, and the Runatupari project was concluded to be the one with the most negative social dynamics as a result of the project. Van Weert reiterated earlier assertions, and expressed fears that what was meant to be a community development project, has turned in to a private enterprise with little concern for reducing poverty on a grander scale.

Tropic has held a long relationship with the Huaorani community, which has led to the construction of the lodge and pending construction of an additional campsite. However, as a private business, they are obviously seeking to expand. As a result, they have recently instigated a new project which, at the time of research, was still in its planning stages. The project with the Secoya, another tribe in the north-east of the

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<sup>11</sup> 2005 occupancy rates were 40% and 2006 occupancy rates were 42%, showing only a 4% increase in 3 years.

Ecuadorian Amazon, is planned to be on a smaller scale, but never-the-less, is currently dividing Tropics attention and resources. Tropic admits that they do find the Huaorani difficult to work with, whereas the Secoya are considerably easier to cooperate with. Carvalho (Tropic), for instance, stated “the Secoya are much calmer tribe...the Huaorani can sometimes be really difficult to please” (Carvalho (Tropic) 2008: personal communication). Tropic appear to revel in the enthusiasm of the Secoya and respect the way in which they have already commenced the base work themselves, such as, commencing construction of shelters, building a community centre for tourists to congregate with the local people, and acquiring funds directly from USAID to print interpretative material. The fact that Tropic has been working with the Huaorani for a long period may actually be detrimental to the future success of the project, since the Secoya project is clearly the one which Tropic hold more enthusiasm for. Moi Enomenga (Huaorani community leader)<sup>12</sup> confessed that Tropics commitment to work with the Secoya could be interpreted by the Huaorani as a division of loyalties, possibly causing animosity and tension. It is also possible that with efforts more focused on the Secoya, the marketing may also shift focus, resulting in lower tourist numbers for the Huaorani. However, the eco-lodge means that Tropic have an invested interest in the Huaorani project, and are therefore likely to maintain their involvement. There were some concerns from within the community, though, that following the eventual transferral of ownership of the lodge to the community, Tropic will cease with their marketing and promotion of the project – a notion denied by Tropic. Carvalho (Tropic) expressed his strong views that for the project to move forward it requires more marketing efforts from their partners abroad; “we need our partners abroad to start selling it, we want people with more resources to start spreading it more” (Carvalho 2008: personal communication). This suggests Tropic have strong visions for the future of the project, and also highlights the external linkages required to make it a success. This was also evident in the numerous awards the project has received (refer to section 7.4.1).

In brief, it is evident that each of the three projects has serious issues which could affect the project longevity and their consequent success. Although it is development organisations which are criticised in the research literature for the short-term nature of their projects, the case study of Tropic demonstrates that, for different reasons, project longevity can also be threatened in the private sector. The Runatupari situation presents an entirely different case, whereby project longevity is threatened not by supporting other projects, but the lack of dedication and innovation within this project. It is also clear that the lack of tourism expertise has resulted in over-supply and under-

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<sup>12</sup> Moi Enomenga had been informed by Tropic of the new project with the Secoya.

demand, and it is proposed that if this issue is not addressed with the help of experts, the long-term sustainability of the project is questionable.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to convey the ways in which operations, management, networks, expectations, agendas, and longevity, impact upon the livelihood outputs of the three projects, detailed in the previous chapter. It has also sought to compare the three projects on these issues, and assess the differences and similarities between them.

The chapter discussed the operational activities and management of the projects. Within this section, three of Ashley's (2002) key barriers to participation of the poor in tourism were utilised to demonstrate the challenges which the project operators have to overcome. It was concluded that location and transport access for the Care and Tropic projects seriously hindered the number of tourists visiting them, as they are both relatively remote. For the Runatupari project, however, this was not an issue due to their close proximity to Quito and frequency of bus services available. The project's capacity to meet tourist expectations were also discussed, and the main issue identified was the language barrier between tourists and host communities. Although this is something which is difficult for the project operators to control, as it would be impossible to teach all members of the communities to speak English, it was something which could have been managed more effectively. In both the Care and Runatupari projects, tourists had not been made aware of the pending language barriers before embarking on their trips, resulting in disappointment and not being able to communicate or understand effectively. Management of this is possible by communicating to tourists in order to control their expectations, but both cases were failing to do so. This section also identified that all three projects were failing to attract the adventure tourist market, and that there was significant potential for improvements to their product offerings. Overall, it was clear that the three very different types of projects are flawed by the way in which they are operated and managed. These flaws had negative consequences on the livelihood outputs of the projects.

The chapter then analysed the networks of actors surrounding the projects, which were deemed important to the study due to the array of relationships between stakeholders. The discussion concluded that Tropic was the most well networked and connected organisation, as Figure 6.1 showed several strong and medium strength relationships and inter-connectivity. Figure 6.4 also demonstrated that Tropic had the highest percentage of shared interests with the other actors in the network. Both of these illustrate the positive outputs of such relationships, as the previous chapter had

concluded that it was also Tropic that was most successful in terms of livelihood outputs. Despite some traditional structuralist views which see the private sector as one of the main culprits of dependencies and exploitation of communities in LEDCs (Müller, 1984; Britton, 1982; Oppermann & Chon, 1997), this chapter has shown that the power of Tropic as agency is far more noteworthy. The evidence also conflicts with arguments made regarding the lack of cross-sector networking when involving the private sector, showing a disparity between research literature and practice.

Throughout the course of the research, it was brought to attention on several occasions that the project operators had alternate agendas for initiating the projects. These accusations are important, as alternate agendas also suggest a lack of commitment to the projects and overall community development. As a result, livelihood outputs are affected as the concentration is not on contributing to community development. Interestingly, it was the Tropic project which showed the least amount of signs of having an ulterior motive. The evidence showed that they had made it abundantly clear that their aim as a private business was to make a profit. Although some respondents were critical of this, they had to admit that this was understandable, and the livelihood outputs which occurred as a result of the project were a “bonus”. The Care project was heavily criticised for “filling their quota” with the project, and accused of not possessing the skills and expertise to embark on such a venture. The Runatupari project has, essentially, turned into a profit-making business, without the level of community involvement originally planned by Agriterra. These alternate agendas suggest to communities that their welfare is of secondary importance, and respondents suggested that it affected the amount of resources which were directed towards the projects, thus reducing the potential for increased livelihood benefits.

Several community respondents were suspicious of having the assistance of an external organisation. The scale and stature of the assistance available directly impacted upon their expectations of what the projects could accomplish. The evidence showed that communities have very high expectations, and expect outputs to occur quickly and abundantly. This affected how they responded to questions asked about the livelihood outputs of the projects, as it could often encourage them to be more negative about the project operator and its outputs than was expected, which supports assertions in other research studies (e.g. Yen & Kerstetter, 2008; Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). Furthermore, the communities also had preconceptions about the differences between assistance from a development organisation and the private sector. Contradictory to the research literature, there were a large percentage of respondents, almost a quarter, who would prefer to work with a private operator than a development organisation. Likewise, there were several criticisms about the

development sector, namely bureaucracy, short-term involvement and lack of technical and financial resources. The evidence has demonstrated that, although the development sector may still be preferable overall, the value of collaboration with the private sector is appreciated, and respondents presented logical rationales for favouring their assistance.

Finally, the research literature highlighted the importance of long-term commitment to projects, and criticised development organisations for the short-term nature of their assistance (Buckland, 1998; Ebrahim, 2003; Brown & Moore, 2001). Again, the evidence presented has shown that all three projects have issues with project longevity, which were causing concerns amongst members of the communities and other stakeholders. A lack of long-term commitment manifests itself in the cynical attitudes about the future success of the projects. With Care's temporary break in operations, Runatupari suffering from over-supply and under-demand, and Tropic concentrating their efforts on a new project with another tribe, it is clear that the research literature was correct in its assessment. However, it is suggested that again, it is Tropic who are likely to sustain with the Huaorani project given that the lodge has provided them with an invested interest. Eventual transferral of ownership, though, may have adverse affects on the project.

As with the previous chapter, it was Tropic who appeared to have the least amount of problems at the meso level. Although their approaches have been brought into question, comparisons with the other two projects demonstrate that criticisms of the private sector were often unfounded and unwarranted. Yet the issues raised in this chapter have stressed how many challenges must be overcome in order to operate a successful project which satisfies local communities, and sufficiently contributes to their livelihoods. For Care, their mandate itself is a hindrance, due to the allocated project quotas they must fill. For Tropic, their role as a ground agent for large-scale foreign tour operators means they must constantly update and adapt their product offering in order to remain an attractive option. For Runatupari, they are isolated after initial funding from Agriterria, with little tourism expertise to help them progress and compete in the marketplace. These broader issues hinder their potential operations, which consequently affect their ability to contribute to livelihoods. It is with this in mind that the study now analyses these broader, more general issues at the macro level, which clearly filter down and play a fundamental role in the outputs of the three projects.

## **Chapter 7 *Macro Level Influences on the Projects***

## 7.1 Introduction

This final results chapter corresponds to objective five of the study, which proposes to 'analyse the macro level influences and how these effect funding and support for the three projects, and consider how this impacts upon livelihood outputs, operations and management'. Discussing the macro level refers to analysing the global structural influences on both the meso (operations, management, barriers and context) and micro (local level outputs and outcomes) levels, and vice versa. The chapter makes more generalised conclusions when analysing the influences, not only discussing the three projects in question, but also wider issues which effect funding, operations and management, and outputs of tourism projects. This is based on the methodological pluralist approach adopted for the research, whereby it is possible to deduce nomothetic conclusions from researching idiographic cases, thus detailing the broader applicability of some of the conclusions (refer to section 3.3.4).

The chapter is divided into three main sections, which were areas concluded to be the most important factors that influence operations and management at the meso level, and/or outcomes and outputs at the micro level. Firstly, the effects of organisational mandates and ideologies are discussed, to show how these translate into actions at project level, and whether or not decisions made at the macro level have an effect on the success or failure of projects. Secondly, the chapter explores the global driving forces faced by tour operators and development organisations to contribute to livelihoods. Again, the purpose of this is to determine what these forces are, and to what extent they affect the projects. The third section analyses the global actor networks and relationships linked to the three projects, and details how they influence the projects. The evidence shows linkages between these networks and relationships with those at the meso level, and also demonstrates direct effects on project outcomes and outputs, corresponding with literature on the global-local nexus (e.g. Jamal & Stranza, 2009; Milne & Altejevic, 2001; Bramwell & Meyer, 2007; Teo & Li, 2003), and demonstrating how entwined these levels are within the tourism industry.

The analysis of these three areas aids in demonstrating the macro level environment and the challenges brought about by embarking on a tourism venture which depends on international markets, actors, and politico-economic influences, as Butcher (2008) claims that "a considerable amount of the rhetoric of the NGOs and academic advocates, implies that the aims of the funding, the trajectory of the development itself, is decided by the local population, and this is certainly not the case" (Butcher, 2008: 19). Evidence for the chapter is based on secondary reports, interviews with actors involved at the micro and meso levels, and interviews with key macro level actors.

These interviews were constructed based on the themes of the conceptual framework, and are detailed in the methodology chapter in section 3.4.1. Several of the interviewees were directly involved<sup>13</sup> with the three projects in question, for example, Agriterra (initial donor for the Runatupari project), Care International (funder of the Care project), Journey Latin America, and Steppes Travel (key UK buyers for Tropic). In order to provide a more robust discussion and allow for generalisations, other interviewees included representatives from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), the Travel Foundation, Travel Operatives for Tigers (TOFT), the Latin American Travel Association (LATA), and the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). It was considered important to gain opinions of various actors to highlight some of the main differences and similarities between the projects, their respective international partners, how and why they are supported, and how successful they have been.

## **7.2 Effects of organisational mandates and ideologies**

The first of the three analytical themes of the chapter is to analyse the effects of organisational mandates and ideologies. The three projects in question have all been influenced in different ways, and to different degrees, by the ideologies and mandates of the funders and supporters. The Runatupari project was strongly influenced by Agriterra's mandate of adopting an entrepreneurial and business-orientated approach. The Care project adopted the capacity-building focus of Care International, almost to an extent whereby little else was accomplished. Finally, the Tropic project has been strongly influenced by the personal ideology of the company's foreign owner. Organisational mandates and ideologies essentially drive organisations and companies, stipulating how they operate. Therefore, they are the foremost consideration when analysing global structural influences, as actors involved with the projects may have varying philosophies which affect their roles, relationships, level of involvement, capacity to influence tourism structures, and the amount of resources they are willing to devote to the project. This may question the extent to which local projects funded in these ways meet local needs, and can be driven by locally generated aims (Barkin & Bouchez, 2002; Chambers & Conway, 1991). Thus, it is crucial to evaluate in what ways decisions made in the developed 'North' translate in to actions and outcomes in the less economically developed 'South'. Furthermore, several authors (e.g. Hellinger, 1987; Thompson *et al*, 1996) have been critical of development organisations using the same guidelines for different tourism projects in very different destinations, with little regard for the circumstances, needs and wants of the local

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<sup>13</sup> Or have been involved at some stage of the project.

people. This section consequently seeks to analyse these ideologies and mandates, and attempts to gauge the effects they have had on the management, operations, outcomes, and outputs of the projects. By focusing on influences in decision making and formal structures, the consideration of Giddens' structuration theory can shed light on the occurrences which guide these organisations/company.

### **Runatupari project**

The main purpose of the Runatupari project was to contribute to livelihoods of rural communities through tourism which, to an extent, was accomplished. Yet with the main ideology of Agriterra being the contribution to agricultural development for farmers, it is questionable whether or not a tourism project coincided with their philosophy. Agriterra maintain that their mandate is to support and strengthen farmers unions, which justifies the relationship they developed with UNORCAC, which was originally formed to represent local farmers. Cees van Rij, the chief liaison officer at Agriterra and instigator of the Runatupari project, claimed that, although "tourism is not the most obvious industry to involve farmers' organisations...it is a perfect fit" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). He further justified the decision to embark on a tourism venture which, incidentally, was Agriterras' first involvement in tourism, stating that another crucial area of their mandate was "to improve their [unions] capacities to offer services to their members" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). This strategy supports research studies (e.g. Ashley & Roe, 1998; Tao & Wall, 2009) which suggest that tourism in rural areas should be introduced as an addition to agriculture, rather than a replacement. Tao and Wall (2009) state that tourism should "fit into the existing situation as a complimentary activity, contributing to economic diversification and forging positive linkages with existing forms of production" (Tao & Wall, 2009: 90), in order to reduce dependency on tourists, and maintain traditional existing livelihoods.

Another key area of Agriterra's ideology was to initiate the project with an entrepreneurial focus, rather than a project which would possibly not be able to operate as a viable business after the withdrawal of the donor. Agriterra described the business-orientated approach, stating that it involved "not considering it as a project, but using project money and starting a business" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). The vision of Agriterra, together with UNORCAC, was to set up a system which could eventually operate as a private enterprise. In so doing, their focus on training was enhanced in order to ensure that UNORCAC had the sufficient capacity to operate the business.

Their exit strategy was also clear and concise (refer to section 7.4.3). Research revealed that very few members of the community were actually aware of the Dutch

donor's involvement in the project, other than the presence of the Dutch consultants. The view of several respondents was that the project had been initiated by UNORCAC, which was a local organisation with local interests. The main purpose of this strategy was to ensure that the eventual withdrawal of Agriterra would have a less detrimental effect on the project; an issue which was prevalent in the research literature (e.g. Borren, 2000; Arora, 1994). Furthermore, Agriterra were determined to work closely with UNORCAC in order to understand the needs of the local people, rather than imposing their ideas directly onto the communities involved. These core elements of their ideology were pivotal in ensuring that ownership was transferred successfully, without further need for assistance, as advocated in research studies (e.g. Barkin & Bouchez, 2002; Green, 2005).

However, research revealed that their strategy had not been as successful as Agriterra had anticipated. The previous results chapter detailed some of the failings of the project at this stage, including: over-supply and lack of demand for the home-stays; lack of product innovation and development; lack of enthusiasm of the office manager; lack of community benefits through the collective social fund; and a lack of community involvement in the project. These problems were also identified by van Rij (Agriterra), who last visited the project in 2009. He stated "I was not that happy with what I found there...they had not managed to expand their business; they manage now fifteen home-stays, which is not that much; there's no new excursions; [and] the Dutch market is still very important for their business" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). His disappointment was clearly evident, and he suggested that some of these problems were due to current management: "it all depends on having a good manager. The one that is there now, he is lacking some entrepreneurial skills and some incentive to develop more" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). Despite Agriterra's best efforts at capacity building, it was clear that the manager appointed by UNORCAC was not an ideal candidate, but due to Agriterra's segregation from the project, they no longer have the same level of influence in the matter.

Organisational mandates and ideologies can also be influenced by individual people, and Giddens (1984) suggests that the co-evolution of human action and institutional structures demonstrates the duality of agency and structure. At the time of the Runatupari proposal, tourism was not part of Agriterra's portfolio. The project spawned as a result of an idea by van Rij (Agriterra), who was visiting UNORCAC and the surrounding area. After presenting the idea to Agriterra, the proposal was accepted, and since then Agriterra has embarked on several tourism initiatives, including similar projects in Tanzania, Madagascar and Vietnam. This shows that the Runatupari project was pioneering for Agriterra as they have since adopted tourism as a strategy,

even though the organisation has historically been involved in agricultural development. Tourism does, however, fit with the core ideology of enhancing opportunities for farmers (Ashley, 2000), and this project has altered the institutional structure of Agritererra.

The tourism projects now included in Agritererra's portfolio have often followed similar guidelines to those used for the Runatupari project. The philosophy of employing a business strategy that enables farmers' organisations to operate tourism ventures as viable businesses has been replicated in other destinations. However, critics (e.g. Hellinger, 1987; Thompson *et al*, 1996) have pointed out that one of the main downfalls of projects funded by development organisations is that they use the same rule book for vastly different destinations, representing institutionalised patterns which can be detrimental for projects and communities. In response, Agritererra claim that their strategy is not entirely generic but that they have developed "a solution, almost a template of steps one needs to take to develop a tourism venture...[but] it's up to the farmers organisations to adjust it and make it work in their context" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). In essence, they are continuing to use the Runatupari project as a template for success, ignoring the current deteriorating status of the project. Although the current problems may be due to bad management, it does suggest that Agritererra did not carry out sufficient capacity building with UNORCAC. The danger of repetition of Runatupari's problems in other tourist destinations is a concern, yet the only other option would be for Agritererra to remain involved with the project for a far longer time period; the repercussions of which are equally as dangerous, as UNORCAC and the communities would inevitably become overly-dependent on Agritererra and their intervention.

### **Tropic project**

The Huaorani tribe, along with conservation in the Galapagos Islands, was the key motivation for the establishment of Tropic Ecological Adventures as a private enterprise. The entire ideology of the company stemmed from its founder, Andy Drumm, who visited the Huaorani and assisted them with land protection from oil production and illegal logging. It was from this involvement that the idea for a tourism project was conceived. The background of the founder, which was mainly in conservation and environmental issues, continues to be the core ideology of the company, coupled with a desire to contribute to poverty reduction. The manner in which the company ideology filtered into the Huaorani project is palpable, and Drumm (Tropic) describes the Huaorani project as "a manifestation of our ethos" (Drumm 2010: personal communication). For example, the lodge is powered by solar energy and

recycles the water which they use; as little of the forest as possible was cleared to accommodate the lodge; trees that had to be felled were used in the sustainable construction work (Carvalho 2008: personal communication); and the position of the lodge is also set away from the village, in order not to over-impose on the daily lives of the local people. Furthermore, as was discussed in chapter 6, the whole concept of constructing a lodge was partly to assist the Huaorani with protecting their land from oil and logging companies, as the lodge now renders the land part of a viable business.

Part of the company mandate is also to transfer ownership of the lodge to the Huaorani; a strategy generally associated with development organisations after seed-funding ceases, again showing Tropic's willingness to challenge traditional structures of the tourism industry. The initial timeline for this was twelve years, but the lodge was only completed three years ago and Tropic's involvement has exceeded the initial estimate. Drumm (Tropic) claims that the "Huaorani have an aspiration to manage it themselves, but at this time they realise themselves that they don't quite have the capacity to do so; I think we are some way off" (Drumm 2010: personal communication). Community residents reiterated this, and even staff working at the lodge recognised the importance of Tropic's continued involvement. However, the previous chapter detailed the possibility of divided loyalties and resources due to a new Tropic project with the Secoya. Partly because of this, Moi Enomenga, (community leader) was keen for the necessary training and development to take place in the near future, in order to facilitate the transferral of the lodges' ownership and management. To an extent, Tropic is aiming towards this goal, and a well-attended training workshop on business management and marketing was observed during the course of the research. Yet criticisms regarding development organisations and the lack of planning on their withdrawal strategies (e.g. Borren, 2000; Arora, 1994), are also applicable to the private sector. Drumm (Tropic) responded to questions on the issue in a slightly dismissive manner, stating "we don't have a specific exit strategy; we have a vague mutual understanding that we're working towards a point" (Drumm 2010: personal communication). He did, however, leave no doubt that the transferral would take place at an appropriate stage, and described it as "the ultimate goal". He believed the appropriate stage would be a time whereby the community are adequately equipped to run the business, and maintain the high standards required to meet tourist expectations, but provided no indication as to when this may be.

The Huaorani project is not only influenced by the mandates and ideologies of Tropic and its founder, but also by their UK buyers, and other organisations with whom they are closely networked, such as USAID and Rainforest Alliance. The demand for quality and service from the UK buyers, such as Steppes Travel and Journey Latin America

(JLA), has been a strong influence for the Huaorani project, and is evident in the way the lodge has been designed and operated. However, other areas of ideologies of their UK buyers, such as their responsible tourism objectives, have not been so influential. Drumm (Tropic) views the influence the other way around, saying “I think it’s us that’s led the way and helped demonstrate what a community based sustainable tourism project is” (Drumm 2010: personal communication). This is supported by the UK buyers, for example, Alex Mudd, General Manager of Steppes Travel, confirmed that “when it comes to technical knowledge and research, they’re [Tropic] actually better equipped than us” (Mudd 2010: personal communication). JLA also claimed that, as a ground agent, Tropic exceeds requirements set by JLA. In further support, Simon Heyes, Senderos Marketing, describes Tropic and the Huaorani project as “revolutionary and trend setting...and definitely an example to hold up” (Heyes, 2010: personal communication). It is, therefore, clear that ideologies are not just influential from the macro to the micro level, but also vice versa, as some UK buyers hold Tropic as a benchmark for other ground agents to meet, again suggesting the co-evolution of Tropic’s actions and changes to tourism structures.

However, the effects of organisational mandates can sometimes be ignored, as is the case with the new Tropic project being developed with the Secoya tribe in the northern region of the Ecuadorian Amazon. The Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently states “we advise against all travel to the areas bordering Colombia in the province of Sucumbios, due to the risk of guerrilla activity in these areas” ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)). Isabelle Mazille, Senior Product Manager of JLA, professed that she had attempted to convince Tropic to abandon the project as JLA, or any other UK tour operator, would be unable to send tourists there under FCO advice. Travel insurers would also not cover tourists in this region, and therefore the outcome of the Secoya project is currently questionable. This example shows that, although Tropic respects the mandates and ideologies of their UK buyers, in this case they have clearly ignored them, and the consequences could be a failed project with no tourists able to visit, and a frustrated community.

### **Care project**

Care’s overall mission is fighting poverty, particularly through enhancing opportunities for the most vulnerable, socially excluded groups. Part of the organisational mandate also focuses on what they describe as ‘priority’ countries or regions, which includes the Andean region of Latin America, where the Care project in question is mainly based. Using tourism as a strategy to achieve their objectives is easily justifiable, as Gianluca Nardi, Private Sector Advisor for Latin America (Care UK), stresses the link between

tourism and poverty reduction (e.g. Bennett *et al*, 1999; Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Ashley & Roe, 2002), stating “tourism can be a very good income generating option in low income communities; it’s something where women can be involved; [and] in the Andes it involved a lot of indigenous people who are some of the most vulnerable groups in these countries” (Nardi 2010: personal communication). He also highlights Care’s ideology that creating more inclusive value chains can lead to poverty reduction, which is an inherent element of the Care project. Another core aspect of Care’s mandate is the involvement of the private sector. Care also work towards making the private sector more accountable for their impacts on communities. Again, this element of their mandate was clearly evident in the project, as the tourism network involved bringing together small and micro enterprises and communities on a trail in order to further develop and promote their tourism offerings. Chapter 5 highlighted how this technique had created links between the businesses and local communities, not only in promoting one another, but also through improving linkages in the supply chain to increase the benefits to local communities, such as guest houses purchasing locally grown produce. This part of the mandate also means that Care UK is planning to work with tour operators in the UK in order to further commercialise the project (see section 7.4.2). Therefore it is clear to see how these aspects of Care’s mandates and ideologies have positively affected the project, and how, as an agency, Care have partly succeeded in altering localised structures which segregated local communities from local private businesses.

Drawing upon the knowledge of the local office, Care UK believed that a tourism project was the most efficient way to address the needs of the local area. As Nardi (Care UK) explains “the people [local field workers] are in touch with the local communities, so the project design concept is usually participatory and involves the beneficiaries...this is the main strategy to make sure it is meeting their needs” (Nardi 2010: personal communication). This strategy is used for the majority of Care’s projects, which are initiated from the country offices rather than the head office. By doing so, it supposedly ensures that projects are not following the same ‘rule book’ set in the ‘North’, which would render many of the projects similar without addressing local needs. Despite assurances provided by Nardi (Care UK), the level of influence and control exerted by the Ecuador office is questionable, with a very similar format of project currently being executed in Tanzania. This suggests that the design of the project did follow a plan laid out by head office, which was confirmed by Rendon (Care Ecuador), who stated “we have to follow a structure...other projects I have done before [with Care] have followed these same rules” (Rendon 2008: personal communication). Tamas (2007) criticises the dominance of head offices of development organisations,

claiming that project proposals must adhere to 'official knowledge' (knowledge stipulated by head office), rather than 'local knowledge' (knowledge generated in the field by country offices). Tamas (2007) argues that "the knowledge of development should emerge from, and serve the needs of, the field rather than the convenience of head office" (Tamas, 2007: 906).

Nevertheless, there are still certain criteria stipulated by head office which must be adhered to in order for the project to be approved. The main areas include: addressing poverty; working in partnership agreements; working with vulnerable groups; addressing social exclusion and discrimination; addressing any conflict implications; addressing disaster risk reduction; and evaluating the impacts on climate change. Nardi (Care UK) admits that "sometimes the risk is that people don't take it [filling forms for project approval] seriously because there are too many [criteria], so they just tick boxes" (Nardi 2010: personal communication), which also raises questions on the level of monitoring and reporting to ensure that these mandates are being adhered to. It also questions whether or not the extent of criteria renders the mandates workable for field offices. Jon Mitchell, Programme Leader for Protected Livelihoods and Tourism at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), criticises the level of bureaucracy within development organisations, claiming that "a lot of the problems are the problems they create for themselves; they do get caught up in their own procedures" (Mitchell 2010: personal communication). This suggests that development organisations are far more prone to institutionalised types of behaviour, which can limit their effectiveness at project level. Nardi (Care UK), however, believes that these procedures are necessary as it helps design more coherent projects which fulfil the mandates and ideologies of Care International. Nardi (Care UK) states that there is flexibility, resulting in a variety of initiatives, although the core mandate must always be adhered to.

With the list of aforementioned criteria, and the fact that the overall purpose of the project was to provide people with alternative livelihood incomes rather than joining in the narcotics trade infiltrating from Colombia, it is suggested that the possibility of having to withdraw from certain communities and businesses was addressed before commencing the project. As with the Tropic project, Care has been affected by FCO travel advice, which has stipulated from March 2009, "we advise against all travel to the areas immediately bordering Colombia...and the town of San Lorenzo" ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)). San Lorenzo hosted two tourism initiatives involved in the Care project; El Cauchal, a community association; and Siete Cascadas, a family-run hostel. As a direct result of the FCO advice, and the immediate danger within this area, Care has been forced to 'drop' these two projects from the network. Although Care described this a considerable issue, Nardi (Care UK) claimed that Care were still

involved in the area in other livelihood projects, and therefore the two initiatives had not been completely alienated from Care's assistance. This shows that Care have respected the international advice, and realised that there is little point in continuing with these initiatives, unlike Tropic who appear to be carrying on work with the Secoya regardless. However, the effects on the two projects have surely been profound and the criteria of working with the most vulnerable groups, appears to have been dismissed. This has undoubtedly resulted in significantly reduced income for the two initiatives, reduced empowerment, and a renewed sense of marginalisation. It is questioned, therefore, if perhaps these should not have been included from the outset, due to the strong possibility of this scenario.

To summarise, it is clear that the Runatupari project has been heavily influenced by the mandate and ideologies of Agriterra. The fact that it runs as a private enterprise was an achievement for Agriterra itself, as UNORCAC were originally apprehensive about adding a business to their activities. The use of home-stays to ensure that farmers were benefiting from the tourism industry was an alien concept, but the outputs and outcomes adhere to the farmers' organisations' objectives, thus demonstrating symmetry between their ideologies. The Tropic project was inspired by their founders' ideologies, and continues to be driven by these ideologies. The way in which the project coincides with the company ethos shows that the community are directly affected by the ideologies of Tropic. The ideologies and mandates from Tropic's UK buyers have not had quite such an effect, as Tropic appear to be operating more responsibly than their UK buyers demand, as representatives of both JLA and Steppes stated that Tropic does far more to contribute to local livelihoods than they, as the buyers, demand. Yet the standards which the buyers demand, in terms of facilities and service quality, have clearly had an impact on the design of the lodge and service offered, and their mandates have had an effect on the project. The Care project has been heavily influenced by the mandates and ideologies of the Care head office, and has clearly had to follow certain criteria in order to gain approval and funding from Care UK. This has resulted in a relatively well designed project which addresses the needs of the local people by using local field workers. However, the FCO travel advice represents serious flaws in Care's planning for the project, and it is suggested that, for these two initiatives in particular, that tourism was not the most appropriate livelihood strategy. Each of the projects has demonstrated that a level of institutionalised patterns exist, which affect the projects. For the Care and Runatupari projects, it appears that such patterns can be a hindrance, such as rules created by themselves (Edwards, 1993; Tandon, 2000).

### 7.3 Global driving forces to contribute to livelihoods

The second area necessary to discuss is the driving forces to contribute to livelihoods. The global impetus to reduce poverty in LEDCs was viewed by some respondents as one of the key motivators, for both private tour operators and development organisations, to increase their efforts in contributing to livelihoods. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have placed pressure on development organisations, and the private sector to an extent (Maxwell, 2008; Christie & Sharma, 2008), and resulted in an increase of project quotas to fill for development organisations. But despite the introduction of the MDGs, it is still questioned if these are a real driving force, or if the pressure arises from elsewhere. Tapper (2001) concluded that there are several driving forces which motivate tour operators to contribute to poverty reduction, including: consumer pressure; industry pressure; and that it makes business sense in a competitive market. The way in which motivations affect project operations and their contributions to livelihoods was discussed in chapter 6, whereby some community respondents viewed development organisations and private tour operators as possessing alternate agendas. This, they believed, resulted in a lack of dedication to the projects, and hindered the projects' potential successes. With these driving forces and motivations generally stemming from macro level ideologies and structures, it is crucial to understand how they are interpreted at the macro level, in order to better understand how they affect the projects at the micro level.

Table 7.1 summarises the main global driving forces to contribute to livelihoods, and the relevance of these to the project funders/supporters. These are elaborated in the following sections. The left-hand column details the driving force, whilst the adjacent columns briefly detail the main ways these have impacted upon the project funder. The evidence is based on interviews with project funders and other organisations/companies involved with the three projects.

#### **Tropic project**

Kalisch (2002) argues that the MDGs have also placed profound pressure on tour operators to adopt CSR policies. Likewise, Ferguson (2007) claimed that the UNWTO has heavily promoted the applicability of the MDGs to tourism, thus the MDGs act as a driving force within the industry. However, Drumm (Tropic) does not believe that these have placed any pressure on him, or the company and the Huaorani project, claiming "I think we were working towards them [the MDGs] before they were established" (Drumm 2010: personal communication).

**Table 7.1 Relevance of global driving forces to project funders**

<i>Project Funder</i> <b>Global Driving Force</b>	<b>TROPIC</b>	<b>CARE</b>	<b>AGRITERRA</b>
<b>MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant but not classed as a driving force</li> <li>• Company ethos embodied the principles of MDGs before the MDGs were actually defined</li> <li>• Tropic has received small grants from development organisations, who feel increased pressure as a result of the MDGs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure to comply with national governments who comply rigorously to the MDGs</li> <li>• Receives funding from various sources (World Bank, DfID, etc.) who all strongly advocate the MDGs and so must work towards the targets</li> <li>• Increased competition for project funding</li> <li>• Increased quotas to reach which resulted in shorter funding cycles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received increase in funding from Dutch government as a result of MDGs and the effort to meet the targets</li> <li>• Increased pressure for monitoring and reporting</li> <li>• Increased quotas to reach which resulted in shorter funding cycles</li> </ul>
<b>CONSUMER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felt in growing demand for niche products such as Huaorani project: visitor numbers have increased year-on-year</li> <li>• Pressure to deliver service quality to meet expectations of high end spenders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be accountable to tax payers due to DfID funding</li> <li>• Care claim that consumers expect tangible results from such funded projects, more than private sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be accountable to tax payers as Agriterra is funded by Dutch government</li> <li>• Consumers expect tangible results from such funded projects, more than private sector</li> </ul>
<b>INDUSTRY/ BUSINESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most recognised driving force</li> <li>• Makes business sense to act responsibly: warrants higher prices for tourists and improved competitiveness</li> <li>• Seeking to be an industry leader/example of best practice in how tourism can contribute to livelihoods</li> <li>• Founder works across industry developing guidelines and is well-renowned: Huaorani project must show the founder is following the principles he advocates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFID recognised as achieving sound results through tourism; Care must now meet expectations to use tourism as a poverty reduction strategy</li> <li>• Pressure to utilise tourism as a development strategy from organisations such as the World Bank, UNDP and UNWTO, but with little tourism expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure to justify the use of tourism as a development strategy for farmers organisations, particularly since Agriterra is part of several agricultural cooperative alliances which don't advocate the use of tourism</li> <li>• Seeking to outperform other development organisations to maintain funding</li> </ul>

Although he admits that the company does work towards the MDGs, he is clear that the underlying principles of the MDGs were part of the company's ethos before they were actually written. Any added pressure as a result of the MDGs does not appear to be a factor, as he believes that there has always been pressure to act responsibly and contribute to the livelihoods of the communities where tour operators work.

The main driving force, which has had an impact on Tropic and the Huaorani project, is the growing demand for community-based tourism projects from high-end spenders, which has resulted in improved levels of service and products offered (Wahab & Cooper, 2001; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). In support, the ITB World Travel Trends Report 2008/2009 suggests that tourists are willing to pay more for "more authentic tourism destinations and products" (ITB, 2009: 33).

Respondents generally agreed that a culmination of consumer and industry pressure, and the potential to increase profits, were driving the private sector to adjust their practices (Goodwin; Mitchell; Drumm; and Matthews 2010: personal communication). The MDGs, in some instances, were dismissed entirely by those in the private sector. Claire Antell, secretary of the Latin American Travel Association (LATA)<sup>14</sup>, responded to the question of pressure to achieve MDGs honestly, stating "I'm going to sound really ignorant and say I don't really know what those are...that maybe says it all!" (Antell 2010: personal communication). Likewise, Mudd (Steppes Travel) also responded "to be honest, I don't know much about the MDGs" (Mudd 2010: personal communication). Despite studies highlighting the importance of the MDGs (e.g. Christie & Sharma, 2008; Ferguson, 2007; Maxwell, 2008; Tapper, 2001), the lack of knowledge on them by the private sector shows that they do not act as the prominent driving force suggested in research studies. Even prominent thinkers in the development sector, who wished to remain anonymous, questioned the pressure caused by the MDGs, suggesting that they have not had the desired effect on driving the development sector or private enterprises. One respondent questioned why the MDGs should be important to the private sector, stating that "it [the MDGs] isn't [adding pressure] for me and I'm a development person!" (Anonymous 2010: personal communication). Shepherd (2008) states that "there is a widespread perception of the MDGs as a northern project" (Shepherd, 2008: 4), and criticises the lack of execution and priority the MDGs hold in the 'South'. Therefore, despite initial assumptions made about the importance of the MDGs, responses show that the goals are not a factor in the private sector.

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<sup>14</sup> LATA is a travel trade organisation promoting tourism in Latin America. Claire Antell is also UK Product Manager for Wilderness Safaris

Consequently, the dismissal of the MDGs as a profound pressure led to the general consensus that tour operators adopt responsible tourism practices in order to boost profits. Julian Matthews, founder of Discovery Initiatives<sup>15</sup> and Travel Operatives for Tigers (TOFT)<sup>16</sup>, argues that “industry pressure is small; consumer pressure is still very niche [and] what it is fundamentally is a business earner driver” (Matthews 2010: personal communication). Mitchell (ODI) agrees, claiming that the real motivator for tour operators is to increase their profits, and that driving forces to contribute to livelihoods are a secondary concern.

Carvalho (Tropic) admitted that the Huaorani project was only being sustained by profits earned from the company’s Galapagos Island tours, which contradicts assertions that tour operators are only driven by profits. Discussions with Drumm (Tropic) revealed that the first year the lodge was in operation cost him, personally, around \$15,000; the second year meant another contribution of around \$2,000; and in 2010, he was anticipating to almost ‘break even’. He claimed that the reason for the lack of profit was due to the ideology of the company, and the desire to contribute to conservation and livelihoods; “I could have made more money if I had cut corners” (Drumm 2010: personal communication). It was suggested by several interviewees that Tropic is not a complete exception to the rule, and that there are many tour operators who are making a reduced profit in order to contribute to livelihoods, as Gordillo Jordan *et al*’s (2009) study of the Posado Amazonas project shows.

Overall, however, the business sense of adopting responsible tourism strategies was discussed by some interviewees (e.g. Goodwin; Matthews; Mudd; Antell 2008: personal communication), and is considered to be the key driving force for tour operators to contribute to livelihoods. Kalisch (2002) cites ‘consumer demand for ethical tourism’ and ‘improving the product’ as the two main areas where responsible tourism practices make business sense. Harold Goodwin (ICRT) describes the motivation whereby “responsibility becomes an opportunity” (Goodwin 2010: personal communication). By this, he is referring to the opportunity of having a competitive edge over other tour operators, through adopting responsible tourism practices and ensuring that these are conveyed to the consumer. In so doing, the tour operator is able to widen its target market and cater for a growing consumer preference. In reference to tourists visiting projects such as the Huaorani Ecolodge, Matthews (TOFT/Discovery Initiatives) asserts “when I started 99% [of tourists] wouldn’t be seen dead doing it; today 15% would definitely do it; and 5% are doing it every holiday” (Matthews 2010:

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<sup>15</sup> Discovery Initiatives is a UK tour operator and one of the key buyers of the Huaorani project

<sup>16</sup> TOFT is a campaign formed by tour operators (and founded by Julian Matthews) working towards the protection of wildlife habitats, mainly in India.

personal communication) reaffirming that, although consumer pressure may not be substantial, the market for such projects is a driving force to contribute to livelihoods.

For the Huaorani project, the global pressures are perhaps not quite as evident in the area of poverty reduction as they are in terms of service quality. Tropic appears to create their own pressures to contribute to the livelihoods of the communities with whom they work through their ideology, rather than a response to factors such as the MDGs. Mazille (JLA) even asserts that Tropic is not so much being pressured by consumers but, rather, they are providing an inspiration for their consumers. Sarah Beard, Group Manager for JLA and committee member of AITO, adds that Tropic most likely does not react to industry pressure, as they are actually ahead of what the industry is asking for. For the Huaorani project, this means that the community is receiving contributions to livelihoods that are beyond expectations of their UK buyers, such as the laundry facility that was constructed, and the access to a plane for emergency medical care (refer to section 5.3.3).

### **Runatupari project**

The Runatupari project was initiated by a donor whose key objective is to contribute to the livelihoods of farmers. The pressure to do this essentially stemmed from the Dutch government and Agriterra's back donors at that time, who were in turn responding to the growing impetus to contribute to livelihoods. Yet van Rij (Agriterra) does not believe that the pressure to achieve the MDGs is the most important factor. In his view, the most significant pressures stem from the monitoring and control measures, which must be adhered to in order to demonstrate to back donors, tax payers, and the government that significant contributions are being made to poverty reduction. He states that there is a growing pressure "to perform and, if possible, out-perform other development organisations" (van Rij 2010: personal communication), in terms of ticking the MDG boxes. Despite his view, the increased pressure for monitoring and reporting can be said to be a result of the MDGs, therefore showing the indirect impact of the goals.

The source of Agriterra's funding also adds pressure to the organisation to achieve results. After initially being mainly funded by a back-donor, the Inter-Church Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO)<sup>17</sup>, Agriterra is now fully funded by the Dutch government, to which they are now fully accountable. Again, this form of monitoring and reporting is a driving force for the organisation to achieve results.

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<sup>17</sup> ICCO is a Church organisation which offers funding and support to projects which contribute to poverty reduction in the broad areas of social services, economic development, and promoting democracy and peace.

Van Weert (formerly Agriterra) argues that the nature of this type of project instantly heightens consumer expectations on how it should help reduce poverty. He suggests that any project whereby a development organisation has had any sort of involvement is expected to achieve increased and more tangible results, which the consumer can witness for themselves. Yet, it was discussed that many community members were unaware of Agriterra's involvement, and it is questioned how tourists are meant to know if residents do not.

Van Rij (Agriterra) explains the importance of Agriterra's role, claiming that if they did not get involved then "NGOs will come, private sector will come, and they will do it but without taking into account the needs of the farmers" (van Rij 2010: personal communication). Interviewees (e.g. Antell; Matthews; Mitchell 2010: personal communication) suggested that so many companies and organisations feel pressure to contribute to livelihoods, that projects can be implemented without careful planning, or taking into account the specific needs of the area. The notion that perhaps these sorts of projects are becoming popular, in order for NGOs or the private sector to gain recognition or responsible tourism accreditation respectively, was palpable. Matthews (TOFT/Discovery Initiatives) argued that, particularly tour operators, assist projects or provide philanthropic donations in order to comply with regulations, which enable them to be awarded certificates in responsible tourism practices. Thus, they are able to use this for marketing purposes, but have little positive impact on development projects (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). This is what Matthews (TOFT/Discovery Initiatives) describes as "green-washing" (Matthews 2010: personal communication). It is also supported by a plethora of research studies on the failings of community based tourism projects (e.g. Blackstock, 2005; Shepherd, 2002). The result of this for the Runatupari project is that Agriterra is determined not to let the project fail. Although Agriterra has no obligation to assist the project now that the term of funding and support has finished, the organisation is insistent in aiding UNORCAC with the current problems. The impact of the additional support remains to be seen, but van Weert (formerly Agriterra) is hopeful that it will make the project more sustainable and further expand its contributions to livelihoods. This, however, is what Borren (2000) refers to as the problem between solidarity and emancipation in development organisation projects. She argues that if people are constantly receiving assistance from external bodies, then they are not contributing to their own emancipation and, rather, become more and more dependent on the organisation, which again, echoes traditional structuralist views of tourism that are usually associated with the private sector (e.g. Britton, 1982; Brohman, 1996).

## Care project

Care International is the third largest development organisation in the world, and therefore guaranteed to feel pressure to achieve the MDGs. Nardi (Care UK) confirms that the MDGs are the main framework applied at country level, and projects are carried out in accordance with the MDGs. This was also reflected in the criteria for projects discussed in section 7.2, many of which coincide with achieving the targets; specifically MDG 1 – “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. Yet Nardi (Care UK) also reveals that “the MDGs are more pressure when you work with local governments...all of their plans is made according to the goals, so sometimes Care has to fit this framework” (Nardi 2010: personal communication). Despite this, some interviewees, who wished to remain anonymous, claimed that the MDGs are not the answer to reducing poverty and criticise the manner in which they have been ‘forced’ upon governments in developing countries, without any convincing evidence that they will have the desired effect. Proponents, however, argue that they have sustained themselves thus far in the development sector and continue to motivate development organisations to accomplish more (Mitchell 2010: personal communication).

In terms of consumer pressure, Care is in a similar situation to Agriterria, whereby a significant proportion of their funding comes from a government department: in Care’s case, from DfID. As a result, they are accountable to tax payers, through their financial relationship with DfID. It is also interesting to note that despite cutting tourism from their activities, DfID continue to fund tourism projects via alternative channels, such as Care. With this particular project there is increased pressure due to the fact that DfID, through Care UK, has funded the remainder of the project which they had not originally committed to. In this sense, DfID are expecting results, and expect Care to report on these in depth (Nardi (Care UK) 2010: personal communication).

In addition, many development projects, specifically the one in question, are subject to short-term funding cycles as a result of quotas the organisations must reach. This was a strong criticism raised by Ebrahim (2003), whereby development organisations were criticised for focusing on “short-term functional accountability at the expense of longer-term strategic processes” (Ebrahim, 2003: 813). Ebrahim (2003) refers to development organisations demonstrating that they are accountable by initiating short-term projects in order to report more outputs and outcomes (see also, Buckland, 1998; Brown & Moore, 2001). Nardi (Care UK) is fully aware that “sometimes you really need medium to long term [funding], but you run out of resources before you can finish” (Nardi 2010: personal communication). This is very true of the Care project which only had a total of three years funding for, what Rendon (Care Ecuador) described as, “a vast and

challenging project” (Rendon 2008: personal communication). The Care project, therefore, has suffered directly as result of the growing pressure to increase quotas of the number of development projects, rather than concentrating on the long-term effects on the communities (Ebrahim, 2003). Goodwin (ICRT) claims that development organisations have relatively easy access to money for projects, but “whether it’s spent well is another matter...sometimes they just fill a quota” (Goodwin 2010: personal communication). He argues that the targets for development organisations are unrealistically high, and the result is a host of semi-functional projects which have not had sufficient levels of funding and support required to stabilise them (refer to section 6.6).

The other area where Care is responding to a driving force is in the addition of tourism activities to their portfolio. The global impetus to contribute to livelihoods may well be encouraging the adoption of tourism strategies without the appreciation of how much expertise is required to create a successful tourism initiative (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008). Although Nardi (Care UK) highlighted that it is a conducive strategy for poverty reduction, Care actually has very little experience of tourism projects, nor do they have an abundance of technical expertise on the topic. The Care project had to employ the skills of a tourism consultant in order to develop and operate the project, as the Ecuador office did not have staff with adequate knowledge of tourism. Although Care view tourism as part of their overall strategy, often coinciding with other livelihood activities such as the Prickly Pear Project (refer to section 5.3.3), it nevertheless requires equally skilled staff as other areas of their activities. Even Nardi (Care UK) admits that he has very little tourism experience, yet he was still in charge of coordinating the project in the UK. Van Rij (Agriterria) agrees, criticising that “by most development workers, it [tourism] is considered not a very serious business” (van Rij 2010: personal communication). He continues in saying that SNV are one of the very few development organisations with a specific tourism programme and tourism experts. Goodwin (ICRT) also suggested that “there is a sense in which people feel that anybody can do tourism” (Goodwin 2010: personal communication), and implied that there is a distinct lack of tourism expertise within the development sector. The impact of this on the Care project is that there are still doubts over whether the project will be sustainable in the long-term. Furthermore, USAID questioned if a network of communities and businesses was the best way to contribute to livelihoods through tourism, and suggested that alternative approaches could have been considered (Rhodes 2008: personal communication). If Care had had more tourism expertise, then the doubts about the future of the project and the lack of tangible benefits, concerns which were also shared by communities and businesses involved in the

project, may have been avoidable. Increased tourism expertise may have resulted in Care having more power as agency to break structural confines, such as the lack of collaboration with other organisations, as one of the criticisms of Care was their lack of tourism knowledge (e.g. Rhodes; Suquilanda; Portillo 2008: personal communication).

To conclude this section, it is clear that there is no general consensus on what the primary global driving force is for development organisations or tour operators to contribute to livelihoods: rather they respond to a combination of drivers. Analysing the specific projects revealed that they all respond to different forces, with Drumm (Tropic) believing that the pressure stems from his and the company's ideology rather than any external motivator. Both Agriterra and Care are obviously concerned with the MDGs, and discussed that the goals have had a direct effect on their monitoring and reporting procedures. Yet both also assert that the pressure to contribute to livelihoods was profound before the introduction of the MDGs. For the private sector the MDGs were dismissed and, in some cases, unheard of, demonstrating that perhaps they have not had the desired effect in encouraging the private sector to respond, as Maxwell (2008) and Ferguson (2007) suggest. Consumer pressure has had a role to play in each of the three projects; for Tropic it represents an increase in demand for such projects and also the quality of service; and for Care and Agriterra, their government funding sources means they must be accountable to tax payers. Overall, there is no distinct over-riding driving force but, rather, an amalgamation of several, and all three project operators admit that the pressure is continually increasing. Pressures, however, have led to actions by each of the project operators, supporting Giddens' notion of the co-evolvement of human action and structure. While some structural constraints, such as institutionalised behaviour, are evident, the pressure, particularly in development assistance, has influenced the project operators.

#### **7.4 Macro level networks and relationships**

This third area discusses actor networks at the macro level, analysing the relationships project operators have with their international affiliates. Due to the nature of the tourism industry, the involvement of various international actors is necessary in order to create supply and demand for the product. Within small-scale tourism development initiatives, such as the three projects in question, the linkages with actors at the macro level are crucial, particularly in selling the projects. Section 6.2 examined actor networks at the meso level, discussing the effects of these networks and relationships on the projects, and the barriers and challenges which are faced by the project operators as a result. Dredge, (2006a), Halme, (2001), and Jackson and Morpeth, (1999) highlighted the complexities of both building and maintaining strong working

relationships and, again, the DfID (1999) sustainable livelihoods framework is applicable to these relationships. The 'structures' which are described in the framework have an influence on how projects are operated, managed, and what the subsequent outcomes and outputs are. Each of the three project operators has relationships with various macro level actors, some of which are more important than others. Through analysing these relationships and gauging their importance to the project, the study shows if and how the networks impact upon the projects at micro level.

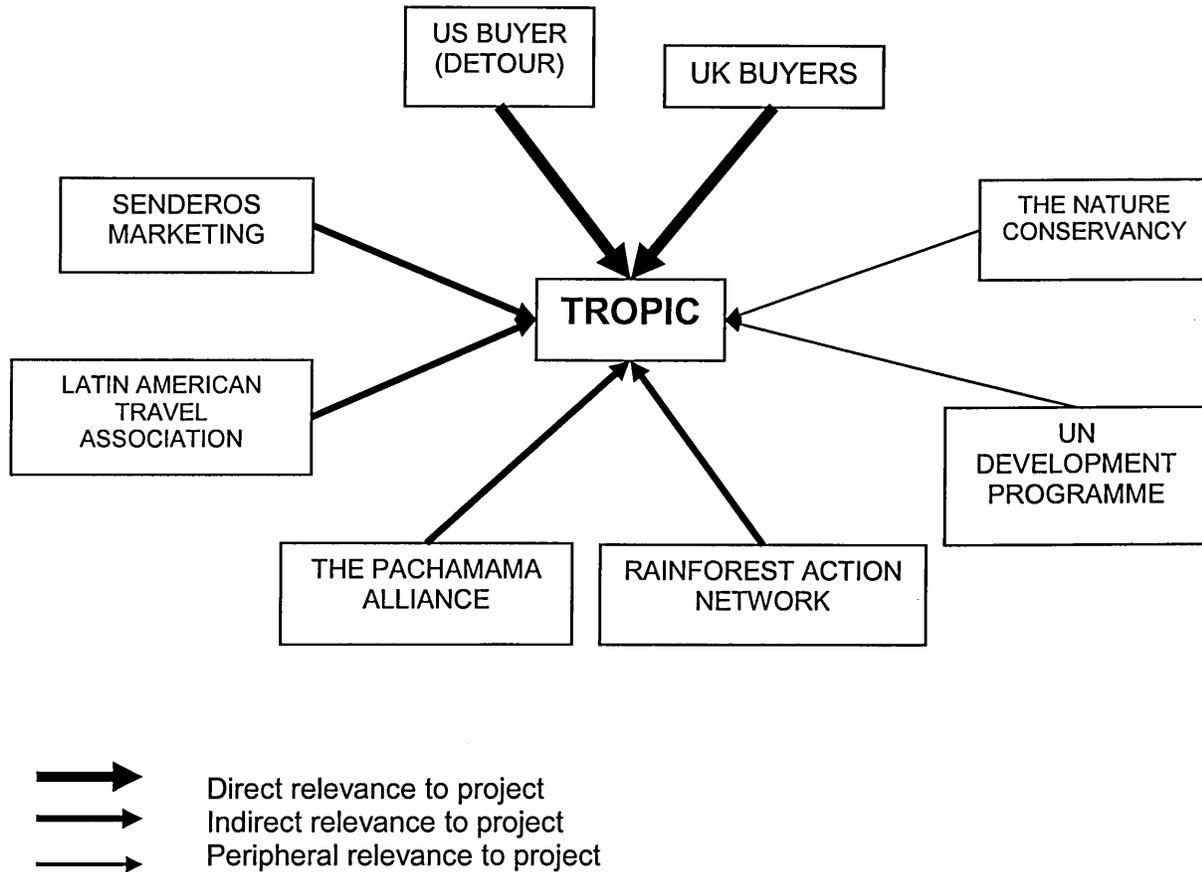
#### **7.4.1 Networks and relevance to the three projects**

Networks surrounding the projects at macro level have also been presented in diagram format, and are detailed in Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3. The relevance of relationships to the project have been divided into three categories: 'direct relevance to the project', which highlights relationships which directly impact upon the operations and management of the project at meso level and, in some cases, the outputs and outcomes of the project at micro level; 'indirect relevance to the project', which shows relationships that affect the project in terms of ideologies or promotion, but the actors are not directly involved in the project; and 'peripheral relevance to the project', which highlights relationships which have a minimal effect on the project, but the actors still form part of the network surrounding the project funder. The following sections will analyse each project in turn.

##### **Tropic project**

Figure 7.1 shows that the most important macro level networks for Tropic are with their international buyers, the majority of which are based in the UK. The network ensures that Tropic has an international outlet to sell the product. These networks have been built up over years and, according to the UK buyers, are based on relationships of trust, mutual understanding, and a shared vision. Mudd (Steppes) stated that "Tropic and Steppes are sufficiently close in the way they feel about these projects to understand one another...you like doing business with people you know and respect, and I think that is more so with Tropic than any other of our ground agents" (Mudd 2010: personal communication). This strength of relationship is also evident with Wexas (tour operator), who maintain that Tropic is a very efficient ground agent and easy to work with (Egan 2010: personal communication). JLA have an equally strong relationship, and first encountered the company at a travel fair. Although they admit that demand from their clients is not as high for the Huaorani project as they would like, they continue to sell it in their brochures (see Appendix 13) and recommend it to tourists.

Figure 7.1 Networks surrounding Tropic and relevance to project



Although Tropic is a ground agent for several UK-based tour operators, Tropic do also have their own website where clients can book directly. Despite this, Drumm (Tropic) recognised that the company was still very much reliant on the UK buyers, which meant that a relationship of power did exist. Power relationships have been discussed at length (e.g. Brohman, 1996; Reid, 2003; Teo & Li, 2003). Discussions within these studies often associate power with negative connotations, such as less 'powerful' actors becoming dependent on more 'powerful' actors. However, Foucault (1987) and Wearing and McDonald (2002) describe power in a more positive manner, whereby it is intrinsically linked with knowledge. They also claim that the balance of power shifts between actors depending on the relative knowledge. Given that Tropic are said to be better equipped to carry out responsible activities than the UK operators, it is suggested that the balance of power does shift between the two. On one hand, the UK operators have certain demands in terms of service, quality, and price; yet on the other hand, Tropic has far more knowledge of responsible tourism practices and projects, such as the Huaorani Eco-lodge, again echoing the concept of the duality of structure and agency.

Figure 7.1 also shows relationships with an indirect relevance to the project. Drumm (Tropic) states that their relationship with the Latin American Travel Association (LATA) has been very fruitful, and aided them in significantly marketing the Huaorani project. Through LATAs tourism awards, the project has won 'Best Sustainable Tourism Project in Latin America' for the last two years running which, according to Drumm (Tropic), is an ideal way to have the project recognised. He did, however, admit that "we haven't won best ecolodge yet, which I would rather win" (Drumm 2010: personal communication). This ambition links back to the effects of ideologies, as the company is obviously looking to constantly improve the project in order to gain further recognition. Senderos are also important in terms of marketing Tropic and the Huaorani project, thus the relationship is described as having an indirect relevance to the project. These links do, however, place pressure on Tropic to deliver a high standard of quality and experience, especially given the awards they have received. The networks with the Pachamama Alliance<sup>18</sup> and the Rainforest Action Network<sup>19</sup> are mainly of cooperation due to shared values, but furthermore, Tropic encompasses their principles and applies these to their project developments, such as the Huaorani.

The relationships of peripheral relevance to the Tropic project are those which have a minimal effect on the project. The networks with The Nature Conservancy<sup>20</sup> and the United Nations Development Programme are linked to the project through Drumm (Tropic), who works as a consultant for both institutions. Although the project is not generally affected by these relationships, they are nevertheless important to highlight as part of Tropic's network of varying organisations across sectors.

Overall, Figure 7.1 demonstrates a diverse mix of actors surrounding the Tropic network, with six of those having some form of impact upon the Huaorani project, excluding those which have peripheral relevance to the company. This shows that it is not solely actor networks at the meso level (refer to section 6.3.1) which have a direct impact on the project, but also those at the macro level.

### **Care project**

Figure 7.2 reveals that one of the main actors in Care's network at the macro level is DfID, where a large proportion of their funding originated. Due to this financial relationship, this is classed as a strong link in the network, which led to the continuation of the project and, consequently, shows a direct impact on the micro level outputs.

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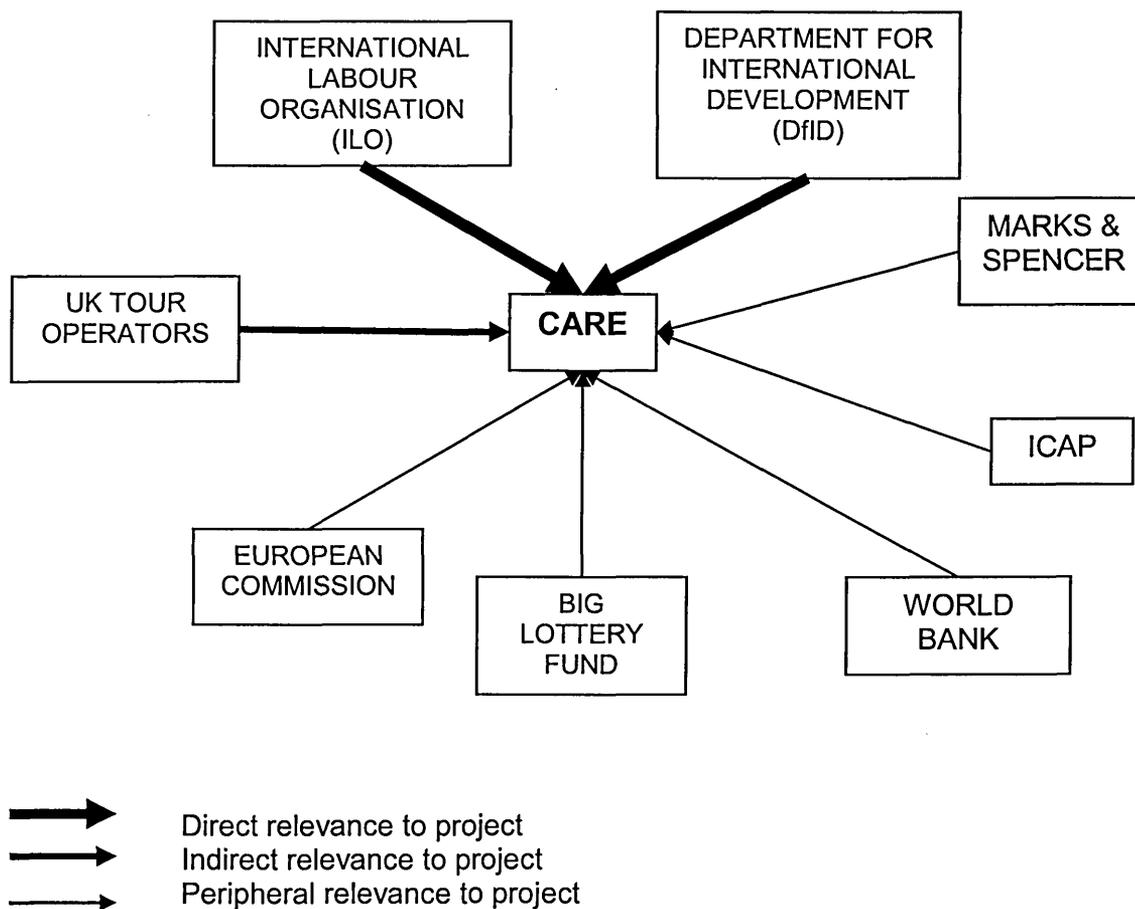
<sup>18</sup> The Pachamama Alliance is concerned with protecting the world's tropical rainforests and safeguarding the cultures of the indigenous inhabitants.

<sup>19</sup> Rainforest Action Network campaigns for protection of forests, the inhabitants and the natural systems within forests.

<sup>20</sup> The Nature Conservancy is a conservation organisation which aims to protect conservation areas around the world.

However, it has also resulted in increased monitoring and reporting for Care Ecuador and Care UK, as they must now demonstrate in greater depth the outputs and outcomes of the project, again demonstrating the institutionalised patterns which appear to be indicative of development organisations. The relationship with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been directly relevant to the project as the ILO also partially funded the first stages of the project, which focused on capacity building workshops and generating marketing material. Again, the result of this funding directly impacted upon the project, but also led to increased reporting to justify use of the funds, not only to Care UK but also to DfID. Care UK has developed links with UK tour operators to enable commercialisation of the project. The strength of this relationship has yet to be determined, but is considered to have an indirect relevance, through marketing potential, to the project.

**Figure 7.2 Networks surrounding Care and relevance to project**



Surrounding the Care network, there are several relationships which have peripheral relevance to the project. Care UK receives funding from the Big Lottery Fund, the World Bank and the European Commission. This shows that they are well networked with some of the largest global institutions, yet the previous two chapters have shown that certain organisations, such as USAID, refused to provide additional funding or

support for the project. Indeed, several respondents at the meso level had been critical of Care and the project, showing very little respect for the work they were doing. However, none of the aforementioned macro level organisations were able to provide the additional funding, meaning their impact is relatively minor and only felt through adoption of similar ideologies to those of the aforementioned organisations.

The relationships with ICAP, a corporate broker firm, and Marks and Spencer are virtually insignificant to the project, but do highlight Care's collaboration with the private sector, as they have acquired funding for various projects from both these corporate firms. Although this has no direct relevance to the project in question, it has enabled Care to 'free-up' funding for this project, given that they also have other sources of funding from the private sector.

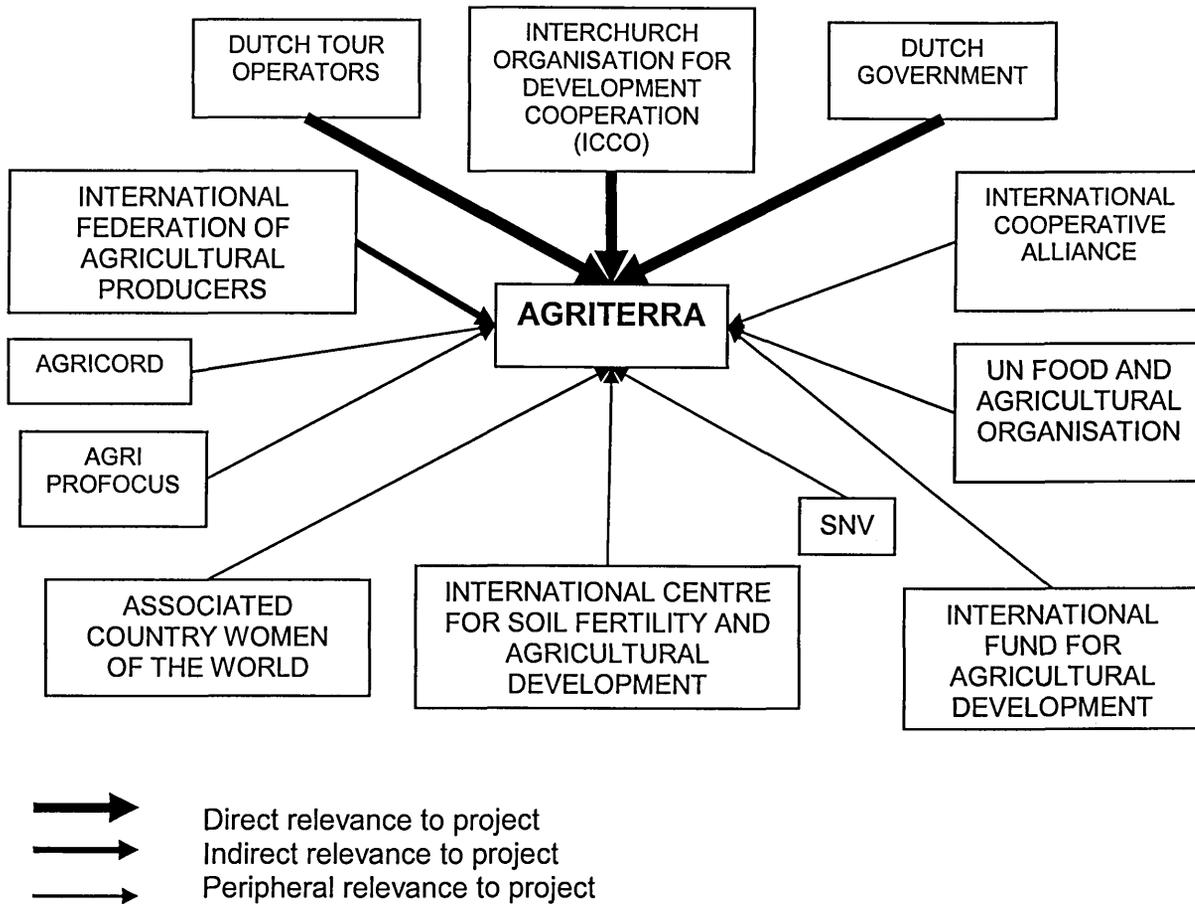
Despite the prevalence of numerous cooperation agreements, it is clear that what is relevant to Care, and the projects they initiate, is funding sources. The macro level network shows that Care is far more tightly networked with powerful global institutions, than they are networked with powerful institutions at the meso level. Transcending the barriers of cooperation, funding, and technical aid at project level, may rely on cooperation with other organisations at the macro level, such as USAID and ESTA. These organisations are far more likely to have country offices which are better equipped to support local projects, and further collaboration could potentially ensure improved support at meso and micro levels for future initiatives.

### **Runatupari project (Agriterra)**

Of the three projects, the Agriterra network is clearly the most extensive. As with Care, Figure 7.3 shows the three of the most important networks with direct relevance to the project are with funding sources. Both the ICCO and the Dutch Government have had a direct impact on the project, as without funding the project simply would not exist. The network with Dutch tour operators is also described as having a direct relevance to the project, since many of the foreign tourists who visit the project book through these operators. These alliances have been built through Agriterra, rather than directly through Runatupari. This demonstrates that, despite Agriterra's lack of involvement in the project at the time of research, the networks they have created have had lasting effects. Van Rij (Agriterra), however, did criticise the project for not developing further networks with other foreign tour operators, and relying too heavily on the existing operators. This reiterates cases made in research studies which have criticised foreign development organisations for creating an over-dependence on them (Bowen, 1998; and Manji, 1997), through their intense, but short-term involvement. Previous evidence (refer to section 6.6), however, showed a distinct lack of innovation and enthusiasm

from the current project operators (UNORCAC). It is therefore questionable whether this can be linked to dependency, or if the lack of new foreign tour operators promoting the product, is a result of inadequate work by UNORCAC.

**Figure 7.3 Networks surrounding Agriterra and relevance to project**



Agriterra is strongly affiliated with, and follows the recommendations of, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)<sup>21</sup> in areas of poverty reduction, rural development, and increasing access to market for farmers. This network is described by Agriterra as one of the key collaborative partnerships within the organisations' network. Figure 7.3 highlights that the relationship with IFAP has an indirect relevance to the Runatupari project, as many of the methods for supporting farmers organisations advocated by IFAP, have been incorporated by Agriterra. This is most prevalent in the area of creating access to markets, which Agriterra placed profound emphasis on during their involvement with the project by developing links with Dutch-based tour operators.

<sup>21</sup> IFAP is a global farmer's organisation advocating farmers' interests and representing farmer's organisations in global policy agenda.

Relationships of peripheral relevance to the project are plentiful. Although Agriterra state that the most significant relationships are with SNV, AgriCord<sup>22</sup>, and AgriFocus<sup>23</sup>, the organisation is also closely networked with the International Cooperative Alliance<sup>24</sup>, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations<sup>25</sup>, the International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development<sup>26</sup>, the International Fund for Agricultural Development<sup>27</sup>, and Associated Country Women of the World<sup>28</sup>. Each of the aforementioned relationships is based on cooperation, exchanges of technical expertise and, in some instances, funding. Although the networks are significant to Agriterra, they have had no influential impact upon the project. Yet Figure 7.3 does demonstrate that, for a relatively small development organisation, Agriterra is well networked with some of the leading global institutions in agricultural development. Van Rij (Agriterra) claims that this level of connectivity has resulted in improved knowledge and technical expertise on a variety of rural development issues; skills which were transferred to projects such as Runatupari.

In conclusion, it is clear that the networks and relationships at the macro level do have direct impacts on the operations and management of the projects at meso level, and the outputs and outcomes and micro level. For each of the projects, the most important networks have been those which are based on funding or marketing. Relationships of peripheral relevance to the projects have shown that the organisation/company has embedded the ideologies of other organisations in their own. Although no links can be shown, it is evident that these ideologies have affected the way in which the organisation/company initiates, operates, and manages a project.

#### **7.4.2 Level of support offered to project funders**

The aim of this section is to reveal actor relationships in terms of the how the projects are supported from actors at the macro level. This is an important part of analysing networks as the level of support offered to a project can enhance or hinder the

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<sup>22</sup> AgriCord is an alliance of agri-agencies promoting farmers' interests and strengthening producer organisations in developing countries.

<sup>23</sup> AgriFocus is a private company offering market research and consultancy services to agricultural producers and representative organisations.

<sup>24</sup> The International Cooperative Alliance represents cooperative alliances all over the world and seeks strengthen cooperative identity.

<sup>25</sup> The UN Food and Agricultural Organisation focuses on reducing poverty and hunger in rural areas, by assisting in the improvement of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

<sup>26</sup> The International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development is a non-profit organisation providing technical assistance and research knowledge to enhance agricultural systems.

<sup>27</sup> The International Fund for Agricultural Development is a UN agency working towards poverty eradication through the improvement of agricultural activities.

<sup>28</sup> Associated Country Women of the World is an international organisation offering support and practical assistance to women in rural areas in an attempt to contribute to poverty reduction.

relationship between actors. For the macro level actors, the projects obviously do not hold the same level of importance as they do at the meso and micro levels. It is understandable that the level of project significance at the macro level is far reduced from the meso and micro levels. Furthermore, many of the international affiliates had an organisation in place at the micro level to coordinate the projects. The research, however, revealed that more could be done to support the projects and the operators from the macro level.

### **Runatupari project**

Throughout Agriterra's involvement with the Runatupari project, a consultant was based within the community in order to ensure the project was being developed, managed, and operated successfully. This direct contact lasted a period of four years, demonstrating Agriterra's considerable support offered to UNORCAC. After the organisations withdrawal, Runatupari was provided with small grants to enable them to attend a Dutch tourism fair annually for a further three years. Consultants, such as van Weert and van Rij, have also returned to the project on several occasions in order to provide technical assistance for short periods of time. For example, van Weert suggested (and instigated) funding another home-stay construction in a different village which had easy access to certain hiking routes. The level of involvement, therefore, exceeded that of many foreign development organisations with projects they initiate, and UNORCAC agreed that Agriterra had assisted them beyond their expectations (Gualsaqui (UNORCAC) 2008: personal communication).

Following a visit to the Runatupari project in 2009, van Rij (Agriterra) agreed that the project currently had certain shortcomings, such as a lack of product innovation, lack of demand, and inadequate use of the 'social fund'. Despite being under no obligation to assist the project any further, Agriterra are currently exploring ways in which they could aid Runatupari with the current problems. The reason for this is mainly based on Agriterra's involvement with other non-tourism related projects in the area, and the working relationship which has been maintained with UNORCAC. It is concluded, therefore, that the level of support provided by Agriterra has exceeded their obligations, demonstrating significant dedication to the project and its outcomes and outputs.

### **Care project**

Care UK's support for the Care project escalated in 2008 when the UK office succeeded in acquiring the additional funding required to complete the project. Up to this point, the level of support for the project had been relatively sporadic. Following the initial grant Care UK allocated to the project, the only support system was through

occasional advice on the projects' strategy. However, now that the UK office has provided the remainder of the funding, the support system has been significantly enhanced. Nardi (Care UK) insists that, upon completion of the project in August 2010, the UK office will assist in further commercialisation of the project; namely raising the profile through media attention and marketing the project to UK tour operators. This coincides with Care's ideology of working with the private sector in order to create an outlet for the project. Some would argue, however, that this process should have been instigated at a much earlier stage of the project. Van Rij (Agriterria) and Mitchell (ODI) both argued that such projects should be demand driven, and outlets sourced before fully initiating projects. However, as a result of Care UK's new financial interest in the project, the organisation is at least committing to assist in this area, which is certainly better than having no support system at all. The outcome of this support has yet to be realised, as this information was only discovered after fieldwork had been completed. Rendon (Care Ecuador) claimed that before this new commitment, much of the contact with the UK office was via monitoring and reporting, and believed that more could definitely be accomplished with their increased support. Thus, the anticipated outcome of the support strategy is to raise awareness of the project, its subsequent visitor numbers, and the effects which the resulting tourism revenue has on livelihoods.

### **Tropic project**

The main criticisms of lack of project support emanated from Tropic in reference to their UK buyers who, Tropic believed, could do more to assist the project. Although the ethos of Tropic is a pivotal part of its status as a ground agent, Tropic's actual project operations, and the manner in which they contribute to livelihoods and conservation, are not a key concern for their international partners. In essence, the UK buyers do not monitor the outcomes and outputs of the Huaorani project. The only form of monitoring the UK operators carry out is via customer feedback, mainly relating to experience and quality of service. This is understandable due to the scale of the foreign tour operators and the fact that they have a business to run, and cannot be expected to monitor all of their ground agents' individual projects. Yet Drumm (Tropic) believed that more could be done to offer support, and criticised the manner in which UK buyers fail to educate their clients on the effects of tourism on livelihoods. He continued, claiming "I don't think some places provide the necessary information to distinguish between good and bad lodges" (Drumm 2010: personal communication). This criticism was echoed by other interviewees, including Fabre (ex-Tropic) who complained that foreign tour operators do not monitor their ground agents closely enough, and sell products based on inaccurate or misleading information provided by their ground agents. This relates back to Matthews' (TOFT/Discovery Initiatives) argument about 'green-washing',

whereby companies claim they are acting responsibly and contributing to livelihoods, but very little is done to assess if these are valid claims. Despite claims that ground agents are not monitored closely enough, Mazille (JLA) states that the company uses Tropic because their effort to contribute to livelihoods coincides with the ethos of JLA, and that monitoring the outputs of the project is unfeasible and unnecessary.

Antell (LATA) believes that UK operators could help projects, such as the Huaorani, gain more recognition and clients through use of the media. She claims that press coverage is one of the main ways to draw business, and feels that UK operators are not utilising this tool to its full potential. Yet Mitchell (ODI) argues that beyond providing finance through selling the products, there is little that international operators are capable of due to the scale of their operations and lack of resources they have available to offer further support, other than marketing, to projects such as the Huaorani Ecolodge. Although this is true, the general consensus was that positive livelihood impacts could be supplemented if UK operators helped to increase the media focus, raised additional funds through charitable events or donations, and increased their efforts to convey to consumers the differences between 'good' and 'bad' lodges. The question remains, however, whether or not this should be the responsibility of private tour operators, who are essentially in the business to make a profit, and not as promoters for tourism and poverty reduction.

Overall, the networks and relationships at the macro level, and the effects on project operations and outcomes, are clearly different from those discussed at the meso level (see section 6.2). Networks at the macro level are far more important in terms of funding, and creating outlets for the projects, as opposed to having a direct impact on the way projects are designed and implemented. The research has shown that all three projects are affiliated with powerful global organisations, suggesting that the level of expertise applied to the projects should meet exacting standards. The previous two chapters, however, have provided evidence to the contrary. Nevertheless, the effects of these networks, particularly those relating to funding, have clearly had significant positive impacts upon the projects. Despite the existence of these networks, more could be done to support projects at meso and micro levels; yet some may question as to why this should be the responsibility of macro level actors who have little 'hands-on' involvement or knowledge of the projects.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has sought to analyse the macro level influences on funding and support for tourism projects, such as the three in question. Through the analysis of global mandates and ideologies, global pressures to contribute to livelihoods, and macro level

actor networks and relationships, the chapter has discussed ways in which these affect projects at meso and micro levels.

Firstly, analysing global mandates and ideologies highlighted the differences and similarities between development organisations and tour operators. The Runatupari and Care projects were heavily influenced by mandates and ideologies at head offices in the developed 'North', suggesting that development organisations are more prone to institutionalise patterns of behaviour, which they have created themselves (Edwards, 1993; Tandon, 2000). The Tropic project was more influenced by the personal ideologies of its foreign owner, who was very familiar with the Huaorani having worked with them on other projects for several years. Tropic was, however, obliged to comply with mandates set by the company's UK buyers, who were succinct about quality of service and product offered. Tropic has been criticised for ignoring FCO travel advice with regards to the Secoya project, whereas Care respected this and 'dropped' two of the tourism initiatives they were assisting. The repercussions of these decisions have yet to be documented, but it does highlight that mandates set at macro level can have a direct influence on projects at the micro level, in line with the concept of the global-local nexus.

The second theme of the chapter, which discussed the main global driving forces to contribute to livelihoods, led to mixed conclusions. There was a lack of agreement on whether tour operators were responding to industry or consumer pressure, or whether responsible practices were solely carried out to generate more profit. The effects of the MDGs resulted in a general consensus that they may not have a direct impact, but they have increased pressure for monitoring and reporting, particularly in the development sector. For the private sector, however, the MDGs appeared to hold little significance, and were dismissed by many respondents. Although previous conclusions have suggested that the private sector are capable of harnessing equal, if not more, positive livelihood benefits than the development sector, the motivation does not stem from the MDGs. Again, it is argued that, irrespective of the reasoning, it is positive that some tour operators are combining their business developments with an effort to reduce poverty, rather than ignoring the potential to contribute to livelihoods in conjunction with operating a business.

Thirdly, the networks at the macro level, and the subsequent relevance to the projects, show that the most influential relationships are those which involve funding or selling the product. Even for the Care and Runatupari projects, the links with tour operators were considered to have direct or indirect relevance to the project outputs and outcomes. The chapter has sought to highlight the importance of outlets for the

projects throughout, and the network diagrams illustrate just how important these relationships are for project success. The commonality between all three project supporters was the level of connectivity with powerful global institutions, suggesting further increased global pressure to contribute to livelihoods, but also questioning the lack of technical expertise applied to some aspects of the projects.

Overall, the chapter has demonstrated the links between the macro environment and impacts at both meso and micro levels. It has also shown certain commonalities between development organisations and tour operators, and their efforts to contribute to livelihoods, despite stark ideological differences between the two. The duality of structure and agency was also evident across the three projects, yet the Care and Runatupari projects appeared more confined by institutional structures, such as reporting and funding schedules, than the Tropic project. Unlike the previous two results chapters, it has not been possible to judge which project/project funder has been most 'successful' at the macro level. The chapter has, however, provided a basis from which to discuss and compare the three projects/project funders, their overall propensity to contribute to livelihoods, and whether the project operators/funders as agents are able and willing to influence structural constraints of developing tourism projects in LEDCs. It is to this discussion that the study now turns.

## **8.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study has been to address a pertinent gap in academic studies, by comparing three differently funded and operated tourism projects which aim to contribute to community development. There is a host of literature discussing the role of tour operators in tourism development (e.g. Wearing & McDonald, 2002; Mosedale, 2006; Dieke, 1991; Sinclair, 1992; Tapper, 2002), and many, primarily practitioner, studies which discuss their role in contributing to livelihoods in an LEDC context (e.g. Braman, 2001; Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Spenceley, 2002; Simpson, 2009), yet these latter studies do not often link up to broader theoretical discussions. Likewise, the role of development organisations in tourism development projects has recently been discussed (e.g. Hawkins & Mann, 2007; Barkin & Bouchez, 2002; Wearing *et al*, 2005; Van der Duim, 2007), yet there is a distinct lack of empirical studies showing evidence of their contributions to livelihoods. The study also aimed to analyse the three projects in the context of the meso level operating environment and macro level influences, and show the links between these and the outputs of the projects. Borrowing ideas from Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, the study aimed to add to existing theoretical discussions surrounding tourism and dependency theory, by assessing the role and power of actors within the three tourism projects. Thus, the study adopted a dual focus by comparing development organisations and tour operators, and by exploring the duality of structure and agency and the effect on tourism's contribution to livelihoods.

This final chapter discusses the key findings of the study and demonstrates the study's contribution to academic knowledge. Firstly, the chapter summarises the objectives of the study and how these were fulfilled. Secondly, the theoretical basis of the conceptual approach is discussed, to demonstrate the value of the study and how the research was guided. Thirdly, the chapter presents the main findings of the study. Fourthly, conceptual conclusions are drawn out of the findings relating to, and contending, existing theories and assumptions. The fifth section demonstrates the applicability of the conceptual framework, and discusses how this can be applied to other studies. Finally, the chapter reveals limitations of the research, and presents recommendations for future studies.

### **8.1.1 Fulfilment of the study objectives**

The study has been carried out according to the objectives highlighted in chapter 1, which are detailed in Figure 8.1.

## Figure 8.1 Study objectives

- 1) Present a review of existing literature to investigate the politico-economic environment that shapes tourism development projects. This will aid in setting the context for the study and identify pertinent gaps in literature.
- 2) Drawing upon the literature review, develop a conceptual framework to highlight factors which impact upon tourism projects, and compares differently funded projects, in order to guide the study.
- 3) Assess and compare the livelihood outputs of three differently funded and operated tourism projects, based on the views and interpretations of community residents.
- 4) Examine and compare the operational context and management of the three projects at destination level and consider how this impacts upon the livelihood outputs.
- 5) Analyse the macro level influences and how these effect funding and support for the three projects, and consider how this impacts upon livelihood outputs, operations and management.
- 6) Determine any links between the macro level influences, meso level operations and management, and micro level outputs.
- 7) Conclude which project is the most successful in terms of livelihood outputs, operations and management, and ability to respond to macro level influences. Using these results, the study will detail the theoretical contribution to academic knowledge by challenging traditional theories associated with political economy and external funding of tourism projects.

Firstly, a review of the existing literature was presented, in accordance with objective 1. The review discussed existing theories and assumptions in areas relevant to the study. This provided the main theoretical background to guide the conceptual framework and the study.

To fulfil objective 2, a conceptual framework was developed, based on the review of existing literature. The purpose of the framework was to identify issues at the micro, meso, and macro levels which would aid in evaluating the outputs/outcomes of projects, and comparing the three different funding sources and their operations. These issues subsequently guided the design of the research and the various interviews and other methods used. The theoretical basis for the conceptual framework will be discussed further in the section 8.2.1.

Objectives 3, 4, and 5 sought to analyse the projects in terms of the micro level livelihood outputs, the meso level operating context, and macro level influences. Various methods were used to analyse these three topics, including interviews, ranking

exercises, and observation, and the results of these were presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7 respectively.

In accordance with objective 6, the study has continuously linked the results of the micro, meso and macro level analysis, to explore any links between the three levels, and this chapter discusses these links in more depth.

Objective 7 was to conclude which project was most successful, in terms of livelihood outputs/outcomes, how the project is operated and managed to respond to the destination context, and how the project is linked, and responds, to macro level influences. This final objective addressed the theoretical contribution of the study, which sought to compare projects funded and operated by different bodies, and supplement traditional theories of tourism and dependency by focusing on the role of actors within the projects.

## **8.2 Theoretical basis of the conceptual approach**

The theoretical approach of the research was guided by political economy. Clancy (1999) claims that political economy as an approach to tourism research has fallen out of favour with academics in recent years, and new approaches, such as gender and post-modernism, are now more popular. Clancy (1999) argues that political economy is still the most appropriate approach which can examine the structure of the industry, and the manner in which tourism impacts upon development. However, traditional political economy studies tend to focus on dependency theory (e.g. Britton, 1981; 1982; 1984; Oppermann & Chon, 1997), and the often negative consequences of the industry structural influences. Dependency theory in tourism studies is a prevalent theme, and is often used to explain the disparities between flourishing international tourism companies, and the lack of benefits received by communities in developing countries (Britton, 1980; 1982; 1984; Schilcher, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007). Yet while the theory was appreciated within the context of the study, an underlying aim was also to assess how relevant dependency theory was to the three project operators and the communities they work with. The study, therefore, did not simply assume that dependency would be a problem but, rather, sought to critique the theory if possible. In order to add to theory, and contextualise the discussions, this study borrowed ideas from Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which focuses on the duality of structure and agency, and their co-existence and co-evolvement. Thus, with the dual focus of the study to compare development organisations and tour operators, and to analyse the links between the macro, meso and micro levels, the consideration of Giddens' structuration theory has sought to place tourism projects in LEDCs within a renewed dimension. Through relating the findings to Giddens' components of knowledgable and

reflexive actors, institutionalised patterns of interaction, leading to the duality of structure and agency, the study has applied a theory which, to date, has been under-utilised in tourism studies (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007).

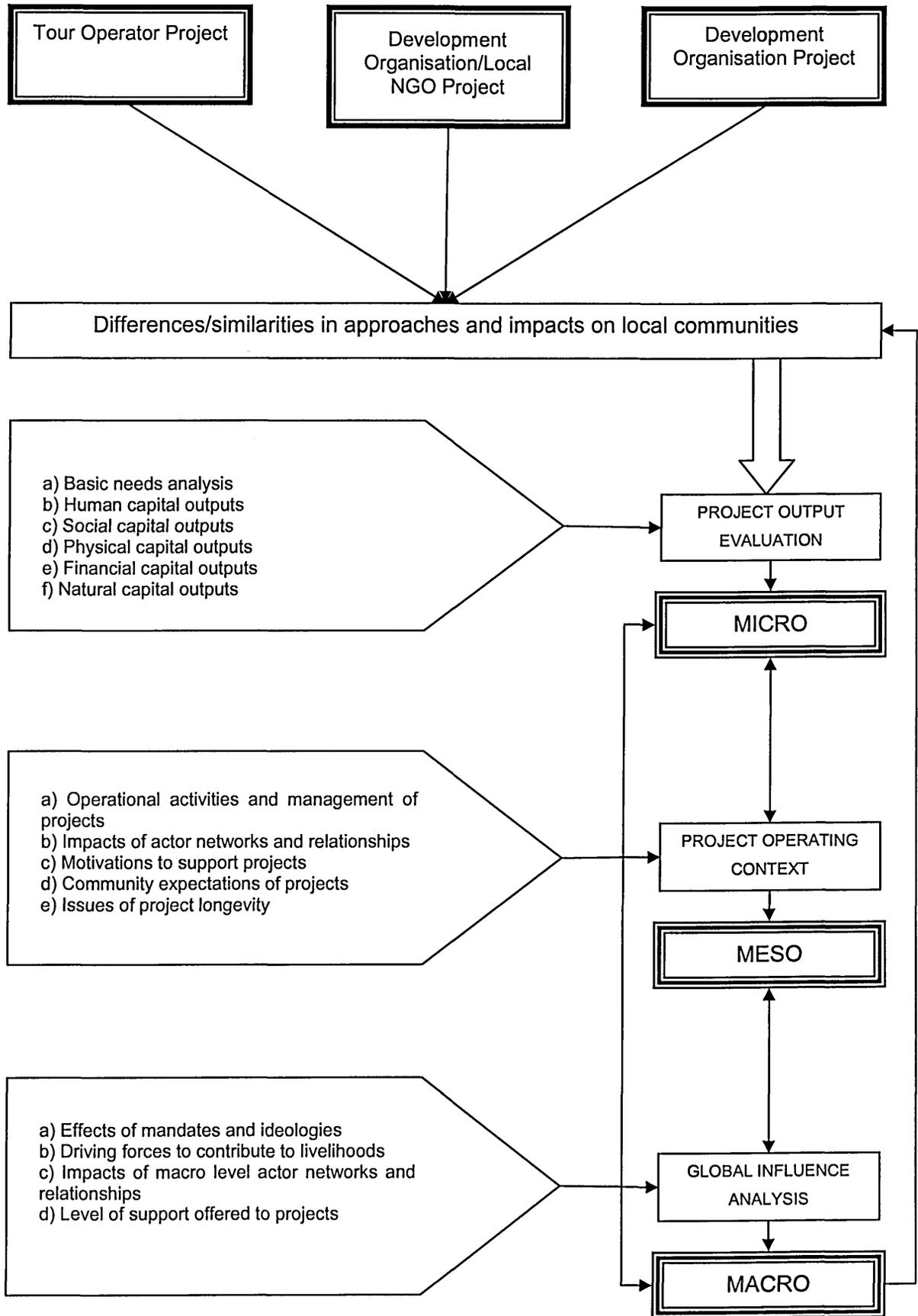
The approach also considered the concept of the global-local nexus, which has become a popular term in recent academic studies (e.g. Harrison, 2008; Schilcher, 2007; Bramwell & Meyer, 2007; Milne & Ateljevic, 2001; Teo & Li, 2003). This concept is based on the theory that local outputs and outcomes are explicitly connected to the policies and actions of global institutions and global influences. The concept is particularly relevant to tourism studies, due to the structure of the industry. This study considered Teo and Li's (2003) notion that the involvement of foreign institutions in local development processes leads to complex power relations, whereby local development is strongly influenced by global actors and actions. However, rather than solely considering dependency theory to explain these relationships and linkages, the study analysed these relationships and influences in their propensity to enhance the outputs of the tourism projects at the local level, and it explored the relevance of structuration theory. This idea conforms more to Bramwell and Meyer's (2007) assertion that the local is part of the global, and that connections between the two are a necessary part of tourism development.

### **8.2.1 Theoretical basis of the conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework (Figure 8.2) was drawn out of several theories and concepts discussed in the literature review. While this section details the theoretical basis for the framework, section 8.5 will discuss the contributions of the conceptual framework. The framework highlights the three tourism projects, and the micro, meso, and macro level contexts which, together, demonstrate the differences and similarities in project approaches and impacts on local communities. The components of analysing the micro, meso, and macro level contexts formed the basis for the design of the interviews and other research methods.

The micro level of the framework is based on the concept of livelihoods analysis (DfID, 1999). The DfID (1999) framework shows five areas of livelihoods capital which impact on communities: human, social, physical, financial, and natural. Through analysing the impacts of development projects on these five areas, DfID (1999) claim that it is possible to assess successes and failures, which can lead to recommendations to improve the project. This concept was used to fulfil objective 3 of the study, by analysing the livelihood outputs of the three projects, and was discussed in chapter 5.

Figure 8.2 Conceptual framework



The conceptual framework then highlights the key issues to explore the project context analysis, the results of which were presented in chapter 5. This was developed based on various theories discussed in the literature. Firstly, the framework drew upon various challenges facing community tourism projects discussed in the literature, which was presented in the framework as operational activities and management of the projects. Secondly, the concept that actors, networks, and relationships impact upon how a project is operated and managed was applied to the framework (Dredge, 2006a; 2006b; Van der Duim, 2007; Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008). Thirdly, the framework highlighted the motivations of the involved actors in supporting the projects. This was to evaluate the assumption that the private sector was only driven by profits (Jackson & Morpeth, 1999), and to evaluate the tour operators' motivations against those of development organisations. Fourthly, community expectations of the projects were included, to ascertain whether communities had higher expectations of development organisations or tour operators. This was partly to assess Poultney and Spenceley's (2001) claim that communities expect too much of the private sector, in terms of contributing to social services and infrastructure. Finally, the framework proposed that issues of project longevity should be discussed, based on Novelli and Gebhardt's (2007) argument that long-term sustainability of projects initiated by development organisations is questionable. The aim was to compare the results with project longevity of the tour operator project.

The macro level of the framework was, again, developed around various theories from the literature review. Firstly, the effects of mandates and ideologies are an important part of the framework, based on the theoretical discussions of pro-poor tourism and the global-local nexus (e.g. Harrison, 2008; Schilcher, 2007; Bramwell & Meyer, 2007; Milne & Ateljevic, 2001; Teo & Li, 2003). Secondly, driving forces to contribute to livelihoods are included, as this forms part of the macro level environment, which influences the involved actors. Thirdly, the macro framework included networks and relationships, to assess these in a similar way to those at the meso level. Finally, the framework proposed that the level of support offered to projects from the macro level could have an effect on the meso and micro levels.

Developing the framework was an iterative process, and issues within the framework were revisited on several occasions to ensure that the evidence and framework coincided. Whilst carrying out fieldwork and analysis, it transpired that some issues, such as government involvement in such projects, were not as important as was previously anticipated. Therefore, the original emphasis on local and national government within the conceptual framework was omitted. The original framework (see Figure 2.1) was also presented in reverse order: analysis began with analysing

the macro level environment, leading to the meso level and, lastly, the micro level. However, when fieldwork began in Ecuador, the framework was adapted to coincide with the way the fieldwork was carried out, i.e. starting with the micro level. This resulted in analysis of the projects from community perspectives, so that problems of the projects could be put to actors at the meso and macro levels to gain their responses to these problems. By doing so, the study placed a more pronounced focus on the perspectives and interpretations of community residents, which has added value to the study. The process of updating the framework, in accordance with the evidence, resulted in a comprehensive framework which guided and corresponded to the study throughout.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework was devised from a range of theories and concepts, and has drawn upon these to present a framework which covers relevant topics to fulfil the aims and objectives of the study. The framework has been influenced by the theoretical approach of the research, and has been pivotal in guiding the study and its structure.

### **8.3 Main findings of the study**

This section reviews the main findings of the study, which are based primarily on the three results chapters (chapters 5, 6, and 7). The main findings of the study are divided into four sections, in accordance with the conceptual framework. Firstly, the main livelihood impacts of the projects are reviewed; secondly, the operational contexts of the projects are discussed, with specific reference to links between the context and the livelihood outputs; thirdly, the findings of macro level influences are presented, with specific references to links between these influences, the operational context, and the livelihood outputs; and, fourthly, the links between the macro, meso and micro levels of the project are discussed. Each of these sections draws comparisons between the three projects and their respective operators/funders.

#### **8.3.1 Impacts of the projects on livelihoods**

Chapter 5 presented results of the three project's impacts on livelihoods of the communities where the projects were operating, showing that there were several key positive, and negative, outputs of the projects. These results were based on partial community representation due to the employed method of purposive sampling for community residents. Tao and Wall (2009) suggest that there are very few studies which show tourism's impact on livelihoods, particularly in the academic arena. More popular terminology for tourism's relationship with poverty reduction, pro-poor tourism, is also criticised, and Mowforth and Munt (2003) claim that pro-poor tourism is "replete

with imponderables; the ‘may’, ‘should’, ‘likely to’” (Mowforth & Munt, 2003: 271), arguing that there is little empirical evidence to exhibit the relationship between a pro-poor approach and positive impacts on communities (see also, Scheyvens, 2007; 2009; Schilcher, 2007). Harrison (2008) recognises that many of the conceptual criticisms of PPT are unwarranted, as there is little substantive research to confirm the criticisms. The main findings of this section demonstrate that tourism projects operated by external organisations, which employ a pro-poor approach, do have positive impacts on livelihoods, thus the empirical evidence of the projects has gone some way to addressing this gap in studies.

Analysing the impacts of the projects on livelihoods revealed four main conclusions: firstly, positive impacts on human and social capital were most important to community residents; secondly, community residents viewed areas of livelihood capital as inextricably linked, i.e. improvements in human capital led to improvements in financial capital; thirdly, the Tropic project produced the most positive livelihood outputs in comparison with the Care and Runatupari projects; and, fourthly, all three projects benefited directly-involved individuals and ‘elites’, but were failing to contribute to wider community development, partly as a result of insufficient tourist numbers.

Evidence for these findings was based on ranking exercises and interviews carried out with community residents. The ranking exercise (Figure 5.1) enabled respondents to detail their basic needs, how important they were, and how the tourism project had impacted upon them. This made it possible to see what aspects of livelihoods were significant to the respondents, which were discussed in the follow-up interviews.

Aspects of human and social capital were the most positive livelihood outputs in all three projects, despite the different style of projects and approaches to operating and managing them. Training and capacity building were cited as key positive impacts of each of the projects. For example, training men in construction work in the Runatupari and Tropic projects had resulted in transferrable skills, and some of the men had acquired other work in construction following this training. Respondents in the Care project had attended capacity building workshops in several areas, for example, a women’s embroidery group had been able to improve the standard of their work to enable them to sell more pieces to tourists. When respondents ranked their basic needs, these assets were not listed. Yet, during follow up discussions, these were the most prominent impacts of the projects, which had significant effects on their livelihoods. The majority of respondents listed ‘health’ as a basic need, and in the Tropic project, residents had benefited from access to a five-seater aircraft in case of a medical emergency. This was a livelihood output cited by the majority of respondents

in the community, demonstrating its value. Although Poultney and Spenceley's (2001) study argues that contributing to social services is not the obligation of the private sector, this livelihood output positively affected the way residents viewed the tourism project overall.

The formation of women's groups and tourism action groups were positive outputs of each of the projects, and respondents talked at length about the improvement of social dynamics within the community. Despite the positive responses, there were several residents in each project who felt that the project was being controlled by certain groups of elites. The project operators argued that the so-called elites had acted as gatekeepers to the communities. All three project operators admitted it would be impossible to involve every member of the community in every decision and that, therefore, much of the decision making was carried out with these groups, who the project operators believed to be representative of community views. It was also observed that meetings with the project operators were made open to all, but it was mainly the gatekeepers who attended. Community participation is problematic in tourism projects, but several authors argue that it is necessary for long-term sustainability (e.g. Häusler & Strasdas, 2002; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Tosun, 2000; 2002; 2006).

There were significant impacts on physical capital in each of the projects, yet, in accordance with the literature (Britton, 1982; Bowen, 1998; Tosun, 2000), only a select few were benefiting. Certain residents in the Runatupari project had benefited considerably from the construction of extra rooms to their houses to cater for tourists, which increased their liquid assets, and increased their level of household income. Yet such improvements had led to animosity towards these residents from other members of the community. Likewise, although Care were involved in the construction of a Prickly Pear plant for residents of one community to produce saleable products, residents in other communities complained of the lack of tangible physical benefits of the tourism project, which mainly focused on capacity building. The Tropic project also produced outputs on physical capital, most notably the construction of a laundry facility in the centre of the village. The community also had access to a motorised canoe, which they could use to travel to market, as a result of the project. The physical outputs of the Tropic project were far more focused on benefiting the whole community, as opposed to certain individuals, which resulted in less negativity towards specific beneficiaries.

In each project, financial outputs were mainly limited to the people directly involved in the tourism project, although there was evidence of the supply chain. Runatupari

respondents, for example, discussed how they sold products to the home-stay operators, which had increased their income. Residents in the Tropic project had earned extra income from the sale of crafts. Again, however, there was a certain amount of animosity towards the people who benefited financially, and were able to improve their livelihoods as a result. Yet project operators stated that it would be impossible to ensure that every community member was receiving financial income as a result of a tourism project, in line with much of the research on pro-poor tourism (e.g. Harrison, 2008; Chok *et al*, 2007; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008).

Natural capital outputs were granted the least amount of attention, although some respondents mentioned certain outputs which had significantly affected their livelihoods. For example, Care managed to acquire a piece of communal land for residents to grow organic produce to sell at market, showing the link between different capital assets. With each of the capital outputs, positive and negative effects were evident in other areas. Training (human capital) had aided people in increasing their income (financial capital). Conversely, the construction of home-stays (physical capital) had led to a change in social dynamics (social capital). It is therefore recognised that the knock-on effects of the tourism projects on other areas of livelihoods, are more palpable than some residents initially realised.

Overall, however, the benefits of each of the projects could be enhanced with greater numbers of tourists. Although project operators expressed concerns about the negative impacts of too many tourists, the small numbers the projects are currently attracting means that the potential positive impacts are not being realised. This was recognised by many community residents, most of whom were in favour of increasing the number of tourists to further the livelihood benefits within the communities. The Tropic project, which produced the most notable livelihood benefits of the three projects, was still limiting the number of tourists to the area, with a concern for carrying capacity. Consideration of increasing the number would undoubtedly improve the benefits to the community, but may lead to problems regarding carrying capacity, such as land degradation through excessive use.

### **8.3.2 Operational context of the projects**

There were several conclusions made in chapter 6 regarding the operational contexts of the projects at the meso level. Firstly, the evidence showed that all three projects faced operational problems, such as transport access to the projects, meeting tourist expectations, and marketing. Secondly, the chapter discussed networks surrounding the projects at the meso level, and detailed the effects of these networks on the projects. Thirdly, the evidence showed that communities expected more from

development organisations than they did from tour operators. Finally, it was concluded that none of the projects were sustainable, due to issues of commitment and involvement by the project operators/funders.

Transport access to the Tropic and Care projects was hindering the number of potential tourists they could attract. Conversely the Runatupari project benefited from its close proximity to the capital, Quito, and a major market town. However, occupancy rates were still relatively low, and research revealed that a lack of marketing activities was ensuing low volume tourism. This was a similar case for all of the projects, particularly Care, which failed to build sufficient links with tour operators as an outlet for the project: a common critique of development organisations projects (e.g. Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008; Wearing & McDonald, 2002). Meeting tourists' expectations also posed a challenge for all three project operators, specifically the language barrier. Many tourists explained that they had not been informed of how few people spoke English, and found that they were unable to communicate effectively. Although it can be argued that tourists should not expect host communities to speak English, it is recognised that the project operators would benefit from making their customers aware of this beforehand, thus managing expectations. This may, however, have a detrimental effect on tourist numbers, and an alternative, although costly, approach would be capacity building with local residents in basic English.

The network surrounding the Tropic project at the meso level (in country) involved the most actors. These actors were connected to the project as a result of technical knowledge exchange, cooperative agreements, or financial grants. Many of the actors were connected to each other independently of the project, meaning that the network was exceptionally dense. The actors also had the highest proportion of shared values, and even actors who did not share Tropic's values, offered alternative views which they believed would benefit the project. As a result, the project was influenced by several different ideologies and areas of technical input, for example, from the Rainforest Alliance. The Care network was deemed the weakest, and of the three project networks, Care appeared to be the most isolated, despite cooperation agreements with several organisations. This showed that cooperative agreements are not always enacted, and often exist for bureaucratic purposes.

The project operators also had to contend with managing expectations of the communities. Whereas some communities expected more community-wide benefits from the projects, others sought personal gain, mainly financial. Some respondents indicated that they expected the project operators to deliver benefits unrelated to tourism, such as social services and infrastructure. Overall however, respondents had

higher expectations of what development organisations could achieve in terms of livelihood outputs: slightly contradictory considering Tropic was revealed to be the most successful project operator at achieving this. There were also some respondents who claimed that they would favour assistance from a tour operator, as opposed to a development organisation, due to the vested interest the tour operator would have, and their propensity to attract more tourists.

It was concluded that issues of project longevity affected each of the projects. The Care project was suffering from a lack of funding and marketing channels; the Runatupari project was suffering from a lack of innovation, development and marketing channels; and the Tropic project was being threatened by the company's new commitment to a different project, which was demanding time and resources. Goodwin and Santilli (2009) claim that community participation in the planning and development of tourism projects may be necessary, but management of the project by the community is what makes the project sustainable in the long-term. In each of the projects, the communities were not involved in management of the projects to the same extent which Goodwin and Santilli (2009) advocate. However, adapting the projects to ensure that communities had a role in management would require far greater levels of training, which none of the projects had the funding for. There is also the question of whether communities would attend such training, despite claims from the majority of respondents that they would like to be more involved, based on their commitments to other livelihood activities.

### **8.3.3 Macro level influences on the projects**

The final results chapter analysed the macro level influences, which had an effect on the operations and outputs of the projects, and vice versa. The main conclusions showed that, firstly, development organisations are far more influenced by the head offices in the 'north' than tour operators are. Secondly, the MDGs do not influence tour operators to the extent which previous idealistic assumptions have suggested (e.g. Maxwell, 2008; Shepherd, 2008), but the MDGs do effect development organisations, particularly in increased monitoring and reporting. Thirdly, all three project operators were well connected to powerful global organisations, yet none appeared to take full advantage of these networks in terms of technical expertise. The networks at the macro level were far more important for funding and sales outlets for the projects.

Evidence for these conclusions was based on various interviews with actors at the micro, meso and macro levels. Interviews were conducted with actors familiar with the projects, and also with actors unfamiliar with the projects. Interviewing actors at the

macro level who were not familiar with the projects aided in understanding the macro level environment which impacts upon community tourism projects in LEDCs.

Firstly, the organisational mandates and ideologies of head offices were more influential for development organisations than for tour operators. Bureaucratic processes, such as form-filling and adhering to specific guidelines related to ideologies of contributing to poverty reduction in marginalised communities, hindered the projects in terms of developing viable tourism businesses. This was particularly true of the Care project, which was confined to developing a specific type of project that concentrated on marginalised communities, even though these communities were spread out over a vast geographical area. This made it difficult for Care to maintain contact with the communities and businesses on a regular basis. The Tropic project was more influenced by the personal ideology of the company owner, who believed in the combination of developing viable businesses whilst being an industry leader in responsible tourism, and Tropic was not so confined by particular mandates. This resulted in more freedom to develop a project which was both commercially viable, and contributed to livelihoods. The project did, however, have to meet the high standards of service, quality, and safety, stipulated by the UK buyers.

The second main conclusion, which conflicted with the literature (e.g. Maxwell, 2008; Ferguson, 2007; Tapper, 2001; Clemens *et al*, 2007), was the reduced emphasis on the MDGs as a driving force to reduce poverty. The MDGs had resulted in increasing monitoring and reporting on projects for Care and Agriterra, but despite being recognised as a driving force, the MDGs appeared to be more of an inconvenience for both organisations. For Tropic, the MDGs held little relevance, and the owner stated that the company was working towards such targets before the MDGs were formalised. The main driving forces for Tropic were consumer and industry pressure, and that acting responsibly made business sense, in terms of competitiveness.

Actor networks at the macro level were far more important in terms of acquiring funding for the projects and creating marketable outlets. This differed from networks at the meso level, which concentrated more on exchanges of technical expertise and cooperation agreements. All three project operators were well-networked with powerful global institutions, yet did not exploit these links to increase the profile of the projects. Furthermore, the project operators believed more could be done to support the projects from the macro level. For instance, it was argued that the Tropic project could be more successful if further information was provided to tourists by the UK buyers on the positive impacts on the community. The Runatupari project was the exception, as Agriterra provided technical advice after their withdrawal from the project, and

appeared keen to help the project with its current difficulties. This showed that their support had extended beyond their remit.

Overall, the macro level influences clearly had an impact upon the three projects, and commonalities between the three project operators were more apparent at the macro level than at the meso and micro levels. This showed that, despite being completely different organisations with different ideologies and objectives, development organisations and tour operators face similar challenges in creating a successful tourism product, and must respond to similar influences in their role as agency.

#### **8.3.4 Links between macro, meso, and micro levels of the projects**

The three results chapters documented any links between the micro level outputs, meso level operations and management, and macro level influences on the projects. Tropic's ideology of protecting natural and cultural resources had a direct impact on natural and social capital for the Huaorani community. The eco-lodge, which now renders the land part of a commercial business, has enabled the community to protect their surroundings from oil and logging companies, in turn meaning they have retained hunting ground, food sources, and access to medicinal plants. The sense of empowerment felt by residents was also palpable, as a result of the type of tourism product they were offering, which was developed through the ideology of Tropic's owner. Thus, the link between a macro level ideology, meso level operations, and micro level outputs is clear.

Tapper (2001) and Goodwin and Francis (2003) discuss the growing demand for 'ethical' holidays, and knowledge that adopting responsible practices could exploit the changing tourist market was a key factor for Tropic. Interviewees argued that a culmination of consumer and industry pressure, and the potential to increase profits, were driving the private sector to alter their practices to satisfy this growing demand. While the MDGs are influential for Care and Runatupari, Tropic contribute to poverty reduction primarily based on a mix of market demands and their own operating ideologies (see also, Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Ashley, 2005; Braman, 2001). Tropic also seeks to be a benchmark for private sector-funded tourism projects, which contribute to livelihoods and, in such, made every effort to achieve positive livelihood outputs in the community, in order to be held up as an example of best practice. This was evident in the numerous awards and media coverage the company has received. The Guardian Green Travel List (2010), for instance, included Tropic, stating "Tropic's trips are the genuine article...the Ecuadorian operator has pioneered small-scale, sensitively-run trips" (The Guardian 20/02/10). This suggests that Tropic's work at the micro level can influence the market at the macro level and, according to several

interviewees, inspire and influence other operators to attempt similar projects. In line with Giddens' structuration theory, this shows the influence of agency within tourism structures. Giddens (1984) also argues that agency refers to a flow or pattern of people's actions across time and space, rather than people's intentions of action. He suggests that this flow or pattern of actions can actually create and recreate structures, rather than existing as two separate entities. Although it is by no means suggested that Tropic has single-handedly altered the structure of the tourism industry, it is recognised that their patterns of actions, and goal to be an industry leader, could eventually contribute to a change in traditional structures of the involvement of tour operators in community development.

The Runatupari and Care projects appeared far more constrained by increased monitoring and reporting, and the pressure to achieve the MDG targets. Nardi (Care UK), for example, stated that "the MDGs are more pressure when you work with local governments...Care has to fit into this framework". This implies that development organisations seem far more prone to institutionalised types of behaviour (e.g. Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Clarke, 1998; Lewis, 2002; Tandon, 2000; Borren, 2000), and it is questioned if the 'development industry' is becoming too closely knitted, "in terms of interests, values, methods, priorities and other factors" (Hulme & Edwards, 1997: 3). This type of institutionalised behaviour was also evident in the short-term nature of project involvement by development organisations, which the evidence has shown to result in shortcomings in both the Care and Runatupari projects. Antell (LATA/Wilderness) argues that "we [Latin America] have a smattering of village projects but nobody is going there, which creates a hostile environment" (Antell 2010: personal communication), which is a direct result of short-term involvement and funding by development organisations. Despite stark criticisms and a plethora of failing tourism projects, this approach of developing short-term projects appears embedded in the culture of development organisations.

Dredge (2006a) asserts that dense networks suggest higher levels of cohesion and reciprocity, whereas sparse networks demonstrate a lack of cooperation and isolation, lending itself to little innovation or support. However, all three project operators stated that receiving funding and technical assistance from their network partners led to the dictation of terms and conditions, and the loss of power. Tropic argued that the amount of report writing and monitoring required placed a strain on their working relationships, as these bureaucracies reduced the time available for the Huaorani eco-lodge. This was also true for the Care project operators, who claimed that endless application forms for funding had detracted them from project operations. These networks and the bureaucracy attached, represent routinised patterns of collaborating with large-scale

institutions, but show the constraints that macro level mandates place on meso level operations, and subsequent micro level outputs.

### **8.3.5 Summary of the main findings**

Based on the main findings of the study, it is clear that social and human capital outputs far outweigh financial contributions for the majority of respondents, supporting Wang and Pfister's (2008) argument that too few studies analyse the non-economic benefits of tourism from community perspectives. This does not, however, take into account several studies carried out by practitioners (e.g. Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Spenceley, 2002; Ashley, 2000). Overall, it is concluded that the Tropic project is most successful in terms of livelihood outputs, operations and management, the company's response to macro level influences, and integration into the global tourism industry, which challenges historical assumptions that tour operators are profit-driven with little social conscience. Development organisation-led projects, however, have not been as successful in harnessing benefits to the communities as would have been expected, and Care and Agriterra recognise this. Despite Agriterra's collaboration with local NGO, UNORCAC, they have not been able to generate livelihood benefits to the same extent as the tour operator-led project, and nor has the Care project. Yet all three projects have shown commonalities, particularly the way in which the operators/funders must respond to macro level influences and bureaucratic procedures, and shown these distinct links between the micro, meso and macro level environments.

## **8.4 Conceptual findings**

While the main findings of the study have documented empirical evidence, primarily related to the three case study projects, the conceptual conclusions place the research within broader theoretical discussions. These conclusions demonstrate the theoretical contribution of the study, through adding to, and challenging, current ideas and assumptions. The section also details the contributions of the conceptual and methodological approaches.

### **8.4.1 Tour operators' propensity to contribute to poverty reduction compared with development organisations**

Throughout the course of the research, there were several criticisms made of both development organisations and the private sector, and their strategies for attempting to reduce poverty. Primarily, development organisations were criticised for not understanding or embracing the tourism market. Projects were criticised for being supply driven, with little research conducted on the demand for what the project was

offering to tourists, or the location. Van Rij (Agriterra), for example, stated that “a lot of NGOs and development agencies are not very professional...and they start with building their home-stays, and once they are there, then they start thinking ‘ok, let’s now look for the tourists’” (van Rij 2010: personal communication). This view was echoed by others, including Antell (LATA/Wilderness), who cited several examples of tourism projects funded by development organisations, which had constructed lodges before researching the market to ascertain whether they were in suitable locations which were attractive and accessible for tourists, for instance, a lodge constructed by Conservation International which, after construction, they found that they were unable to supply it with water as there were no suitable access points. Antell (LATA/Wilderness) added that “it really summed up the fact that they had this huge idea, but they hadn’t thought it through. They had sort of guided the local community and then left them high and dry” (Antell 2010: personal communication). Likewise, Matthews (TOFT/Discovery Initiatives) claimed that development organisations are able to start projects but do not have the relevant resources or expertise to sustain them; “so often I’ve seen wonderful ideas and hopes dashed because the money runs out” (Matthews 2010: personal communication).

A second criticism of development organisations and, to an extent, the private sector, is the lack of planning in their exit strategies from projects. As was discussed in section 7.2, Agriterra’s exit strategy was clear and concise, and ensured that UNORCAC had control of the project upon their withdrawal. Yet the current stagnation has been partly attributed to the management of the project, suggesting that Agriterra’s efforts to adequately equip the organisation to run the enterprise were not sufficient. Similarly, the break in funding for the Care project witnessed the virtual collapse of the community-local business network they had facilitated showing that, without Care’s involvement, there are serious doubts about the projects’ ability to sustain. The Tropic project has exceeded the proposed timeline and the exit strategy is vague, with little assurance as to when transferral of the lodge will take place.

Withdrawal strategies and transferring ownership appear to be problematic for other project operators also. In Ecuador, Kapawi Lodge in the Amazon was cited repeatedly by interviewees as an example where capacity building with the local people to run the business was not adequately carried out, despite the fact that it is held up as an example of best practice in research studies (e.g. Rodriguez, 1999; Stronza, 2008). Kapawi was funded by a large private tour operator, who transferred ownership of the lodge to the community after eight years. Without the management and marketing skills of the tour operator, the lodge has been subject to a drastic decrease in tourist numbers and revenue. It is suggested that neither development organisations nor tour

operators have determined how to successfully withdraw from a project, and this study has shown how crucial this issue is in order to create sustainable tourism projects.

There have been several discussions within the literature and the results chapters, on whether development organisations or tour operators have more potential to contribute to livelihoods (Soloman, 1994; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Harrison & Schipani, 2007). Although the need for collaborative partnerships was agreed by many interviewees, respondents had different views on who can accomplish increased livelihood benefits without this collaboration. Matthews (TOFT/Discovery Initiatives) believed that the private sector was the way forward in the world of development because it must be more accountable, and it must assume ownership. He criticised the funding cycle which development organisations need to go through, and claimed that many of the projects they initiate can never be self-sustained; “[they] go through a three year scenario of having millions of quid, to having absolutely nothing...it can start things but they can never be the sustainers” (Matthews 2010: personal communication). Antell (LATA/Wilderness) supports this, claiming that development organisations lack the continuity to sustain a project. Despite the recognition that the private sector are capable of harnessing significant benefits to poor communities, Mudd (Steppes) and Beard (AITO/JLA) believe that the development sector is far better equipped, due to their knowledge of poverty reduction. Although this may be the case, Goodwin (ICRT) argued “if you said to me ‘who’s achieved the most’, I’d have no hesitation in answering that it’s the private sector” (Goodwin 2010: personal communication). He claims that, with the number of large development organisations focusing on tourism, there should be far more empirical evidence documenting the positive results.

Comparing tour operators with development organisations has revealed very different opinions, based on personal background and knowledge of each sector, resulting in different viewpoints from people who worked in the same sector. In conclusion, however, it is suggested that comparing two sectors is almost unfair, due to their vastly differing mandates, ideologies, and goals. Yet, despite criticisms of the private sector, this study suggests that tour operators have a far larger role to play in poverty reduction than has previously been documented. This is in line with Harrison and Schipani (2007), who argue that “the pro-poor credentials of tourism enterprises in the private sector are largely under-rated (Harrison & Schipani, 2007: 89), and relates back to structuralist views which consider actions of the private sector to mirror imperialism.

#### 8.4.2 The inevitability and necessity of dependency relationships

The issue of dependency featured throughout the literature (e.g. Britton, 1982; Francisco, 1983; Scheyvens, 2007; Brohman, 1996; Jackson & Morpeth, 1999; Tosun, 2000; Schilcher, 2007), and continued into the analysis of the projects. Britton (1982) claimed that the “industry structure ensures that third world destinations have a largely passive and dependent role in the international system” (Britton, 1982: 347). This statement can be translated to the three projects in this study. However, section 6.2.3 concluded that the communities and local businesses involved may well be dependent on the project operators, but the project operators were equally dependent on them. At the macro level, dependency on international actors is, once again, a consideration, due to power balances and relationships of reciprocity. Overall, the general consensus was that dependency is unavoidable in the international tourism industry due to the nature of the business. It was agreed by the interviewees, however, that certain measures had to be taken to avoid complete dependence on particular actors.

Mudd (Steppes) summarised the rooted problem of dependency, stating “where there is a line of cash, there is dependency” (Mudd 2010: personal communication). This argument was emphasised by proponents of dependency theory (e.g. Bowen, 1998; Britton, 1982; Dos Santos, 1970 & 1973), who argue that nations brought into the global capitalist system, through trade systems, international aid, and investment, were subject to a degree of control by their international affiliates. However, opponents of the theory argue that it does not consider those nations and regions which have prospered with the input of foreign capital (Lall, 1975; Warren, 1980). For the three projects in question, this flow of ‘cash’ from the developed ‘north’ to the less-economically developed ‘south’ is clearly evident, thus resulting in some level of dependence on the project operators and funders. Yet the levels of dependence, and the outcome of it, are dependent on the involved organisations and companies, the strength of their relationships with other actor groups, and the ability to empower communities. This suggests that human action can overcome dependent relationships, which are so commonly associated with the tourism industry. Bianchi (2002), for instance, argues that the dependency perspective is preoccupied with viewing destinations in the ‘south’ as unable to resist the power of metropolitan tourist capital. The research suggests that, in line with the power of agency, communities in LEDCs cannot be viewed as ‘weak’, and the study argues that their recognition of their own empowerment substantiates this.

Stronza and Gordillo (2008) conclude from their study of tourism projects in the Amazon that the knowledge acquired by the community residents throughout the

process was invaluable in altering their relative 'power' and that it provided residents with a "newly gained temerity to talk with donors, NGOs, and other sources of potential support for the community" (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008: 461). Similar views were also voiced by residents in all three of the case study projects, and the importance of empowerment within localised social structures was expressed by respondents. The formalising of women's groups to sell arts and crafts within the Tropic project was cited as one example of empowerment, while the formation of tourism action groups within the CARE project, and home-stay operator groups within the Runa Tupari project disclosed how these developments had strengthened the position of community members. For instance, a home-stay owner in the Runa Tupari project stated that "now this is my business I go to meetings [public and open council] to be a representative and try to protect what we have". His reference to being a representative of community views demonstrated that, despite being dependent on the project, it had also provided him with a distinct sense of empowerment. The sense of empowerment of communities in all three projects shows that dependency can shift between actor groups, and that the communities do not view being dependent on an external organisation as something which had negative repercussions. These arguments solidified the consideration of structuration theory throughout the study, and community empowerment echoed Giddens' concept of actor knowledgeability.

Butcher (2008) claims that the power of agency in community participation is a myth, and he states that "'control', 'empowerment', and 'democracy' – all implying agency – need to be tempered by a recognition that community participation on the part of the NGOs is intrinsic to a particular development agenda, an agenda shaped externally" (Butcher, 2008: 25). Yet, while this may be true, it still recognises that agency is an inherent part of structure. Furthermore, the positive power of agency does not only have to refer to communities, as Butcher (2008) implies, but it transfers to other stakeholders surrounding tourism projects. Although community empowerment has been demonstrated to some degree within this study, the power of agency was even more palpable when analysing the role and influence of the tour operator and development organisations operating the projects. Yet tour operators are commonly criticised for their dominance, development organisations have recently been criticised for their values and agendas, and the 'community' is often the sole focus of agency discussions. It is suggested that perhaps the actions of these actors, particularly the private sector, are somewhat under-valued in academic studies (Harrison & Schipani, 2008), despite the fact that they have more potential to influence structural patterns than communities alone do. While community empowerment and participation are key for long-term sustainability of projects, there is a need for the recognition of the positive

role that external actors can play in harnessing benefits to these communities, as certain practitioner reports have shown (e.g. Poultney & Spenceley, 2002; Spenceley, 2001).

While Tropic is very much dependent on their UK buyers and, more recently, their only US buyer Detour, they maintain that having such strong relationships of trust and understanding, reduces the risk of their dependent relationships with their buyers becoming a threat. This was supported by the majority of UK buyers interviewed, as several confirmed that the relationship with Tropic was more personal than with some other ground agents. As a result, Tropic was adamant that their buyers would not simply end their partnership without significant forewarning and considerable motive, which was also confirmed by the buyers themselves. Therefore, the issue of being dependent on buyers was not considered as a negative, but more of an opportunity. As Antell (LATA/Wilderness) explains, “they will always have a dependence because it’s a link in the chain...without the tour operators and that access to market, they’re not going to have anybody interested, so it’s a necessary dependence” (Antell 2010: personal communication). Having access to markets enables Tropic to increase their visitor numbers and gain international recognition, essentially outweighing any issue of dependent relationships which may exist.

Van Weert (formerly Agriterra) affirms that, for the initial stages of the Runatupari project, Agriterra was pivotal, providing grants and technical expertise, thus there was a clear relationship of dependency. Mitchell (ODI) rightly asserts that “of course that charge will be made and it’s probably valid to a certain extent, but it’s a cheap shot because what’s the alternative?” (Mitchell 2010: personal communication). The alternative would have been for Agriterra never to have involved themselves, in which case the Runatupari project would not exist, and the additional livelihood benefits of tourism would never have been realised. Proponents of dependency theory would argue that the current stagnation of the project is a direct result of Agriterra’s withdrawal, thus demonstrating just how dependent the project was on the organisation. However, Agriterra maintain that their withdrawal from the project after three years was essential, “so instead of worrying about donors, they should start worrying about the market, and about clients, and how to generate business” (van Rij 2010: personal communication). Making the case for the short term involvement in projects actually demonstrates how this can reduce the dependence on an organisation, as van Rij (Agriterra) and van Weert (formerly Agriterra) both associate the current stagnation with a bad choice of management, which occurred after their withdrawal. If Agriterra were still involved, the issue of dependency would be far greater and cemented within the project.

The Care project quite deliberately selected tourism initiatives to combine on a tourist trail which were already involved in some form of tourism activities. One of the reasons for this was to reduce the dependence on Care due to their relative short term of involvement. The view was that if those involved already had knowledge of tourism and were operational, then it would enhance the chance of success. This tactic, however, does not appear to have worked so far. After the project ran out of funding in February 2008, Care admitted that the period of separation had been detrimental for the project, and that the majority of the network had ceased working together. The project is also heavily reliant on Care to maintain the networks between private enterprises and communities, as chapter 5 discussed that several community respondents did not understand why Care were assisting businesses. As a consequence, Nardi (Care UK) insists that “the main focus of this phase of the project is making the tourism network self sustainable, [and] the exit strategy” (Nardi 2010: personal communication). He views this final phase as pivotal to the continuation of the project following Care’s withdrawal. Care Ecuador’s reliance on funding from Care UK has shown that they were unable to source the remainder of the funding from elsewhere. Commercialisation of the project is another key area which Care UK is assisting with, therefore demonstrating a strong level of dependence on the head office. Due to the fact that they are the same organisation does render this dependence slightly less of a problem, as they are not directly reliant on an outside actor. At this time, however, it is difficult to assess to what extent this dependence will affect the project in later stages.

#### **8.4.3 Success of collaborative projects between tour operators, development organisations, and communities**

Collaborative projects between development organisations and the private sector are often described in the research literature as the most fruitful approach in creating a successful development project (Fadeeva, 2004; Zhao & Brent Ritchie, 2007; and Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008). In reference to small scale tourism development projects, such as the ones in this study, it is argued that “establishing links with the private sector is probably the best way to help ensure that initiatives are commercially successful” (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008: 109). However, there is little empirical evidence of where this strategy has been applied and resulted in success (with the exceptions of Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Spenceley, 2002). In each of the three projects, collaboration between the private sector and development organisations has been evident, although most prevalent within the Tropic project. This section analyses these collaborative links, and discusses why collaboration appears difficult to achieve.

When discussing the contributions to livelihoods at the micro level, chapter 5 revealed that several community respondents did not understand why Care were also working with, and assisting, local private tourism businesses, and not focusing all of their efforts on the communities. At the meso level, chapter 6 discussed the repercussions of the Runatupari project operators failing to build sufficient working relationships with domestic tour operators, resulting in a lack of demand for the product. Interviewees suggested that a stigma attached to private sector tour operators and their profit-driven agendas deterred development organisations from seeking their collaboration. Yet, recent literature has begun to question this, and implied that the development sector is becoming more open to collaboration (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008; Wearing *et al*, 2005; Zhao & Brent Ritchie, 2007). However, Goodwin (ICRT) claimed that he could not think of any examples where a collaborative venture between the development and private sectors had been initiated and been successful. The only examples he could provide were very small ground agents who had a minimal amount of cooperation with a development organisation, but it was not something which the ground agents actually recognised, or thought enough of, to describe it as a 'collaborative venture' between a development organisation and a tour operator. Antell (LATA/Wilderness) believes that collaboration is essential for project success, and suggests that development organisations would benefit significantly from consulting the private sector. This would make sense, as development organisations focus on poverty reduction, and private tour operator's focus on product and business; therefore, collaborative partnerships at the macro, meso, and micro levels can produce all round positive results (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008; Wearing *et al*, 2005; Zhao & Brent Ritchie, 2007).

The private sector faced many criticisms from community respondents in chapter 6, including a lack of understanding of community needs, being unapproachable, the threat of over-commercialisation, and a lack of empowerment. At the macro level, tour operators faced similar criticisms, coupled with what van Rij (Agriterra) describes as a lack of patience. Despite appreciating the value of collaborating with tour operators, he does recognise that the private sector often expect results very quickly, and are not willing to move at the pace required to adequately equip local people to enable their involvement. Van Rij (Agriterra) also believes that many tour operators do not want to venture too far 'off the beaten track', and instead opt to set up tourism projects in areas where there is already a market. For rural or remote areas, this can result in a distinct lack of livelihood options, which is often the cause of urban migration (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, these areas are often the regions were development organisations focus their attention, rendering it difficult for them to convince tour operators that projects in such places are a viable option. Drumm (Tropic) describes the two sectors as "two

different animals” (Drumm 2010: personal communication), and empathises with development organisations for not seeking to collaborate more with the private sector, as he believes tour operators have a long way to go in having more positive livelihood impacts in the areas where they operate.

Mitchell (ODI) declares that “most donor projects working in tourism avoid the private sector quite deliberately...they run away from the people who might actually make the projects work” (Mitchell 2010: personal communication). Mitchell (ODI) reiterated arguments made in research studies (Van der Duim & Caalders, 2008) that the development sector and tour operators have very little experience working together due to differing ideologies. As a result, Mitchell (ODI) claims that development organisations are “trying to make a model of alternative tourism that doesn’t work” (Mitchell 2010: personal communication). According to van Rij (Agriterria), it is clear that “instead of development organisations working from the support side, the best way is to develop [projects] from a private sector perspective in order to ensure they have an outlet” (van Rij 2010: personal communication). This criticism of development organisations, in that they struggle to make projects commercially viable, was also raised earlier. Some respondents believed that the sector did not know enough about the market in order to make the projects successful. Creating market access also relates back to arguments raised in chapter 6, whereby neither the Care nor the Runatupari project had initiated substantial marketing and promotion. Without this market access, tourist numbers were relatively low, resulting in a direct impact upon all aspects of livelihood capital. Thus, it can be argued that the lack of collaboration between the two sectors at the macro level, filters down to the meso level, and hampers the potential success of the projects.

Despite this, collaborative partnerships were evident in this study, and showed the potential of such partnerships to contribute to successful tourism projects. This is mirrored by Poultney and Spenceley (2001), who argue that the collaborative tourism partnership between Wilderness Safaris and local communities has acted as a catalyst for change over time, and that “the contact between the community and tour operators generates ideas and opportunities, which quite often fall outside the competence of the private tour operator” (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001: 31). In line with Poultney and Spenceley’s findings, the Tropic project discussed in this study shows that the willingness of Tropic to embrace change, i.e. collaborative partnerships between communities, conservationists and the private sector, represents a new era of pro-poor tourism projects. It also symbolises the willingness of Tropic to act as an agent of change, by altering traditional structural confines of partnerships between these stakeholder groups.

In brief, collaboration may be viewed by many as the way forward for tourism development projects in developing countries, but as Heyes (Senderos Marketing) asserts “it needs to be more than just words” (Heyes 2010: personal communication). This was also raised in chapter 6, whereby Care had cooperation agreements with several organisations, but no collaboration was actually evident. The importance of collaborative ventures may only be realised when more empirical evidence of success is made available, yet this study has supported arguments for such collaboration. A move towards more collaboration between development organisations and the private sector would also go further to challenging binary positions which assume that the two work within different structures. Sharing common goals and working in conjunction would, again, support structuration theory, in that human action and patterns of interaction between development organisations and tour operators, could alter historical structures which, for the most part, have divided their actions.

#### **8.4.4 Contributions of the methodological and conceptual approaches**

The few existing studies which discuss tourism’s contribution to livelihoods have been carried out using primarily quantitative methods (e.g. Ashley, 2000; Saville, 2001). Such studies have commonly focused on livelihoods, without analysing the operational context of the project and the macro level influences. This study, however, has used primarily qualitative techniques to carry out the research, which has resulted in a more in-depth study that considers the interpretation of impacts by the community residents. Rather than surveying, or ‘counting’ impacts, the methodological approach enabled the researcher to deduce the meaning of the impacts to the respondents. As such, the study concluded that impacts on human and social capital outweighed other areas of capital outputs. Wang and Pfister (2008) and Scheyvens (2007) argue that there are too few studies which focus on the non-economic impacts of tourism. By using a qualitative approach to research, this study has gone some way to addressing this gap in academic studies.

The study is also slightly different in combining livelihoods analysis and critical ethnography. The result is a study which considers three different projects, and project funders/operators, in their propensity to contribute to livelihoods and operate a successful, sustainable tourism initiative. Using a critical theory approach, and considering the concept of structuration theory, allowed the researcher to consider the political and economic influences on the tourism projects. These macro level influences have direct links to the micro level livelihood outputs; links which are not a common focus in livelihood studies. The study has also connected the outputs to

networks at the meso and macro levels; again, an approach which is not often associated with livelihood studies.

The consideration of structuration theory has also led to questions about the traditional structuralist approach, which is so often applied to tourism studies. Whilst appreciating dependency theory and recognising its relevance, the study has also shown that the power of agency can be influential within the structure of the tourism industry. Using this approach has led to the conclusion that the private sector is, to an extent, gifted with more freedom than development organisations. Tropic is not confined to working within funding cycles or particular objectives established by a head office in another country, as is the case with the Care and Runatupari projects. Considering the duality of agency and structure, and the fluctuating power between the two, has been a key contribution of this study by bridging the gap between normal micro-level impact studies, and studies which consider theoretical structural constraints of tourism development projects in LEDCs.

#### **8.4.5 Summary of the conceptual findings**

To summarise, the study has shown that the dependency perspective, whilst still relevant in tourism studies, can be overly negative regarding the involvement of external bodies in tourism projects in LEDCs. Rather, relationships of dependency are a necessary part of tourism development, and the dependent relationships can shift between actors depending on contextualities and the level of empowerment felt by the communities. Consideration of Giddens' concept of the duality of structure and agency has indicated that, for tour operators, the power of agency can be more influential within the structure of the tourism industry, whilst development organisations appear more confined by institutionalised structures, often pertaining to bureaucracy of their own making. Yet the negative stigma of the tour operator seems embedded in the culture of the tourism and poverty arena. More empirical evidence is required on tour operators' contributions to poverty reduction and community development, in order to eliminate this stigma. This could potentially witness further collaboration between the development and private sectors, to harness significant benefits for communities in LEDCs, which interviewees in this study have advocated as the way forward for tourism and poverty reduction.

#### **8.5 Contributions of the conceptual framework**

The development of a conceptual framework to guide the study has been a useful tool, which could potentially be applied to other studies. Drawing on existing theories, the framework merged several concepts and approaches to evaluate tourism projects

which focus on community development. The structure of the framework made it possible to compare different tourism projects with different funding and operating sources, on issues which have traditionally been kept separate for development organisations and tour operators. For example, livelihoods analysis has been used by development practitioners, whereas exploring the operational activities and management of such projects would usually be reserved for research on projects supported by the private sector. The framework also illustrated how, simultaneously, it was possible to evaluate the micro level outputs of the projects, the meso level operating context, and the macro level influences. By doing so, the framework employed a dual focus, which could be applicable to future studies.

The micro level of the framework demonstrated that assessing the impacts of tourism projects on the five areas of livelihood capital can show the impacts of the projects on communities. Although the study was not a full livelihood impact study, as it only used the elements of DfIDs sustainable livelihoods framework, the impacts are presented from the perspectives of those communities who are affected, providing an overview of respondent's interpretations of impacts. In addition, evaluating a project funded and operated by a tour operator in this way, demonstrates that the private sector is able to contribute to livelihoods to the same, if not greater, extent as development organisations. It also means that the projects are evaluated against the same criteria. Using this approach is feasible, even though the overall aim of the tour operator is not specifically to contribute to livelihoods.

The project context analysis of the framework correlated to the meso level, which concentrated on issues within the destination, besides from micro-level outputs. By evaluating the issues within the meso level and linking them both to the micro and macro levels, it is possible to deduce any links between the three. Evaluating projects in this manner aids in explaining the destination context in which the projects operate, and compare the challenges which project operators face in the destination. Again, this ensures that each project is evaluated against the same criteria, allowing for comparisons.

The macro level of the framework connected influences which are usually separated for the private sector and development organisations. For example, driving forces to reduce poverty would not ordinarily be associated with a tour operator project. However, the inclusion of this area of analysis for all three projects has shown that tour operators are affected by global driving forces, other than profit-making. This enabled the study to conclude that, despite the operational and ideological differences, tour

operators and development organisations bare many similarities in their attempts to contribute to livelihoods through tourism.

Linking the three levels, and comparing the three projects, is a unique conceptual framework, which is suggested to be to be applicable, feasible, and representative of issues concerning tourism projects which are funded and operated by external sources. Adaptation of the framework for future studies could provide the academic arena with further empirical evidence on these issues, as it could be altered for any externally-led tourism project.

## **8.6 Limitations of the research and recommendations for future research**

Although the study has been successful in fulfilling the research objectives, it is recognised that there have been limitations. By outlining these limitations, this section presents recommendations for future research, which could allow studies on similar topics to contribute further to academic knowledge.

The study was constrained to a timescale and financial costs. Therefore, it was not feasible to carry out a higher number of ranking exercises and interviews with community residents. DfID (1999) recognise that thirty respondents is an adequate number to represent a relatively small community. Yet the scale of the Care project, which covered several communities, meant that a higher number of responses would have been preferred, in order to be more representative of the effected population. The geographical area which the project covered rendered it impossible to cover all communities involved in the project in the time and cost constraints. Whilst the Care project presented an interesting case study, the researcher did not appreciate the scale of the project until research had commenced, and it is recognised that a smaller-scale project would have been more feasible for the study.

The timeframe was also affected by the selection of an unsuitable SNV project, before fieldwork in Ecuador commenced. Although initial document research indicated that the SNV project was functioning and impacts could be clearly assessed, a visit to the community revealed that this was not possible due to the very early stages of SNV's involvement. It was subsequently decided to find a different project which would be suitable for the study and, hence, research was conducted on the Runatupari project as a replacement. This did, however, reduce the amount of time spent gathering evidence on the Runatupari project compared with the other two projects (refer to section 4.2.3 for further details). It is recognised that time would have been saved if alternative projects had been researched before the commencement of fieldwork, in order to reduce the time spent finding another project whilst in the destination.

As discussed in section 7.2, the Care project and a different Tropic project were both affected by advice from the FCO, which advised tourists against all travel to those areas. However, this advice was not circulated until 2009, at which point fieldwork in Ecuador had been completed. It was not possible to return to Ecuador to gauge the effects of the actions taken by the organisations as a result of this advice.<sup>29</sup> Follow-up research would benefit from assessing how this travel advice impacted upon the communities, and be able to demonstrate a clear link between an international mandate, and the effects on the communities.

Analysing networks and the subsequent impacts upon project operations and management was a key finding of the study. However, a more in-depth analysis of the actors, networks, and relationships within the networks would have revealed a more precise representation. Due to the number of actors within each of the project networks, at both meso and macro levels, this was unachievable within the timeframe. It would have also drastically altered the overall focus of the study, and not allowed for other elements of the meso and macro level frameworks to be presented. It is, however, recognised that more time and resources should have been designated to actor networks. Future research should consider these actor networks to a greater extent in a study designated to this topic. This would allow for deeper understanding of power balances, the process of acquiring funding, the exchange of technical expertise, and the value of cooperation agreements within networks.

The study has succeeded in assessing the impact of three tourism projects on livelihoods from a qualitative perspective. However, the tradition of using quantitative studies to analyse household income and outgoings may have supplemented the study with a more in-depth analysis of the impacts on financial capital. This method may have also aided in providing clearer evidence as to the effects of the supply chain, but the focus on gathering qualitative data as opposed to quantitative meant that this was not appreciated at the time of research. Although the adopted qualitative approach has been useful in gaining a depth of understanding of the impacts, future studies should consider employing more mixed methods to establish exactly how many people are benefiting financially from such projects.

Using interviews as the primary data collection method was particularly successful when seeking evidence from project operators, funders, and actors independent of the projects but, due to the volume of community resident interviews, questionnaires may have been more appropriate, providing they contained certain open-ended questions to allow respondents to expand on their interpretations of impacts. Focus groups within

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<sup>29</sup> Care withdrew two communities in the area from the tourism project; Tropic continues to work in the area against the advice of their UK buyers.

the communities may also have been a useful method of investigation, but were not used due to the high number of resident ranking exercises and interviews carried out. Document analysis aided in supplementing some of the empirical data, but unfortunately, there were limited documents available regarding the three specific projects, such as tourist statistics. The ranking exercises, on the other hand, were shown to be a very useful tool for gathering evidence on basic needs, and the importance of tourism to these needs. Residents responded well to the exercise, and several stated that it had made them think about the value of the tourism project. Further research should consider the use of ranking exercises as a participatory method, which lends itself to a bottom-up way of carrying out research.

One of the main concepts to emerge from the study was the applicability of Giddens' structuration theory. Whereas many previous studies have focused either on the theoretical structural constraints of using tourism for community development, or on micro-level impact studies, potential research could seek to explore structuration theory within tourism and LEDCs in more depth. Collaboration between development organisations and the private sector is currently highly topical in research literature, and future studies could also seek to link this to structuration theory.

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## Appendix 1: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

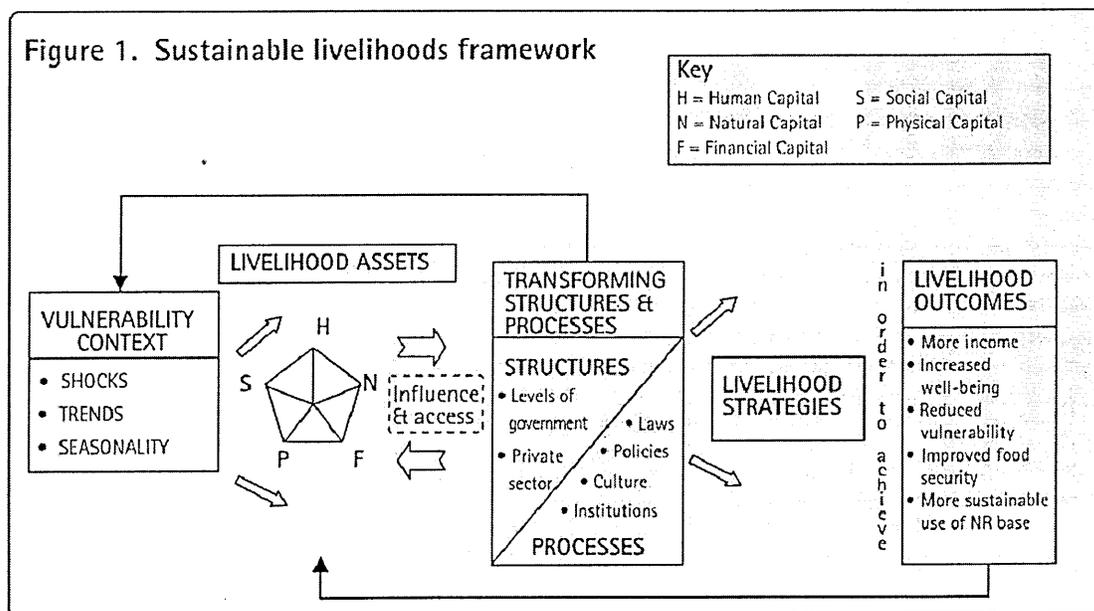
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Source: Adapted from The Millennium Project (2005)

## Appendix 2: DfID sustainable livelihoods framework



Source: DfID (1999) Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets

### Appendix 3: Example of a completed ranking exercise

NECESIDADES PARA LA FAMILIA (POR EJEMPLO: AGUA)	MÁS 4 MENOS IMPORTANTE (NÚMERO 1-3) (NIVEL DE IMPORTANCIA)	¿CÓMO BUENO EL TURISMO PARA SUS NECESIDADES? (1= PEQUEÑO 2= GRANDE)
agua de beber		3 = nada
agua de riego	2	3
nivel del estudio	5	3
comida		2
medicos para los niños	2	2
medicina natural	4 =	1
el dinero		1
el dinero para construcción	3	1
	6.	1

### Appendix 4: Interview template for project operators

1. How did the project start? Who initiated it and why? Where did the project gain funding from?
2. What elements of the initiative are pro-poor? Is reducing poverty the key objective of the project?
3. How were the needs of the area assessed? Are these implicitly linked to the practices of the project?
4. What do you feel has been the most significant contribution of the project thus far towards people's livelihoods?
5. What do you think makes a successful community tourism project?
6. Which types/groups of people are involved and how are these identified?
7. What efforts are made to involve other stakeholders (i.e. government, donors, NGOs, private sector)?
8. What other actors are involved with the project and how are they involved? What are these networks based upon? Who are the most important actors surrounding the project?
9. Are there any conflicts of interests between the actors?
10. How accepting are local and/or national authorities of your involvement here? Are there any policy conflicts or conflicts of interest?

11. Do you feel there may be a risk of people becoming dependent on the project and subsequently, you?
12. What would you describe as significant barriers you've had to overcome?
13. What are the main challenges which hinder the potential success of the project?
14. How do you think the project rates in comparison with other such projects?
15. What do you feel are the organisations motives for supporting this project?
16. How does what is being done at the micro level fit in with macro level policy and ideology?
17. How do you feel local people view the project? Are they accepting of it and of a foreign organisations involvement?
18. Do you think there are any negatives of having a foreign organisation here operating this type of project?
19. Is there anything you think can be done to further contribute to the livelihoods of the local people?
20. Are there any plans to expand the project or duplicate it to create a wider impact on improving livelihoods?
21. What was/is your exit strategy? How did/do you expect the project to operate after your withdrawal?

#### **Appendix 5: Interview template for project funders (Agriterra)**

1. Can you explain to me the process involved in funding the Runatupari project? For example, how was the project brought to your attention/ who decided to fund the project and why?
2. How did this project fit with the mandate and ideologies of Agriterra?
3. Why did Agriterra decide to fund a tourism project when the main focus is on agriculture?
4. I notice that some of the money (€6144) came from ICCO as a back donor. Can you explain this to me and why a back donor was used? Was this the only money involved or did Agriterra also provide funding?
5. Were there certain criteria that the project had to match in order to acquire the funding?
6. How did Agriterra assess the needs of the local area to ascertain if a tourism project was the best livelihood strategy?
7. After initial funding, what involvement did Agriterra have with the project? What were the monitoring and control measures?
8. Does Agriterra have any involvement now? Why/why not?
9. According to discussions with those involved in the project, Runatupari is now suffering from a lack of product innovation, and over-supply and under-demand. Is it likely that Agriterra will have any further involvement with the project in order to help them rectify these problems?

10. What other organisations do you collaborate with? What are these relationships based on?
11. Do you think these networks at the international level are important for contributing to livelihood projects at the local level? Why?
12. In what ways does Agriterra feel the pressure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? What impacts have they had on the organisation? Are your quotas harder to reach? How has this been addressed?
13. What are the other driving forces for Agriterra?
14. Do you believe there is a historical generalisation that the private sector is 'bad' and that the development sector is 'good', in terms of delivering positive benefits to poor communities?
15. In your opinion, between development organisations and tour operators, who has the most potential to have a more prominent positive impact on the livelihoods of poor communities?
16. Do you think collaborative ventures which draw upon the resources and expertise of both are the more fruitful approach?
17. Do you feel development organisations are becoming more open to the idea of collaborating with the private sector i.e. tour operators? Can you explain reasons for this? What are the problems of this cross-sector collaboration?
18. There are certain criticisms made of the development sector, particularly their eagerness to add tourism activities to their portfolio, and their short-term involvement in projects. Generally speaking, what are your views on development organisations using tourism as a strategy to achieve their objectives?
19. What do you think are the key challenges facing both development organisations and tour operators, in terms of contributing to livelihoods in developing countries?
20. Do you feel that local NGO's and ground agents working on community tourism projects in developing countries, are given adequate support from their international partners?

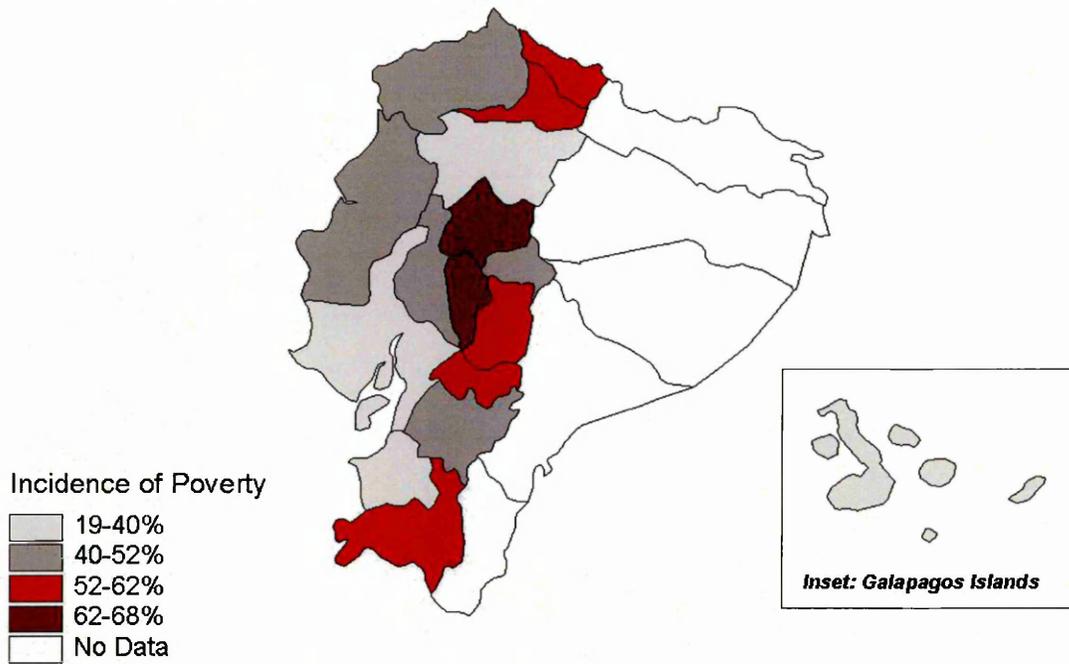
#### **Appendix 6: Interview template for actors independent of projects**

1. What do you think influences tour operators to involve themselves in actively contributing to the livelihoods of poor communities where they operate? (i.e. consumer pressure/industry pressure?)
2. Do you think they feel and react to the pressure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?
3. Different organisations and companies appear to use very differing methods when approaching this aspect of contributing to livelihoods. Whereas some incorporate an encompassing business approach, others use philanthropic donations as their method. What are your views on this, considering the Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership has criticised the shortcomings of donations?

4. Do you think tour operators and development organisations, through their initiation and support of projects and local communities, are in danger of creating a dependence?
5. Do you believe there is a historical generalisation that the private sector is 'bad' and that the development sector is 'good', in terms of delivering positive benefits to poor communities?
6. In your opinion, between development organisations and tour operators, who has the most potential to have a more prominent positive impact on the livelihoods of poor communities?
7. Do you think collaborative ventures which draw upon the resources and expertise of both are the more fruitful approach?
8. Do you feel development organisations are becoming more open to the idea of collaborating with the private sector i.e. tour operators? Can you explain reasons for this?
9. There are certain criticisms made of the development sector, particularly their eagerness to add tourism activities to their portfolio, and their short-term involvement in projects. Generally speaking, what are your views on development organisations using tourism as a strategy to achieve their objectives?
10. What do you think are the key challenges facing both development organisations and tour operators, in terms of contributing to livelihoods in developing countries?
11. Do you feel that local NGO's and ground agents working on community tourism projects in developing countries, are given adequate support from their international partners?
12. How do you think mandates and ideologies of organisations and companies at the macro level effect small-scale tourism projects in developing countries at the local level?

# Ecuador

## Incidence of Poverty -2001



Data from "Ecuador Poverty Assessment"  
World Bank Poverty Assessment -2004

Source: World Bank Poverty Assessment (2004)

## Appendix 8: Huaorani Eco-lodge accommodation





## From the Snow to the Mangroves

**Alliances between communities, private sector and local governments to develop alternative and responsible tourism products in the northern region of Ecuador**

The Project, started in February 2007, is being implemented by CARE International in Ecuador in partnership with the Development Alternatives Foundation and the Ministry of Tourism through its Northern Regional Office.

Within the project area, a great deal of tourism potential has been identified in terms of landscapes and scenery, local crafts and food, as well as historical, social and cultural value arising from the presence of Afro-Ecuadorian and Andean indigenous ethnic groups that are very important for fomenting tourism in the region.

The main fields of work are focused on the following areas: Alternative Tourism Development, Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprises, Protection and Conservation of Tourism Resources and enhancement of a Responsible Tourism Network.

The project seeks to incorporate concepts and practices that ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability, encouraging interaction and coordinated work between public and private sector and also the communities. For this purpose, the project is addressing the creation and linkage of tourism products, taking into account the entire productive chain, the establishment of alliances between rural communities and the private sector from the perspective of their responsibility into their own business and their surroundings, and the inclusion of local governments in tourism planning in order to make a significant contribution to local economic development through this activity.



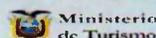
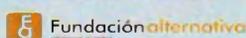
### List of companies and communities part of the Responsible Tourism Network

ENTREPRENEURSHIP	TYPE	CANTON
• Chilcapamba	Micro-enterprise / Community	Cotacachi
• Bosques de Paz	Micro-enterprise (family) / Forest Farm	Ibarra
• El Kibutz	Small business / Hostel	Ibarra
• Hacienda La Merced Baja	Micro-enterprise (family) / Farm	Ibarra
• San Clemente	Micro-enterprise / Community	Ibarra
• Zuleta	Artisan Association	Ibarra
• Gaén (Mascarilla)	Micro-enterprise / Artisan Association	Mira
• Monteverde	Community Association	Montúfar
• Pizán	Community Association	Montúfar
• San Juan	Community Association	Montúfar
• La Casa Sol	Small family business / Community Hotel	Otavalo
• Red Muyuntik	Community network	Otavalo
• Rey Molá Kocha	Community Association	Otavalo
• Totora Sisa	Micro-enterprise / Community	Otavalo
• Nueva América	Micro-enterprise / Community	Pimampiro
• El Cauchal	Community Association	San Lorenzo
• Siete Cascadas	Micro-enterprise (family) / Hostel	San Lorenzo
• Hacienda Pantayí	Small business / Farm	Urcuquí



www.care.org.ec  
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Photography: CARE 2007 / Juan Carlos Valdiviso

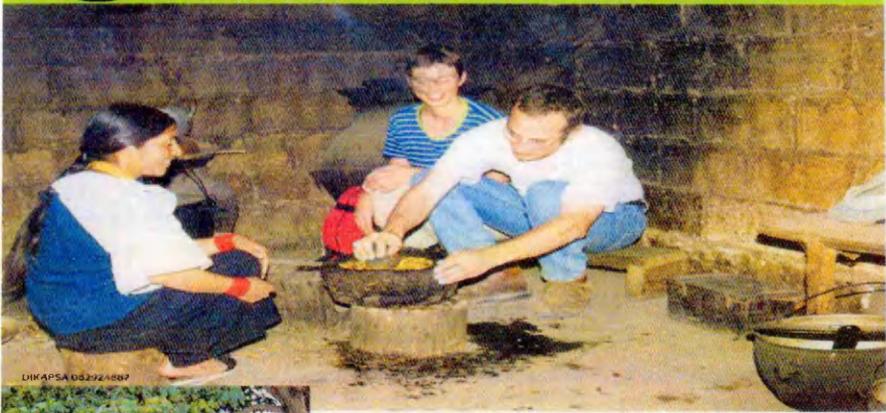




# RUNA TUPARI

## NATIVE TRAVEL

SHARE IN EVERYDAY LIFE WITH INDIGENOUS FAMILIES



DIKAPSA 052324889




The 12 rural lodges are located within various indigenous communities of the Cotacachi region where you may enjoy the tranquility of the countryside, the hospitality and the cultural authenticity of your host family.

The meals will be prepared with local products by your host family. The characteristics that define the rural lodges of RUNA TUPARI NATIVE TRAVEL are authenticity, sharing experiences, security and trust.

Each lodge can house up to three adult visitors. The lodges consist of one room with a single and a double bed, a fireplace and a private bathroom with hot shower.




[www.runatupari.com](http://www.runatupari.com)



## COMMUNITY BASED TOUR OPERATOR

### THE TOURS OFFERED BY RUNA TUPARI

#### INDIAN VILLAGE TOUR AND QUICOCHA LAKE



This tour to 3 indigenous communities, will give you the opportunity to observe and learn about different Quichua indigenous handicrafts being made such as the processing of wool and weaving, musical Andean instruments and mats of the "torora plant". In addition we will have lunch in the town of Cotacachi, which is well known for its special leather goods. We will end the tour at the beautiful volcanic Cuicocha lake, located in the Cotacachi Cayapas ecological reserve.

#### TREKKING AROUND QUICOCHA LAKE

This 4 hour hike will give you the opportunity to view a variety of Andean flora surrounding the lake as well as its unique landscape. With a clear sky during the trek we will be able to see the snow-capped peaks of the volcanoes Cayambe and Cotopaxi and of course the volcano "mama" Cotacachi itself. We will start our hike at 3,100 m and we will reach a viewpoint at 3,500m from this point onwards we will descend to the level of the lake.



#### TREKKING TO THE FUYA - FUYA MOUNTAIN AND HOJANDA LAKES

In this one-day trip we will visit Caricocha Lake. This tranquil lake is situated at approximately 3,700 m. above sea level. We will ascend Fuya-Fuya (4,265 m.), and have a magnificent view of two of the three sparkling Mojanda lakes. If it is a clear day, we may also see the snow-capped peaks of Cotopaxi, Cayambe and Antisana, and we will be able to spot Ouito, Otavalo and Cuicocha lake.



#### HORSE RIDING TREK THROUGH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

We will start our horse-ride through native forest and indigenous communities where we will be able to observe the daily life of the people. The whole day option includes visiting Cuicocha Lake and having lunch in a restaurant with a beautiful view of the lake. From Cuicocha Lake, we will return to the rural community or the hacienda by horseback and then return to Otavalo by car.



#### BIKING DOWNHILL TO THE SUBTROPICAL CLOUD FOREST

This 60 km. bike ride is mainly downhill from approximately 3,500 m. near Cuicocha Lake (Andean zone) to 1,500 m. in the subtropical Cloud Forest of Intag. After this adventurous biking trip there will be the opportunity to bathe in the thermal pools at Nangulvl. A dip in the hot water will wash away the dust and tiredness. After this relaxing swim and lunch we will return to Otavalo by car.



#### CLIMBING UP TO THE COTACACHI VOLCANO

For the adventurous tourist in love with Andean climbing, this tough one-day tour (10 hours hiking) offers the opportunity to climb the volcano "mama Cotacachi" (4,939 m.) We will cross the highland moors and gradually, the landscape changes to rocky formations and after a 5 to 6 hour climb we will reach our destination at a height of 4,850 m. After a good rest we will start our 3 to 4 hour descent and then return to Otavalo by car. There is also the option of doing this tour in two days.



Source: andi Quirind; Blaine de los Pines; de los Pines; 052 324 11 11 2 925 933 7 067 266 706  
mailto:runatupari@runatupari.com; runatupari@runatupari.com

# Appendix 11: Tropic's questionnaire for tourist feedback

Dear

In order to constantly improve our services and provide a better experience for our clients we would be most grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to share your thoughts about your time with Tropic in Ecuador.

With kind regards,

Jascivan Carvalho  
manager@tropicec3.com

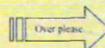


## EVALUATION FORM

GROUP # \_\_\_\_\_

Our services:	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not applicable
Itinerary					
Organization					
Problem solutions					
Information					
Overall Quality					
Sustainable practices					
Natural experience					
Cultural experience					
Other:					
Other:					

Our Guides:	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not applicable
Punctuality					
Service					
Knowledge					



Some of the services provided during your trip were hired with other companies please tell us a little about your experience with them:

For this journey you have stayed at:

Very Good = VG    Good = G    Fair = F    Poor = P    Not applicable = N/A

Description	Very Good = VG	Good = G	Fair = F	Poor = P	Not applicable = N/A
Transportation					
Accommodation					
General services					
Local guides					
Food					
Cleaning					
Sustainable practices					
Natural experience					
Cultural experience					

We aim to provide high quality, educational and inspirational ecotourism experiences.

Your comments and suggestions are helpful to us in achieving our mission:

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Would you like to receive our occasional newsletter?

Yes    email: \_\_\_\_\_  
No

Thank you for travelling with us



objectives; thus, tourism is one element in a holistic development concept. The Ecotourism Association of Quechueri'ono has ownership of and involvement in the program, it grants tourists the permission to visit, and it invests, controls, guides and profits in cooperation with Tropic. A major portion of the benefits remains in the community, and care is taken that income from the program is distributed to different families and service providers. In addition, the program has been approved by the relevant higher organization, in this case NAWE.

Our aim is to include our visitors in an intimate experience with the Huaorani and to inspire you through educational experiences to become active conservationists (if you aren't already) so that we can minimize negative impact to this unique culture and vitally important region.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

What we strive for is that visitors, through the unique experience of seeing the rainforest through the eyes of the people who live here, gain insights that make you new allies in our common struggle to defend the rainforest.

Just by being here, you help community-based ecotourism maintain a way of life for the Huaorani independent of gifts and handouts from oil companies. This venture links the Huaorani to tourism as an alternative means of income in their irreversibly-changed world, enabling them to preserve their culture, heritage, and traditions and at the same time conserve the land.

If you wish to contribute money to the **Conservation in Action Foundation**, please speak to the Lodge Administrator.

#### Other Ways to Help

##### Lightening the Collective Footprint

The scientist and environmental activist David Suzuki used to urge people to think globally, act locally. "That was a mistake," he says today. "When people think globally they feel helpless." So his foundation ([www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)) created the "Nature Challenge," listing 10 things people could do to lighten their collective footprint on the landscape.

##### Live Clean

- Find ways to reduce your home heating and electricity use by 10% this year.
- Choose an energy-efficient home and appliances.
- Replace chemical pesticides on your lawn, garden and houseplants with nontoxic alternatives.

##### Eat Local and Lean

- Choose at least one day a week to eat meat-free meals in your household.
- Prepare your meals with food from local farmers and producers for at least one month this year.

##### Go Green

- Check your Government's ratings for the next car you intend to buy to make sure it is fuel-efficient and low-polluting.
- Walk, bike, carpool or use transit to get to one of your regular destinations each week.
- If you are moving, choose a home within a 30-minute bike, walk or transit ride from your daily destinations.
- Support alternatives to the car. Contact your local media or government urging improved public transit and bike paths.

##### Get Involved

- Learn more about conserving nature and share what you have learned with family and friends.

## The Amazon of Ecuador

### So far and yet so near

The rivers of the Ecuadorian Andes flow down into the Amazon basin, here known as the **Oriente**. A true wilderness of rainforest and remote indian communities, this is nevertheless one of the most accessible areas of jungle for visitors to the Andean republics. You can travel by air or by land, journeys are short; although when you arrive in the lowlands there may be a longer canoe or light-aircraft journey to reach some of the more isolated lodges or cruise starting points. Some of the lodges are now owned and operated by the indigenous population: we feature below two of the best.



### Huaorani

Overland from Quito to Shell and onward flight to Quehuero l'ono, 4 days, 3 nights (Monday), or 5 days 4 nights (Thursday) From £584pp based on two sharing



The **Huaorani** are a rainforest people who lived simple nomadic lives south of Coca. They had no contact with the outside world until the oil industry and tourism impinged upon their territory. Now they are taking steps towards establishing a dialogue with tourism which will be of benefit to the community. Based at the locally-operated **Huaorani Ecolodge**, you have the opportunity to understand the Huaorani way of life, guided by naturalists and looked after by the people themselves. There are walks along forest trails, canoe trips and swimming opportunities. The lodge consists of five Huaorani-style thatched cabins within which are fitted modern tents, with private bathroom. On the four night option you will continue by canoe to Coca, passing

alongside the pipelines of the oil industry territory, where you can appreciate the challenges faced by the Huaorani. Return by air to Quito

#### OUR COMMENT

Based at a lodge committed to minimising negative impacts on the area, you will be able to appreciate the extraordinary resilience of a people in harmony with the environment.



Above: The baggage handlers at Quehuero l'ono airstrip – it reverts to the local football pitch when the plane isn't there.



Top: Tropical rainforest as it should be experienced – slowly and silently. Above: Kapawi Lodge – a highly regarded joint project in eco-tourism.

### Kapawi

Fly from Quito to Kapawi 5 days, 4 nights (Monday) or 4 days, 3 nights (Friday) From £646pp based on two sharing



The isolated **Kapawi Lodge** is situated on a lagoon fed by the Rio Pastaza close to the remote border with Peru and is accessible only by air. The region is occupied by around 60 communities of the **Achuar** people who have only come into contact with the 'western' world in the past 30 years. This lodge is a project to avoid the 'shock contact' with the 21st century through a joint ecotourism venture. Here is an authentic opportunity to witness how the benefits of tourism are channelled back into the indigenous community, as well as to enjoy the traditional explorations of the jungle environment. The accommodation is in very simple open cabins with wide porches. But there is electricity and hot water provided.

#### OUR COMMENT

Activities in this area of high quality, untouched rainforest can be tailored to suit your interests.

Below: With a beak like this, it's a good job birds have a 180 degree view.

