
26. Shifting from benefiting to serving community: a case of regenerative tourism and building cultural capital through the Children's University Tasmania

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INTRODUCTION

It is uncontroversial to consider tourism an economic resource. Policymakers, industry players and the public acknowledge that tourism brings jobs, revenue, and other benefits. Unfortunately, the distribution of the benefits to the local community is frequently uneven. Tasmania – the southernmost island state of Australia – is no exception (Denny et al., 2019; Shelley et al., 2021). There are points of intersection and overlapping interests between tourism and community members. For example, tourism income is redistributed through infrastructure, services and welfare to residents. Tourism services are regarded by many as implicitly fostering the benefit and welfare of future generations (Wiltshier, 2020). Indeed, tourism offers opportunities that can be generative and can engage, intergenerationally, with children and families. Yet, this is an underdeveloped field. We identify one way tourism can support the community. There is a particular programme – Children's University Tasmania – that distributes benefits from tourism to the local community in a way that fosters positive, intergenerational change. Tourism can be used to increase educational aspirations. This chapter shows how it happens.

Children's University Tasmania mobilizes tourism resources for educational purposes within the community (Shelley et al., 2019). It also puts on the agenda the benefits of tourist attractions, focusing on residents as a primary 'market'. In Tasmania many tourism activities are freely available, such as going to museums or visiting parks. These are common 'trickle down' benefits. Some residents in regional and rural communities may not have the resources or confidence to participate in these free tourism experiences. This section of the community has largely been ignored in tourism policy discussions even though policymakers and the industry often make claims that tourism will benefit society-at-large. Yet tourism operators can engage with local children and their families to enhance cultural capital so that these children will have a better foundation to succeed. The case of the Children's University Tasmania draws lessons, and points to other opportunities for tourism to

prioritize residents in their activities. Moreover, the programme enables tourism to boost its services in response to regional challenges.

Rural and regional communities in Australia have been exposed to the twin impacts of globalization and economic reforms. These impacts are spatially patterned. Rural and regional areas tend to have a narrowly based economy. The 'five sectors' that are dominant in Tasmania are agriculture, forestry and fishing; retail trade; accommodation and food services; public administration and safety; and health care and social assistance. The island state of Tasmania is regarded on a number of national measures as regional, for example, it has only one university, which is classed as a regional university, with its campuses dispersed across three subregions on the island. This reflects the regionally dispersed nature of the population. In addition to its regionally dispersed population, other defining characteristics of the Tasmanian community are lower income, employment and educational attainment levels compared to national counterparts. Nearly half of Tasmania's adult population lacks the literacy and numeracy skills they need for everyday life. As in other regional communities in Australia, national economic reforms have influenced economic disadvantages, and tourism has been regarded as a viable vehicle to generate economic growth. Local, state and federal governments have turned to tourism development as a development strategy to sustain regional communities (Ooi and Hardy, 2020). Tourism has grown to the point where it now accounts for a larger share of the Tasmanian economy than any other state in Australia.

Interest in sustainable and regenerative tourism highlights the challenge of using local resources, such as heritage, lived cultures, environment and physical spaces, for visitors, at the expense of residents. Community-led tourism has emerged as a development model that centres local people within the planning process and promotes equitable and sustainable practices (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Nair & Hamzah, 2015). A shift in emphasis to collaboration fosters a more regenerative model. As described above, policymakers and planners have tended to regard tourism sites and the communities in which they are located in terms of regional economic policy goals. The Children's University Tasmania connects tourism with broader social policy goals; for example, it aims to lift educational attainment levels of young people in the state by increasing children's participation in rich, experiential learning outside the curriculum (Ooi & Shelley, 2019). Learning occurs everywhere and informal learning influences formal learning. Tourist attractions in regional destinations become validated Children's University Tasmania 'learning destinations'.

This study contends that: educational equity matters; is critically important in regional Australia; and that tourism can play a role. In this context, the chapter addresses a social and community challenge in which tourism can be part of the solution. Consistent with our core argument, the chapter is structured to prioritize community before tourism. The first part of the chapter sets the scene for the analysis, outlining the connection between cultural capital and education outcomes in the context of informal learning. The second part of the chapter discusses how to centre the community within conceptions of regenerative tourism. In the third section, a deeper consideration of the Children's University Tasmania is undertaken.

To inform this analysis, the authors draw from research with tourism operators and from artefacts created by children who are members of the Children's University Tasmania. The final section refocuses on regenerative tourism and identifies four lessons.

TOURISM, EDUCATION, CULTURAL CAPITAL, AND THE CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY

Many tourism studies have focused on how to enhance visitor experiences by transmitting local knowledge to them, such as through interpretation signage, guided tours and recommendations. The cultural knowledge provided to visitors is distilled and packaged, as attraction operators attempt a balance between deep knowledge and entertainment. Regardless, the visitors are engaged in informal learning, and are enhancing their cultural capital. Local residents, particularly children, would also benefit from the experiences. This is an opportunity for the community to enhance their cultural capital. Set in this context, this section concentrates on making the links between cultural capital and enriching young people's education outcomes in the community.

This chapter draws upon Bourdieu's sociological concept of cultural capital to accentuate the potential benefit of transmitted experiences curated and created for visitors to be shared with the local community. Cultural capital refers to cultural competencies, either in the embodied sense of valued lifestyles or in the institutionalized sense of educational credentials (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital has enabled us to view cultural capital as a resource – one that provides scarce rewards and under certain conditions may be transmitted from one generation to the next (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Bourdieu and Passeron considered the relationship between children's stock of cultural capital and their accumulation of educational capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). While all modern societies espouse the values of equality and aim to offer every child the same chance to excel, the playing field is still not level. This unevenness, according to Bourdieu, is influenced by the family background of the children. Some children, he argues, have access to the types of cultural capital valued by education systems, while others do not. Bourdieu's work helps us understand why this is so.

Bourdieu observed that the educational system presupposes the possession of cultural competence, which only some students possess.

[Education] is in fact the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one. (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 34)

It has been argued that the educational system may function to legitimize social inequalities because it wrongly assumes the same starting points for all children (Sullivan, 2002). Educational attainment is then viewed as the result of individual

abilities and gifts. By assuming that everyone has the same cultural capital resources upon which to draw and observing that children from higher socio-economic status backgrounds tend to have higher levels of educational attainment, educational credentials serve to reproduce and legitimize social inequalities, as these children are made to think that they deserve their place in the social structure (Bamford, 2014, p. 32). It may seem that Bourdieu's work suggests a biased education system that is resistant to change (English & Bolton, 2016), but there is a less pessimistic approach to his work. Cultural capital is not fixed, it is transmitted. It is valued differently in different circumstances, settings, or fields.

Cultural Capital in Action

There are different ways in which cultural capital is acquired. One of them is parental engagement with and participation in schools, and with their children's learning more broadly. Lareau & Weininger's (2003) examination of the influence of class-related cultural factors on the parents' compliance with teachers' requests for parental participation in schools is relevant to our research given the key role that parents play within the Children's University Tasmania – as it is parents who take children to the 'learning destinations'. Lareau & Weininger conducted a qualitative study of two first-grade classrooms located in two different communities. The participants include a white working-class community and a professional, middle-class community. The study reveals that both sets of teachers at the different schools considered parental involvement as indicative of the value which parents placed on education. During the study, Lareau & Weininger observed that working-class parents primarily placed the responsibility of education upon the teachers whereas the middle-class parents consider the process of educating to be a shared, collective experience.

It is important to understand differences in parental involvement among different groups of parents because parental involvement is a powerful determinant of the educational success of students. Gottlob (2010, p. 98) concludes:

There is no magic strategy bullet to increase student achievement. Instead, we have to focus on building on the cultural capital of the community and helping parents gain the cultural capital they need to navigate the educational system. Schools need to work with, and in the context of the community. There has to be give-and-take and a mutually respectful relationship between them. It is imperative that schools find the way to build on the assets of the community to create genuine partnerships that benefit students, parents, and the community at large.

Learning, of course, occurs outside formal educational institutions. Self-directed learning, learning that is voluntary and beyond the formal curriculum, is also part of a process of cultural transmission. The acquisition of cultural capital is thus an ongoing socialization process.

Kisida et al. (2014) suggest that children can be activated to acquire the type of cultural capital valued by educational systems and thus compensate for family background characteristics. Their study is based on a large-scale study of an art museum

educational programme operating across a set of American schools. Exposure to the institutional culture of the museum was seen to produce ‘cultural consumers’ who were then ‘motivated to acquire new cultural capital’.

Seow and Pan (2014), in their literature survey, identify three frameworks to explain the impact of extra-curricular activities (ECA).

First, the zero-sum framework posited that ECA participation has a negative effect on academic performance because students were devoting more time for their ECA activities at the expense of their academic studies. Second, the developmental framework theorized that ECA participation has a positive effect on academic performance indirectly as a result of the non-academic and social benefits associated with ECA participation. Last, the threshold framework hypothesized that ECA participation has a positive effect on academic performance up to a certain point beyond which participation leads to negative academic outcomes.

It is important to observe that measures of cultural capital are imperfect since they are limited to describing behaviours (e.g., participating in activities) rather than other types of cultural ‘signals’, such as attitudes, preferences, or credentials. In sum, everyone has cultural capital; the education system may privilege some forms of cultural capital over others. This, according to Bourdieu, can account for persistently uneven educational outcomes. The ways in which informal learning, in the form of extra-curricular tourism activities, can support the twin goals of raising educational aspiration and attainment and increasing parental engagement in children’s learning are key considerations of this study.

REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND TRANSFORMING THE COMMUNITY

In the last two decades, tourism scholarship has become increasingly critical of the eroding impact of tourism on social justice and environmental preservation (Budeanu et al., 2016; Cave & Dredge, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Jamal, 2019). Scholars have advocated a more sustainable, if not regenerative, form of tourism development, rather than an extractive one. Like so many types in this genre, regenerative tourism gives equal consideration to the social and natural environment as to economic outcomes (Pollock, 2019). Regenerative tourism advocates practices that claim to be transformational (Ateljevic, 2020). It advances an approach that values and celebrates people, place and diversity, and that aims for quality over quantity (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Such tourism strategies should be developed from the ground up and be community-driven (Muganda et al., 2013; Sofield, 1993). Local communities live their culture, heritage and environment. They have found opportunities to thrive, and solutions to the challenges they face. The community should thus be consulted extensively and should lead the development (Okazaki, 2008).

However, engaging with the community has its challenges. Local communities are also replete with agendas and inequalities that can be further perpetuated through

collaborative processes (Ooi, 2022; Scoones et al., 2020; Sin & Minca, 2014). There are established social hierarchies and informal practices that benefit the local elites. Regardless, some examples are available that show specific community solutions that deliver tourism and are largely beneficial with limited detrimental impacts (Cave & Dredge, 2020). It remains the case that tourism is seen largely as an economic enterprise that brings benefits to the community, albeit these tourism activities are likely to be community-led, and the benefits of tourism should be distributed more equitably.

In this context, the case of the Children's University Tasmania points to an opportunity, and also to a need to rethink tourism. Regenerative tourism desires to be community-focused, but current so-called regenerative practices still predominantly let tourism drive the agenda. The programme drives the social policy agenda of lifting up the educational attainment of the community, and through that, tourism-relevant activities, services and products may emerge. It is thus intentional that we have decided to focus on education and Bourdieu's concepts here. By doing so, we then subsume the interests of tourism to serving the community through the educational programme. It is then that tourism can be seen as truly positive, transformative, and collaborative. The implementation of regenerative practices requires the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, which commonly meets with obstacles and challenges (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Tourism operators and businesses frequently set the agenda, as they seek out local cultural and natural resources for the industry. But in the Children's University Tasmania programme, the need to improve educational attainment in the community takes centre stage, and tourism activities are selected and shaped towards serving that goal. This is idealistic and may not be realized in actual practice, as our experience in Tasmania shows. There are still many tourism businesses and operators that do not participate in the programme. Their products and services may not be relevant (e.g. bars and casinos) or they have not bought into a community-led mindset. Regardless, a truly regenerative tourism process has started, in a rural development context.

TASMANIA AND THE CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY

This chapter draws from a small number of research projects related to the Children's University Tasmania. The first compared survey responses from participants and non-participants from the same class groups to reveal a self-concept as a learner. The second involved in-depth interviews with learning destinations (involving the authors of this chapter). The final (ongoing) research project assesses the influence of the Children's University Tasmania on educational outcomes of students aged 7 to 14 years and continuing after they have exited the programme, until they leave school at 18 years old. It also contains several child-friendly research methods, such as workshops where children are invited to write a letter to the 'boss' of the Children's University Tasmania, or to draw a map detailing their experiences.

The Children's University is a social franchise and operates in the UK, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia. A literature is developing, focused on its influence. Evaluations of the Children's University programmes conducted in the United Kingdom and in Adelaide have shown an indicative relationship with children's aspiration, social skills, self-confidence, and well-being (Gorard et al., 2017; Hamshaw, 2015; Harrison & Skujins, 2017; MacBeath, 2013). The Children's University aims to promote social mobility by providing high quality out-of-school-hours learning activities to children aged 7 to 14. It targets children and young people facing socio-economic disadvantages to ensure that every child, irrespective of parental means, has access to quality extra-curricular learning activities. Studies have shown the significance of extra-curricular participation on educational outcomes, and the ways in which access and opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activity are impacted by socio-economic characteristics (Mullan, 2014; Skattebol et al., 2012; Skattebol & Redmond, 2019).

The Children's University identifies informal learning as a rich site to foster aspiration, parental engagement, and educational success – if the social, economic and cultural barriers to participation can be reduced (Moore, 2014). Using the narrative of travel, when a child becomes a member of the Children's University, they are given a 'Passport to Learning', in which they record their participation in activities at learning destinations (Figure 26.1). After completing 30+ hours of validated learning, their achievement is celebrated at a formal graduation ceremony, a significant cultural experience itself.

The Children's University Tasmania is a mechanism to support parents and guardians to participate in a variety of extra-curricular learning experiences. Tourism experiences are key within this. During 2021 there were over 83 learning destinations and 586 active members who collectively participated in over 50,000 hours of extra-curricular learning. Participants report that the best thing is spending time with family. One learning destination described: 'The adults absolutely loved the activities. It crossed all the boundaries' (LD5) (see Shelley et al., 2019).

DOING TOURISM AS EXTRA-CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

There is a significant body of literature that identifies the significance of extra-curricular participation on educational outcomes, and the ways in which access and opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activity is impacted by socio-economic characteristics (Karlsen Baeck, 2005, p. 218). So, how does tourism fit into this discussion? The Children's University Tasmania has partnered with local services and attractions that serve residents and/or visitors. They include museums, historic sites, wildlife sanctuaries, regional galleries, and events such as festivals. The Children's University Tasmania encourages tourism services to become validated learning destinations by highlighting their potential to enrich the local community, following the Children's University Australia guidelines (n.d., p. 12):



Figure 26.1 Every Children's University Tasmania member has a 'Passport to Learning'

Being a learning destination is a great way to promote your organization to the local community and to engage with young people in your service delivery. Learning destinations can enrich communities and build valuable networks that help support children and their families in their educational journey.

The authors conducted interviews with the Children's University Tasmania's employees and at public learning destinations in 2017. An employee of the Children's University Tasmania observed that 'it provides a structure for parents to understand how and what to engage in with kids outside of school ... But I think that is important as parents struggle sometimes with knowing what to do (Employee, Children's University Tasmania).

Tourism destinations that actively seek to engage local children also engage other caregivers. In this way it contributes to an intergenerational enrichment. An employee at a small regional art gallery in Tasmania stated,

It is either a mother or a father and quite often a grandparent who will bring the children and it is very important for us to have contact with the older generation. We are very open to have a wide range of ages participating ... I really encourage adult and child participation here. It is a family thing if they can. (Learning Destination Officer 1)

They added: '[Parents] know that art and creativity is good for you (a bit like broccoli), but they haven't had the opportunities themselves, but they sense that it should be encouraged and rewarded and applauded and helped. [During activities] they also have a go and are as happy as their kids' (Learning Destination Officer 1).

Early evidence is indicative of positive impacts of the programme upon a sense of achievement, the self-concept as a learner, and awareness of further learning as a pathway to a 'dream' job in the future. The Children's University Tasmania also highlights an avenue for the local tourism industry to be more proactive in using their social licence. While many of them serve visitors, they should use similar resources to serve residents. They can become learning destinations, and not just tourist attractions.

Obstacles remain. It is important to observe that the economic and cultural barriers to participation in local tourism and informal learning opportunities need further analysis. It is evident that even where people have free access to tourist attractions, there are cultural barriers to visitation. Skattebol and Redmond (2019) reveal a tendency for young Australians living in disadvantaged locations to resist or opt out of out-of-school hours opportunities that are costly or located in areas of perceived higher advantage. Tourism has a latent and largely unrealized potential to encourage further participation of parents in their children's learning. Learning that takes place outside the classroom benefits and enhances learning outcomes within the classroom.

GENERATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

In spite of good intentions by tourism researchers, policymakers and attraction operators to make sure that tourism development serves the needs of the community beyond economics, examples are still largely tourism-centric. And in the rural context, per capita resources allocated for community development tend to be more limited than more densely populated urban places. As a result, more effective and efficient solutions need to be found. As criticisms hold, resources for tourism development take away opportunities from other improvements. Can we then allocate more resources for community development that are tourism-friendly, rather than allocate resources for tourism development that are community-friendly? Yes, and the case of the Children's University Tasmania shows that possibility.

In building up young people's engagement with their surroundings, they were asked to map out the places they have been with the Children's University. Figure 26.2 is an example of a Grade 2 child in a regional school (seven years old). They started with school and listed the sites they visited, such as 'looking for cristls [crystals]', bee farms, gardens, nature parks, McDonald's and also playing basketball.



Figure 26.2 A seven-year old's map detailing their trip with the Children's University Tasmania

They ended with an image of the abacus. The child is acquiring cultural capital at various levels, including getting to know the geography of their surroundings, and becoming familiar and knowing more about various sites. This travel 'itinerary' is from a child's perspective. Many of them are also tourist attractions, even though they are not presented in that manner.

Another child, also aged seven, wrote a review of their Children's University Tasmania journey: 'I really enjoy the way you've set up CU. I find it very enjoyable. All activities I've done have been awesome and find it quite unfortunate that Covid 19 prevented me from doing more of these activities. The graduations are my favourite part of it all.'

In the context of tourism and the authentic experience, these experiences are important. Would these be interesting for visitors? These stories can be told fondly, but more importantly, the children went looking for crystals, visited a geology museum and engaged with the region's mining heritage. The content knowledge

and destination experience overlap and intersect with that of visiting tourists. Local children and visiting tourists are building up their cultural capital through informal learning.

Four Lessons

We identify at least four lessons of thinking about the Children's University programme as part of a more regenerative tourism approach. First, the 'learning destinations' that signed up with the Children's University Tasmania are not all tourism sites. From one perspective, the case suggests resources created for tourism can also be deployed to support broader societal goals, such as raising educational aspiration and attainment. During off-peak tourist seasons, more can be done to engage local children in extra-curricular, experiential learning through tourism-related services and attractions. And the tourism industry has benefited from skill development initiatives funded by government. Fostering skills in inclusive and child-friendly practices within the tourism industry is encouraged. The beneficiaries of this approach include the child participants, but also the industry, as they build connections with a new audience, or customer base. Further, and from another perspective, because the industry receives public funds for development, it can be argued that the attractions and their programming should put the community first and not the other way around. The Children's University Tasmania seems to be spurring visitor attractions in that direction. For instance, one employee in a 'learning destination' notes that they had carried out training of customer services officers. Learning Destination Officer 2 observed:

[T]he staff are getting a really good basis in educational principles so that when they are actually teaching or showing students ... they are able to give them the information that they need in a way that has meaning to them ... it means that the kids are walking away with something a little bit more than just an experience which is fantastic ... We want to engage with the Children's University. For one, in terms of pure numbers, it brings us a new audience.

Second, ideally from a regenerative tourism perspective, the community should be the primary focus, but that is still not the norm today. In moving towards that, steps can be taken. So, in some instances, rich and interesting learning content on site at tourism attractions can also be harnessed to create online learning opportunities. Higher priority should be given in this area, particularly for regionally dispersed communities. Tourism assets can be crafted into mobile 'destinations'. These can be physical, or digital, or a combination. For example, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has an outreach programme. They provide a box that contains items and information that schools can use, while a museum employee connects via video-link and discusses the contents of the box. The museum becomes a mobile supporter of learning. Currently, this is used to support formal learning within the curriculum. There are opportunities to develop content that supports non-formal learning.

Third, whilst key public institutions such as museums, art galleries, and historic sites often have an explicit educational purpose and resources to support engagement strategies, the Children's University Tasmania case suggests that similar principles can be extended more broadly across the tourism sector. The example here shows that the narrative of travel is a tool that can stimulate the imagination and provide creative, fun and engaging ways to enhance learning about culture, history, science, natural and social environments. As such, it supports broader social and economic goals of improved educational attainment for children and young people, as well as fostering an understanding of their place (self and community) in a globalized world. For instance, a 11-year-old member wrote: 'Learning in this environment has really helped me to explore different parts of myself, and learn to be a positive role model in my community.'

Fourth, the Children's University Tasmania is also about the adults. The role of parents, caregivers, and home environments as influential agents on levels of educational engagement and attainment is well documented. As noted above, as in many rural places around the world, Tasmanian families have higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage than the national average. All parents have aspirations for their children. Yet, the pathway to achieve those goals can be hard to navigate, especially for socially excluded families. They benefit from programmes like the one described here to understand what experiences and events are available in their local community. Tourist attractions should not be places that are expensive and exclusive. Instead tourist attractions should be part of the community and be there to lift the population and to improve children's educational attainment.

CONCLUSION

In sum, this chapter reminds researchers and the practice community that a more regenerative form of tourism has to put the community first. There remains a tendency for social programmes to fit in and find synergies with tourism development initiatives. The Children's University Tasmania illustrates how resources are being used for local and community development, enhancing individual, social and cultural well-being, and tourism players can try to fit into that wider social aim of serving the community before visitors. Ideally, tourism is then part of wider social policy strategies that regenerate, invigorate and can engage, intergenerationally, with children and families. This would be the spirit of community-led and regenerative tourism, but it remains only a partially realized goal even for the Children's University Tasmania. As for next steps, policy settings should move in the right direction to encourage – if not necessitate – new tourism developments to fit in and work with wider social programmes like the Children's University from the beginning, so that the community-first ethos can be realized. This is even more salient in a rural regional context.

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