Operationalizing Participation in Data Collection
For Community Based Ecotourism Planning
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Chirripó – The Other Costa Rica

- Highest poverty and lowest HDI in the country
- Lack of infrastructure & basic services
- Agricultural & subsistence livelihoods
- Large indigenous population (96%)
- High levels of inequality and discrimination

The Ecological Planning Process

Working from the Ecological Planning model developed by Steiner, I adapted it to reflect two main challenges within the developing context, increasing focus on the processes of generating information for planning and emphasizing the social and economic components of sustainability:

- Lack of endowments in the capital assets base (community & livelihood capitals) and the need for balanced and sustainable investments across sectors
- The importance of local institutional structures for collective natural resource governance
- How the process of planning and data collection can emphasize collaboration of local and external stakeholders to overcome resource deficits and strengthen governance

Initial Appraisal

Stakeholder Analysis
- Community members, local businesses and organizations
- External support organizations

Identify Priorities and Shared Goals

Local Level Information

Data collection through collaboration with external stakeholders served to establish connections with external agencies, increase awareness of the project, and garner support

Meso & Macro Level Information

Synthesis and Translation

Outcomes

ICT District Tourism Inventory
- 10 page document detailing the results of the participatory inventory and identifying current and potential tourism products and attractions
- Turned into the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) for inclusion in their new regional tourism planning initiative

Feasibility Study and Tourism Market Analysis
- Detailed study of the current national and regional tourism market including the results of formal interviews with hospitality providers and national level community tourism organizations
- Will be delivered to Cooperuchú and the Turrialba office of the ICT for use in planning and investment & marketing strategies

Proposal for Indigenous Plan de Sondereismo
- Document outlining the participatory planning process for infrastructure investments and Community Indigenous Tourism within the reserve, in accordance with Indigenous community priorities
- Planning loosely follows the process detailed here and was designed with local indigenous organizations
- Will serve as the initial proposal for future activities and funding requests

Tourism Product Development
- Develop tours with various groups including planning organizational logistics, pricing, and publicity
- Worked with community organizations to build capacity in administrative activities and accounting and financial management

References

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