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Ecotourism as Community Development Tool: Development of an Evaluation Framework

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Statutory Declaration

I herewith declare that I have completed the present thesis independently making use only of the specified literature and aids. Sentences or parts of sentences quoted literally are marked as quotations; identification of other references with regard to the statement and scope of the work is quoted.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis reflects on the question under which conditions ecotourism can result in successful community development. This main research question results in the working hypothesis that, community empowerment emerges through properly conducted ecotourism and contributes to community development and subsequently, regional development and welfare.

The master thesis outlines the positive effects ecotourism can have on a community in a third-world country. It also demonstrates the positive influence of ecotourism on the individual tourist. It is necessary to achieve a more sustainable development of the tourism industry as sustainable development in general might be essential to preserve nature for future generations.

System theory was used in order to create a research framework including all actors of an ecotourism project. As a major part of this model deals with community empowerment connected to ecotourism, an evaluation framework for community empowerment was created which enables the researcher to compare different ecotourism projects with each other. A set of indicators - economic, social, political, psychological, ecological and tourism related - was developed and can be used for different kinds of ecotourism projects. According to this set of indicators two ecotourism project in Nepal were evaluated. Questionnaires for community members, project workers and tourists were created and handed to people in the villages of the case-study area.

The main goals of this thesis consists in showing that community empowerment, if emerging through ecotourism, has a positive effect on community development and, in creating an evaluation framework for ecotourism projects which can be applied in different countries all over the world. This evaluation framework can be applied both, for the comparison of ecotourism projects in various countries as well as for the analysis of strengths and weaknesses within a single project. Additionally, the results of the evaluation should help the visited projects in Nepal to improve their performance and to find potential weaknesses in their development plans.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Masterarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Forschungsfrage 'Unter welchen Voraussetzungen kann Ökotourismus zu einer erfolgreichen Entwicklung von Gemeinschaften (Dörfern) führen' und geht davon aus, dass korrekt durchgeführte Ökotourismusprojekte zu einer Stärkung der Gemeinschaft beitragen. Das wiederum resultiert in einer Erhöhung der Entwicklungsstands, der regionalen Entwicklung sowie von Wohlstand im Allgemeinen.

Die Arbeit zeigt die positiven Effekt eines Ökotourismusprojekts auf dörfliche Gemeinschaften in einem Entwicklungsland auf, und beschreibt auch die möglichen positiven Effekte von Ökotourismus auf den Touristen vor Ort. Des Weiteren wird erklärt, dass eine nachhaltige Tourismusentwicklung notwendig für diese Industrie ist um die natürlichen Landschaften der Touristenziele zu erhalten.

Die Grundstruktur für die Forschung beinhaltet mehrere Rahmenstrukturen die in einem System in Wechselwirkung zueinander stehen. Diese Strukturen beinhalten die Hauptakteure von Ökotourismusprojekten ebenso wie die Grundprinzipien von Ökotourismus und auch noch ein Bewertungsschema für Tourismusprojekt. Dieses Bewertungsschema soll es dem Forscher ermöglichen unterschiedliche Ökotourismusprojekte mithilfe von Indikatoren miteinander zu vergleichen. Diese Indikatoren werden aufgeteilt in ökonomische, ökologische, soziale, politische, psychologische Indikatoren und solche mit Tourismusbezug. Mithilfe dieser Indikatoren wurden zwei Ökotourismusprojekte in Nepal bewertet und danach verglichen. Die Bewertung erfolgt durch Fragebögen für die dörfliche Bevölkerung, Touristen und der Projektmitarbeiter vor Ort sowie durch Interviews mit Entscheidungsträgern.

Das Hauptziel der Masterarbeit ist es zu zeigen, dass eine Stärkung der Gemeinschaft mithilfe von Ökotourismusprojekten einen positiven Effekt auf die Entwicklung der Gemeinschaft hat. Des weiteren wird ein Bewertungsschema geschaffen mit dem es möglich sein wird Ökotourismusprojekte zu bewerten und miteinander zu vergleichen. Außerdem sollen die Ergebnisse der Arbeit auch den untersuchten Projekten in Nepal helfen mögliche Schwachstellen zu eliminieren und Entwicklungspläne effizienter voranzutreiben.

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1 Tourism and community development

1.1 Trends in tourism

Tourism is one of the biggest industries on the planet with hundreds of millions of people either directly or indirectly involved in tourism or connected businesses. The potential for a rise in tourism numbers is very high[1] and therefore, it is necessary to achieve a state in tourism development which leads to a sustainable future. Tourism has the obvious benefit of being able to adapt to sustainable methods, more so other industries, especially if the customer - the tourist – creates the demand for it. This thesis will outline the effects ecotourism can have on a community in a third-world country. It will also demonstrate the influence of ecotourism on the individual tourist. It is important to understand that the tourist has a high capacity for learning while travelling. Education and getting to know new foreign cultures and habits should be as important for planning a trip as the recreational factor. Additionally, it is necessary to achieve a more sustainable development of the tourism industry as sustainable development in general might be the only way to preserve nature for future generations. In achieving these goals, it is necessary for ecotourism projects to be conducted in the right way to serve the community and boost community empowerment. For this reason it is essential to evaluate such projects and, if necessary, to improve them.

In one of their framework letters, the Dutch development organization SNV (which provides advisory services to over 30 developing countries) states that "Sustainable Tourism is increasingly recognised by Governments and international development agencies (…) for its enormous potential for poverty reduction. Sustainable and Pro-Poor Tourism seeks to maximise the potential of tourism for eradicating poverty by developing strategies in cooperation with key stakeholders, at local and national levels" (In: Verdugo, n.d.:1). Long and Wall (In: Schellhorn, 2010:116) demonstrated in their 1996 study that tourism can be an important incentive to enhance small scales economies.

Another fact is that education is one of the four core principles of ecotourism (Blangy & Metha 2006:233). Education about sustainable development, ecotourism and biodiversity conservation for indigenous, as well as for tourist communities, is necessary for society (not only in developing countries). Ceballos-Lascuráin (In: Honey 2008:87) mentions that "international tourism could become a means of redistributing wealth 'from north to south'".

On a macro level, it can be argued that tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world and on a micro level, tourism is a rapidly growing sector in developing countries. The newest forecasts of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO 2011) are that international tourist arrivals will reach 1 billion in 2012 and 1.8 billion by 2030. Even the worst case scenario predicts an increase in numbers to approximately 1.3 billion by 2030. Emerging economies in particular (such as those in Eastern Europe, Asia, South and Central America, Africa and the Middle East) will experience an increase in tourist numbers by an average 30 million people each year by 2015, estimating their global share of potential tourists to be 58% and rising.

The conclusion has to be a combination of tourism with sustainability and community development – combining not just economic and ecological factors but also social and ethical ideals, such as poverty reduction

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[1] It is estimated that tourist numbers will increase by an average of 43 million people each year until 2030(UNWTO 2011)

and fair resource allocation. At the moment, it seems that sustainable tourism development is the only long-term solution which meets the needs of the rising number of tourists and prevents overexploitation of tourist destinations. I think that, in the long-term, the benefits of sustainable (tourism) development far outweigh the costs imposed considering all the external costs overexploitation might have. With this in mind, ecological and social benefits are not considered in this statement, as economic interests are presently the leading global interests.

1.2   Different tourism approaches

Several tourism concepts are combined under the expressions such as 'environmentally friendly and socially compatible' tourism. Sustainable tourism for example can be seen as very similar to the concept of ecotourism defined by TIES because the general focus is the same. A new concept is pro-poor tourism which focuses on poverty and its eradication. The idea behind geotourism lies in conserving certain landscapes in order to make it available for tourists in the future. The last concept presented in this subchapter is responsible tourism. It will become clear that all these concepts are connected and that many approaches are very similar to the ideas of ecotourism which will be presented in detail subsequent.

1.2.1   Sustainable Tourism

The term sustainable tourism refers to sustainable development as mentioned in the Brundtland report in 1987. In this report, a definition of sustainable development was outlined from which a definition of sustainable tourism can be extracted (Weaver 2006:10): "Sustainable [tourism] development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (United Nations 1987) Sustainable tourism should minimize negative effects and maximize positive effects of tourism (Budkowski 1976 in Weaver 2006:10). It is surprising then that tourism is not mentioned in the Brundtland report even though it can be seen as one of the world's largest industries. However, this 'mistake' was corrected at the World Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 when tourism was considered a contributor to solving social and environmental problems as well as being a potential threat (UNCED 1992 in: Weaver 2006:10). Butler (1999 in: Wearing and Neil 2009:9f) mentions that sustainable tourism should not be seen as "tourism development in line with the principles of sustainable development". Butler also thinks that it is necessary and very important not to span sustainability across everything but clearly define the type of tourism which is studied. Anyhow, the term was not regularly used by academics until the 1990s and finally received an official definition from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 1996 which stated that sustainable tourism is "tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems" (Earth Summit 2002). According to the UNWTO (2004 in: Wearing and Neil 2009:10f), sustainable tourism requires strong political leadership and the active participation of all stakeholders. Additionally, it is mentioned that the development of sustainable tourism must be seen as a process which requires continuous monitoring of the effects and, if necessary, interference

and implementation of correction measures. Furthermore, tourist awareness concerning environmental and social topics should be raised alongside tourist satisfaction.

It could be argued that the UNWTO's definition is somehow more vague and broader than the TIES's definition of ecotourism, but in my opinion these two definitions can be considered as similar and therefore, a difference there will not be made between ecotourism and sustainable tourism in the following chapters of this thesis. In support of this proposition, it should be mentioned that many authors and researchers are using ecotourism and sustainable tourism as synonyms (such as Wearing and Neil 2009, Honey 2008).

1.2.2   Pro-Poor Tourism

The definition of pro-poor tourism is delivered by the pro-poor tourism partnership: "Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) is tourism that results in increased net benefits for poor people" (Pro-Poor Tourism 1 n.d.). According to the partnership, PPT should be seen as a tourism development and management approach which increases the benefits of tourism for poor people. The main point behind this tourism concept is the question of if (and how) tourism can benefit the poor. If the answer is to be 'yes', it is necessary to put poverty and poor people in the focus of sustainable development and the corresponding debate (Roe and Urquhart 2001:1f).

There are many overlaps between PPT and ecotourism or sustainable tourism as many projects based on the latter two concepts include many pro-poor elements. However, PPT's main focus is on poverty and its eradication, wanting to bring net benefit to the poor, and is not too concerned with environmental issues. The 'classic' alternative tourism approaches use a holistic approach which includes several problems such as environmental, ecological, social, etc. and does not really focus on one specific problem (Pro-Poor Tourism 2 n.d.). PPT claims that it has "generated practical lessons which could be incorporated within ST [sustainable tourism] and are particularly appropriate to countries where poverty is the pressing concern" (Ibid).

There are several requirements and principles for PPT in order to ensure success. It is necessary that the pro-poor ideas are included in an existing tourism infrastructure. Without a functioning infrastructure, PPT will not work. One very important principle is the fact that PPT does not focus on minimizing costs but on maximizing benefits for the poor and that this could work in all tourism segments. Another fact of interest which is mentioned on the PPT partnership website is that the PPT idea will only equally benefit 20% of the poorest and some will even be on the losing side. Additionally, it is not proven yet that PPT is effective, so it is still in a 'learning-by-doing' phase (Ibid). However, the most important principle of PPT is to "unlock opportunities for the poor within tourism" (Roe and Urquhart 2001:5).

To conclude this subchapter, ways to make sustainable- and ecotourism more pro-poor will be named. Roe and Urquhart (Ibid) mention that it is necessary to put the poor and poverty in the centre of a sustainability debate rather than (only) focusing on environmental issues. Additionally, opportunities for the poor should be unlocked at all levels of action, not just at the community level and the authors demand that mainstream tourism should take place in 'non-mainstream' places and regions. These actions are a means of fighting the unequal allocation in our society.

1.2.3 Geotourism

"Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents " (National Geographic n.d.). Geotourism is a combination of the principles of sustainable tourism and ecotourism and some might see geotourism as a part of ecotourism. It adds to the principles of conserving a place's character and additionally, the protection of a region's history and culture which has to be seen as an important asset (Ibid and Newsome and Dowling 2005:6).

The concept of geotourism includes landscapes with characteristic landforms (such as mountain ranges, valleys, volcanoes, etc.) which therefore put a geosite in its focus. A geosite is not only a landscape but everything that forms it, such as rock formations and crystals. On the one hand, geotourism focuses on geological phenomena, but on the other hand, some geosites are visited because of their aesthetic, cultural and historic assets. Other geosites are tourist places because of a certain adventure aspect (Newsome and Dowling 2005:4-7). Anyhow, the idea of geotourism is less about preserving nature for its own sake and more about preserving geosites in order to make them available for tourists in the future.

1.2.4 Responsible Tourism

Responsible Tourism was defined at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Cape Town. Its main characteristics are (The Responsible Tourism Partnership n.d.):
- to minimise negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
- to generate greater economic benefits for local people and enhance the wellbeing of host communities;
- to involve local people in decisions;
- to make positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
- to provide more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
- to provide access for physically challenged people; and
- to be culturally sensitive, engender respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

Responsible tourism looks to minimise the negative effects and maximise the positive effects of tourism development through undertaking concrete actions in tourism destinations such as capacity building of involved stakeholders (Fabricius and Goodwin 2002 and The Responsible Tourism Partnership n.d.).

1.3 Ecotourism

The concept of ecotourism emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s. Hetzer (1965) was the first to identify four principles of tourism which help to minimise environmental effects, respect local cultures, maximize tourist satisfaction and provide locals with the financial benefits from tourism (in: Buchsbaum 2004:4). One of the first persons who integrated the concepts of tourism, conservation and local communities was Miller (1978) in his work about Latin America's national parks. Miller introduced the term 'ecodevelopment' and

defined it as the integration of economic, social and political factors into biological considerations to meet environmental and human needs (in: Honey 2008:15). The term ecotourism is claimed to be coined by the Mexican environmentalist Ceballos-Lascuráin in 1983 (in: Ibid:16).

Ecotourism can be seen as an ideal strategy for attaining economic and ecological success in biodiversity protection (Bookbinder et al. 1998:1004). Due to its high direct use value, it plays an important role as an economic incentive for protection (Gössling 1999:303). "Ecotourism can generate support for conservation among communities as long as they see some benefit" (Kiss 2004:234). Tourism can enhance biodiversity-protection jobs in terms of agreements which lead to benefits for the community and for individuals. There is hope that ecotourism will create enough revenue for the community within a certain period of time that it will be seen as a strong incentive for conservation (Ibid:234f).

These claims are theoretically a means of solving environmental problems through ecotourism. As always, the solution to the problem is not as easy to implement as it seems with several problems arising in potential areas. These problems depend highly on the community, the institutional setting and the habitat. Kerley et al (2003:13ff), for example, mention that ecotourism, on the one hand, can be seen as a strong instrument to conserve biodiversity and spread wealth however, on the other hand, state that "biodiversity per se is of little interest" to tourists. In their research, they discovered that many safari tourists in South Africa were keen to see elephants but did not mind seeing other, less 'popular' animals. Therefore, they concluded that only education about biodiversity, and in this case about other animals, can create an incentive for biodiversity protection in terms of demand for specific mammals. In their case study, Kerley et al. (2003) proved that economic values can be transferred into biodiversity protection by enhancing tourists' perceptions. However, it is questionable whether ecotourism can be seen as panacea for biodiversity conservation. Some argue that it is a tool for development aid but "Unregulated tourism can cause profit leakage to foreign investors, an increase in local prices, increased crime, pollution, landscape degradation, and the depletion of locals' natural resources, particularly water resources" (Jetmore in: Schloegel 2007:250).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature stated in 1992 that tourism is one of the biggest threats to biodiversity. Through ecotourism, it is possible to minimize and even avoid those negative effects but it needs to be carefully planned and well organized (Gössling 1999:314).

Ecotourism is strongly connected to the principles of sustainable development and these connections can have different forms. Bramwell (in: Butler 1999:29) mentions "seven dimension of sustainability". Those are "environmental, cultural, political, economic, social, managerial and governmental" (Ibid) and show a similarity with my definition of ecotourism given below. Bramwell (Ibid) also mentions one very important fact which refers to the value system of a people or a community. Such a value system has to be included in sustainable (tourism) development of a region or a country otherwise it can lead to misunderstandings and, in the worst case, failure. Mowforth and Munt (2003:98ff) mention several criteria for sustainable tourism which, on the one hand are almost congruent with the dimensions Bramwell mentioned, and, on the other hand, show a very clear structure of the connections between sustainability and tourism. Mowforth and Munt's approach is also very similar to the approach I adapted from Friedmann's work which will discussed later. The authors mention the well know three pillars of sustainable development as well as cultural sustainability, education and participation (of/in communities). Some of these aspects, such as cultural sustainability, are long term factors which effects a community not immediately and are therefore, harder to measure than the other

sustainability factors. Education and participation are two concepts which do not come into one's mind when thinking about tourism. Education and mutual understanding of tourists and host communities, as well as the understanding of the surrounding environment is one important difference between conventional tourism and ecotourism. In a perfect example tourists and locals will share cultural information with each other and both can profit from it (Ibid). Additionally, there are also some critical comments about the core principle of sustainable development which is about satisfying the needs of future generations. It can be argued that there is no clear idea about the needs of future generations and therefore, it cannot said definitely how tourism should be managed (Butler 1999:28ff). Another factor, which is very often forgotten in discussions about ecotourism is the journey to and from the tourist destination. In many cases this journey produces some kind of emissions and contributes to climate change in a negative way. Because of this reason it can be argued that tourism abroad cannot be sustainable except if the journey is made by bike or the tourist is hiking. However, in this thesis I emphasise on the location of tourism projects and not on the journey to get there. Even though this might lead to conflicting interests it is not possible to consider this factor because of the complexity of the topic. Anyhow, I think it is easy to say that tourism as an industry has to expand in a sustainable way, otherwise the long term costs for ecological degradation will be too high.

One of the main problems of this kind of tourism is that there is no clear definition for it. As mentioned before there are different kind of sustainable and environment tourism which are connected in some categories and differ in other. This lack of clear definition(s) leads to problems in the scientific world as well as problems for governments and tourism stakeholders (Mowforth and Munt 2003:94f). Green washing is a problem which is very present in the tourism branch. Therefore, it was very important for me to have a very clear definition of the core principles of ecotourism for my thesis because otherwise it is not possible to work with this terminology.

In 1990, the International Ecotourism Society defined ecotourism as "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (TIES n.d.). The essence of ecotourism can be described in three core principles. If it is practiced in the right way then it can: (1) protect the environment and enhance biodiversity protection; (2) lead to financial benefits in local communities without disrespect to their culture; and (3) provide education for indigenous communities as well as for visitors (Blangy & Metha 2006:233). Honey (2008:29ff) mentions in her book 'Ecotourism and Sustainable Development' seven characteristics for 'real ecotourism', which can be seen as a stricter version of the above mentioned definition:

1. *Travel to natural destinations*
2. *Impact minimisation* on environment as well as on local culture
3. *Environmental awareness building* for locals and tourists
4. *Direct financial benefit for conservation* through ecotourism
5. *Financial benefit and empowerment for locals* should be provided if ecotourism is seen as a tool for community development
6. *Respects for local culture* as in learning local customs and accepting certain cultural differences
7. *Human rights support and encouragement of democratic movements*

For this thesis, the definition for ecotourism will be the official definition provided by TIES in combination with the seven characteristics mentioned above. In the broadest sense, this would lead to five core principles of ecotourism:

- **environment and biodiversity protection**
- **economic benefit for the community**
- **cultural acceptance**
- **community empowerment**
- **education**

Fig. 1: Core principles of ecotourism (Winkler 2012)

It is necessary to mention again that the core principles of Fig. *1* are those I am using for my thesis. The definition itself is not that important as I see ecotourism as a combination of the definition of TIES and the ideas about sustainable tourism. From now on every reference made to 'ecotourism' has its basis in these five core principles. Additionally, it has to be considered that the terms ecotourism and sustainable tourism are seen as synonyms in this thesis because of the similarity between them.

1.4 Community development and community empowerment

Before defining community development and community empowerment, it is necessary to demarcate the term 'community'. According to Merriam Webster (n.d.), "community" has several meanings. It can be a "unified body of individuals" such as a group of people who share similar interests and are living in the same area or a body of persons with the same historical and cultural background, economic and social interests and the same characteristics living together within a broad society. Additionally, a community can be defined as a "society at large" and as a "joint ownership of participation" (Ibid).

A community, in my understanding, will be a group of people with the same interests (social, economic, ecological, political) and characteristics (history, culture, political) living together in the same region (within a bigger society).

Community development and community empowerment will be important factors in this thesis. However, most of the time it is very hard to define a community if you are within it, as it is self-defining (Community Development Foundation n.d.). As an outside observer, it is essential to have a clear definition of

these terms. The definition of community development by the National Occupational Standards for community development (2009:4) reads as follows: "Community Development is a long–term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. The process enables people to organise and work together to:

- identify their own needs and aspirations;
- take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives; and
- improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part."

It is important to consider that community development is a long-term process and that it takes time for a community to develop. Before starting with community development measures, there is a lot of preparatory work which needs to be done. It is necessary to get to know the community and to define development goals. It is important to convince community members that they are able to make a change and to include all necessary stakeholders. Following this, it is essential to have the right resources for the actions that will be taken. Finally, the process should be monitored and, if necessary, adapted to new factors (Community Development Exchange 1 n.d.). This short description of the community development process is far from complete but it can give an overview of the work that has to be done and it can also show a certain complexity regarding this topic.

The Community Development Foundation (n.d.) provides a more practical definition of community development. It argues that community development combines six characteristics:

- "helping people find common cause on issues that affect them;
- helping people work together on such issues under their own control;
- building the strengths and independence of community groups, organisations and networks;
- building equity, inclusiveness, participation and cohesion amongst people and their groups and organisations;
- empowering people and their organisations where appropriate to influence and help transform public policies and services and other factors affecting the conditions of their lives; and
- advising and informing public authorities on community needs, viewpoints and processes and assisting them to strengthen communities and work in genuine partnership with them".

These definitions underlie several core principles of community development. Those principles contain equality and anti-discrimination, social justice, collective action, working and learning together as well as community empowerment (Community Development Exchange 2 n.d.). Additionally, it is important to mention that one of the main goals of community development is to (re)build communities based on the core principles mentioned above (Community Development Exchange 1 n.d.). As these principles should be self-explanatory, there will be an emphasis on community empowerment in the following subchapter.

1.4.1 Development cooperation

Development cooperatives support third world and transition countries in their sustainable development in the fields of social, ecological and economic growth. Their activities are very diverse and range from financial support (e.g. infrastructure or poverty eradication) to knowledge transfer and humanitarian help. The number of development organisations worldwide is high, but the most important are part of the United Nations (UNDP, UNEP, etc.) and several others such as WWF, or institutions connected to the World

Bank. However, international aid provided by the World Bank is sometimes controversial as it is 'just' a loan and not a long-term money transfer.

In the two subchapters below, the term international aid will be discussed briefly and defined. An important factor of international aid is the effectiveness of the transferred goods and services in the receiving countries. This factor will also be elaborated on in one of the following subchapters. Anyhow, in the rest of the thesis the terms 'international aid' and 'aid effectiveness' are not mentioned directly but it is important to understand these concepts as development aid is essential for (eco)tourism projects. Therefore, these concepts should always be kept in mind when reading this thesis.

1.4.2   International aid and aid effectiveness

International aid, or foreign aid, is "the [voluntary] international transfer of capital, goods, or services from a country or international organisation for the benefit of the recipient country or its population" (Williams - Encyclopædia Britannica). Without enough control, these resources may not get to the places and people where they are needed. One very important point to mention is the different definitions and the controversial effects of international aid. From my point of view, loans (e.g. from the World Bank) cannot be considered as international aid because it is just a short-term way of 'helping' as a loan might be used to build a hospital but afterwards it is necessary for the recipient country to pay it back; this fact is very often not considered. There are many critics of international aid (e.g. Djankov 2008:193) who have proven that international aid can weaken democratic structures and lead to even more dependence on industrialised countries. Another important point to mention is that according to some papers from the World Bank, a large amount of international aid goes to countries with good policies (Hansen and Tarp, 2000 and Lensink and White, 2000). This leads to problems because very often it is a country with bad (environmental and economic) policies which actually needs help. However, there are also many positive correlations of international aid with certain factors, such as growth, aggregate savings, etc. (Hansen and Tarp 2000) which could be seen as indicators for aid effectiveness.

According to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness by the OECD from the year 2005, it is important not to confuse aid effectiveness and development effectiveness, as these two terms have separate meanings. In this thesis, aid effectiveness will be mentioned in combination with international aid for ecotourism projects as an external source for resources.

In the Paris Declaration, aid effectiveness is defined as an "Arrangement for the planning, management and deployment of aid that is efficient, reduces transaction costs and is targeted towards development outcomes including poverty reduction" (Stern et al. 2005:vii). More simply put, "aid effectiveness is about ensuring maximum impact of development aid to improve lives, cut poverty and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals" (HLF 2011) . The increase of aid effectiveness is something every aid cooperation should work towards achieving, ensuring a maximum rate of effectiveness.

1.4.3   Community empowerment

Community empowerment will play an important role in the framework presented in Chapter 2.1 Therefore, my definition of community empowerment will be a little bit different, respectively more complex

than the 'official' definition provided by community development organisations such as the Community Development Exchange and Changes.

In a combined paper written by those two organisations, they argue that an empowered community has to be "confident, inclusive, organised, co-operative and influential" (Community Development Exchange and Changes 2008:1). A confident community believes that it is able to make a difference through increased skills and knowledge of its individuals. If a community is inclusive, it supports equality and good relations between different groups through raising awareness about discrimination. An organized way of working and living in a community brings people with common issues together and concerns can be discussed in democratic groups. Cooperative communities enhance partnerships through building relationships across different groups within the community in order to determine common interests. If communities are willing to take part in decision making that is encouraged by its members, then those communities are influential (Changes n.d.).

Another definition, which is perhaps a little more tangible, is provided by a department of the UK government. Community empowerment is about shifting the "power, influence and responsibility away from existing centres of power and into the hands of communities and citizens" (Local Government 2010) and about convincing community members that they can make a difference (Ibid). Additionally, it has to be mentioned that this last source is about community empowerment in the UK and not about communities in third world countries, however, the ideas are similar.

In order to empower a community successfully, it is necessary to consider certain factors. The community has to have the right to define itself and its actions. Understanding of the long-term actions which lead to community empowerment is essential as well as the community's accountability and transparency (National Occupational Standards 2009:18).

Recapitulatory, it can be argued that there are internal and external factors of community development and community empowerment. On the one hand, there is the work done by outsiders, development workers, who have to ensure that the principles of community development and empowerment are transferred to the community, and on the other hand, there are the community members, individuals, who need to take action and realize that they can make a difference. If those two groups are working together it is possible to be successful and boost the social, economic, ecological and political interests of the community.

1.5   Research question and research objectives

The objective of the thesis is to boost the idea of development of ecotourism as a tool for community development and to show that investments through ecotourism can enhance community empowerment. This will occur by identifying and analysing indicators for ecotourism and community empowerment, by providing an overview of stakeholders' opinions, and by providing an insight into the work of a specific organisation.
The research aims to yield:
- descriptive knowledge by providing an overview of the current situation and acceptance of ecotourism and other sustainable tourism approaches, as well as by defining several concepts of ecotourism such as sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism, etc.

- explanatory knowledge by studying the historical, socio-economic, political- and cultural indicators of ecotourism projects in a developing country and their contribution to community development as well as by studying the case study projects in Nepal.
- prescriptive knowledge by making recommendations on how to use ecotourism as a tool for community development in cooperation with development organisations.

In order to write a thesis about a complex topic it is necessary to formulate a main research question and several sub-questions for the study. Additionally, I formulated a hypothesis which is central to my idea about the connection between ecotourism, community development and community empowerment. This hypothesis provides the foundation of this thesis and it also assists the reader with finding the central theme. This thesis will critically examine the following questions, led by the main research question:

Under which conditions can ecotourism projects result in successful community development?

Working hypotheses:
Community empowerment emerges through ecotourism (if conducted how it is defined in the literature), leading to community development and subsequently, regional development and welfare.

Several sub-questions have been formulated in order to effectively answer the main research question above.
Sub-questions related to descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive knowledge:
- What are the most important factors contributing to ecotourism implementation?
- What are the most important influences of ecotourism on community development and empowerment?
- Which steps should be taken into consideration when planning community development?
Sub-questions related to the case study:
- Under what circumstances is ecotourism in developing countries effective? – Analysing the case-study projects (descriptive and evaluative).
- What are the positive and negative effects of the projects in the host country?
- How is the acceptance of the ecotourism projects in the host country?
- How should ecotourism in the host country be managed and by whom should it be managed?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the evaluation framework?

1.6 Research strategy and innovative aspect

The research question and sub-questions lead to a complex research strategy which contains different frameworks connected to ecotourism projects that influence community development. The research is divided in different steps as can be seen in figure 2. First, there is an extensive research using existing literature in the fields of ecotourism and community development which leads to a connection between community development and community empowerment and the creation of the research framework for community development. This research framework is the theoretical concept of the conceptual model.
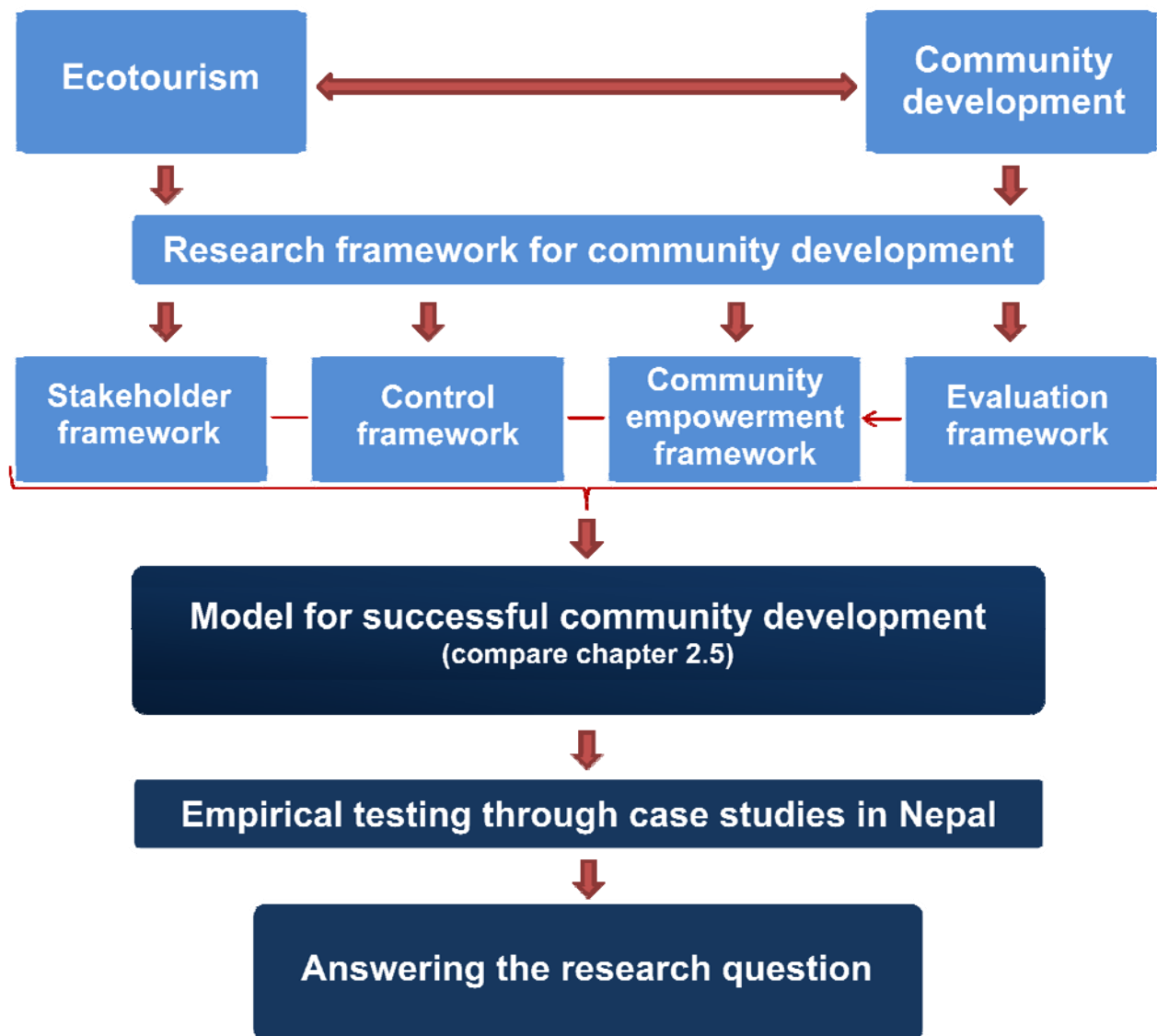
Fig. 2: Research strategy (Winkler 2012)

The next step is the creation of the different frameworks for the conceptual model of the thesis. For an easier understanding these frameworks can be seen as elements of a system which all can influence the outcome. The stakeholder framework contains external and internal stakeholders which are connected to an ecotourism project in a community and who got power to influence it. The control framework contains factors which are given, such as climate, political stability, etc. The community empowerment framework contains of six community empowerment factors which were partly adapted from existing literature and partly added by myself. Each factor meets a certain aspect of ecotourism and community development and has an influence on them. An evaluation framework for the influence of ecotourism on community development was created by myself in order to measure this influence. This framework depends on a set of indicators concerning ecotourism and community development in connection with community empowerment. The search for indicators will depend on existing indicators from the literature about ecotourism and community development. It will be necessary to combine literature about indicators in general with findings from the specific fields which are connected to this thesis. The indicators for the evaluation framework will be divided

into six different main indicators and subcategories which are important for interview questions and questionnaires for stakeholders in the case studies. A huge set of indicators is necessary to make the evaluation framework applicable to all kinds of case studies in different areas and countries. The input for the evaluation framework will come from questionnaires and interviews with stakeholders on location of the case studies. This framework is the basis for the community empowerment framework which is the central component of the conceptual model and has a high influence on the output.

The outcome of the creation of the frameworks is a conceptual model which is based on a research framework by Vermeulen et. al. (2011). I adapted the model for this research and combined it with elements of system science theory so that it can explain the step-by-step progress within the model. The elements of the model and the connections and influences between them will be explained thoroughly in chapter 2, the model itself in chapter 2.5. Finally, the model is tested in two case studies in Nepal through indicators of the evaluation framework.

The innovative aspect of the thesis is, on the one hand, the community empowerment framework with its six empowerment factors. The literature about community empowerment only contains four factors which do neither include an environmental factor nor a factor connected to the main stakeholder, the tourist. I included those factors in my community empowerment framework and used it as a theoretical basis for the evaluation framework. Which itself is, on the other hand, also an innovative aspect as the evaluation framework connects the community empowerment factors with community members and other stakeholders through interviews and questionnaires. Therefore, it is possible to measure community development through community empowerment in an ecotourism project. The evaluation framework itself can be very useful for future evaluations of ecotourism projects and a comparison of those.

2 Research framework for community development

2.1 Community empowerment framework

The community empowerment framework which I adapted from Friedmann (1992:33) and Scheyvens (1999:247) is the most important part of my thesis as it is the basis for the conceptual model and lays the foundation for the preparation of my field research. In addition to Friedmann's work about the three factors for community empowerment, Scheyvens added a fourth and I added two further factors, totalling - all together - six factors of community empowerment. In the community empowerment framework, these factors are in direct connection with ecotourism and community development and, according to the hypothesis mentioned in chapter 1.5, these factors will help to categorise the influences of an ecotourism project on a community and will also help to identify indicators which can link the benefit of ecotourism to community development.

As stated above, Friedmann mentioned the importance of community empowerment in his book 'Empowerment - The Politics of Alternative Development' (1992) and claims that the power of communities lies in the hands of households and of individuals (Ibid:31ff). According to Friedmann, households are seen as markets and political units which require cooperative actions with other households, communities, governments, etc. He argues that households have three different powers in order to achieve their goals in life (Ibid). Those three different powers are political, social and psychological power. Social power is seen as essential because it gains "access to certain 'bases' of household production, such as information, knowledge and skill, participation in social organizations, and financial resources" (Ibid:33).

Scheyvens emphasises on the importance of empowerment to fight poverty in her studies (1999, 2011. She refers to Friedmann's work and considers his powers as a way for poor people to overcome poverty (Scheyvens 2011:23). Empowerment can be seen as a development process which leads to actions that allows poor people to (re)claim their rights (Mowforth and Munt in: Scheyens 2011:24) and it is important to mention that "genuine empowerment can never be conferred from the outside" (Friedmann in: Ibid). Zhao and Richie (2007) "specify empowerment as a key condition for tourism to be able to contribute to poverty alleviation as it aims to enhance and strengthen people's participation in political processes (...) as well as removing barriers that work against the poor" (in: Scheyvens 2011:37). Cole (2006) and Sofield (2003) argue that 'empowerment is a key to achieving sustainable tourism" (in: Ibid).

As mentioned before, Scheyvens added a fourth factor to Friedmann's framework - economic empowerment. She argues that her framework should help researchers to distinguish successful ecotourism projects from green washing. She sees the framework as a tool for communities and development agencies for an involvement in ecotourism projects or the attempt to start one (Scheyvens 1999:246). That Scheyvens added an economic factor is only logical as there is a very high potential for economic benefits (Scheyvens 2011:3). The success of an ecotourism project and the distribution of the economic benefits are important in measuring the sustainability of the project (Wilkinson and Pratiwi 1995 in: Scheyvens 1999:248).

In the following subchapters, the above mentioned factors of empowerment are examined in closer detail. In addition to the four (dis)empowerment factors which were already considered by Friedmann and Scheyvens, I have added a fifth and a sixth factor which struck me as vital components - ecological empowerment and visitor empowerment. If ecotourism projects are put under the microscope, it is necessary

that they are environmentally friendly, do not harm nature but conserve it and, in the best scenario, teach community members and visitors about the ecotourism venue. Therefore, the ecological factor should not be forgotten in this framework especially considering the (positive) effect that ecotourism can have on biodiversity conservation[2]. In addition to this, the 'tourist' factor should also be reconsidered when talking about ecotourism projects. Tourists are the necessary element for the project to survive and have an influence on the empowerment of the community itself. The development of a tourist destination - the community - depends not only on the environment provided by the project itself, but also depends highly on the attitude of the tourists. Finally, it is important to mention that ecotourism cannot only lead to empowerment of communities but also to disempowerment if it is not conducted in the right way.

Those factors of empowerment are not only based on the ideas of Friedmann and Scheyvens but are also consistent with studies about sustainable development in general and in combination with tourism specifically. A good example is Bramwell (in: Butler 1999:29) who mentions seven dimensions of sustainability and Mowforth and Munt (2003:94f) who are talking about tourism sustainability and include aside from the three pillars of sustainable development also education and participation. This approach is very similar to the main factors of my community empowerment framework as this also includes factors about education and participation (of tourists).

2.1.1 Economic (dis)empowerment

Economic empowerment might be considered as very important by western thinking as some might believe that economic benefits can lead to all the other forms of empowerment. To define economic (dis)empowerment, it is necessary to understand different economic sectors. Economic empowerment is not just about gaining benefits from an ecotourism project, it is also about creating new jobs in the community and its surrounding region. However, as a community cannot be seen as one homogenous entity, it is very hard to 'discover' and to define economic empowerment in a project (Scheyvens 1999:248).

Anyhow, economic (dis)empowerment occurs if ecotourism contributes (or not) to the financial incomes of a community. This income should be shared between the households of the community and a long-lasting effect (such as infrastructure improvements) should be observable. If profit from ecotourism is not evenly distributed and is filtered to single organisations in the community or/and if not all households can gain benefits from the project, this indicates economic disempowerment of the community (Ibid).

2.1.2 Social (dis)empowerment

Social (dis)empowerment is concentrated towards information, knowledge, participation in organisations and (financial) resources. If an individual or household can increase those 'necessities', an increase in social power is possible (Friedmann 1992:33). Social (dis)empowerment and the implementation of ecotourism projects go side by side. Such a project can disrupt or contribute to the equilibrium of a community in terms of harmony or disharmony. "Social empowerment refers to a situation in which a community's sense of cohesion and integrity has been confirmed or strengthened by an activity such as ecotourism" (Scheyvens 1999:248). Cooperation among all groups in a community with the project is essential for social empowerment.

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[2] compare: Gössling (1999).

It is necessary that no group (e.g. women) is left behind and that all benefits are shared equally. An inequality of the economic power, such as an unfair distribution of incomes, can lead to social disempowerment (Ibid:247f).

Another important point of contributing to social empowerment, which is not mentioned by Friedmann or Scheyvens, is education – one of the core principles of ecotourism. Education of community members might lead to problem solving (e.g. of conflicts) within the community, but there is also the chance that new knowledge might interrupt some cultural habits.

2.1.2.1 Excurse: The importance of education through tourism

As mentioned several times already, education is a very important part of ecotourism. Ecotourism, conducted in the right way, should teach locals and visitors about the culture of the other and boost acceptance of a different lifestyle. When talking about education, it is important to mention that education goes both ways - from the ecotourism project/the locals to the tourists (as mentioned in chapter 2.1.6) and from the visitor to locals; everyone can learn from each other if they are willing to do so.

Tourism, in its original function, should bring outsiders to a new surrounding in a new area (Jafari and Ritchie 1981:19) and satisfy their needs of recreation and exploration. Mass tourism is not fully able to serve these needs as, most of the times, there is hardly any 'real' contact with the people of the host country and their culture. Ecotourism is able to provide education for tourists and, additionally, also offers the opportunity for locals to learn about their environment, about dealing with foreign influences, etc. "Educational activity is necessary to provide meanings and relationships to people about the places they visit and about the things they see and do there" (Tisdell and Wilson 2005:292). After learning about a place and its characteristics people will develop some kind of connection which can boost the awareness of certain troubles this region or community might have. The common view at the moment is that education through initiatives such as ecotourism projects has a positive effect on environmental conservation (Ibid) and certainly also on social issues.

2.1.3 Psychological (dis)empowerment

Psychological power can be seen as self confidence and "as an individual sense of potency" (Friedmann 1992:33). Psychological empowerment very often results from successful social, political and/or economic actions. Additionally, self-esteem of the community members is increasing because of outside recognition of their uniqueness, culture, etc. which is an important effect of ecotourism. Furthermore, ecotourism can lead to increasing self respect of traditionally low-status groups such as women and youths.

However, if the allocation of the ecotourism's benefits is not fair, this might lead to psychological disempowerment in terms of disbelief in the project or frustration and disillusion. Another way of creating disempowerment can be tourists who interfere with local customs and disturb the relationship between nature and the local people (Scheyvens 1999:247f). Just recently, there were reports detailing the displacement of locals in Kenya in order to open a new national park (Müller 2011)[3].

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[3] The newspaper article shows that the topic is very controversial and the displacement is not yet proven.

2.1.4 Political (dis)empowerment

Political power is about the opportunity of decision making which can have an influence on one's future. Therefore, it cannot just be seen as a power to vote but also as having a voice in decision processes and participating in collective action (Friedmann 1992:33).

Political empowerment in communities occurs when there is some kind of forum where all community members have a say about aspects concerning the ecotourism project and where everyone is allowed to bring in ideas and opinions. Signs of political disempowerments would be if the community has a self-interested leadership, if the ecotourism project is treating the community as a necessary evil and if the community members have no say and no influence on decisions concerning the project (Scheyvens 1999:248f).

2.1.5 Ecological (dis)empowerment

In addition to these factors set out by Friedmann and Scheyvens, I think that it is necessary to include another one in order to address all the core principles of ecotourism. It is quite interesting that neither Friedmann nor Scheyvens included an ecological factor within their frameworks. The conservation of biodiversity, which is one form of ecological power, is essential for the survival of humanity. It has a value for current, as well as for future generations. It is a fact that there are many ecosystem services which are as yet undiscovered but may be vital for humans and animals. A great loss in biodiversity occurred in the last few decades and therefore, biodiversity conservation became increasingly essential. It was discovered that conservation lead to positive feedback in the form of trade-offs for humans. Sustainable use of resources leads to more ecosystem services which creates synergies with other needs of society. However, the establishment of protected areas or the creation of such areas is often failing due to lack of funds (Dullo et al. 2005:122).

The biggest problem within biodiversity conservation is the different methods of measurement. Schloegel (2007:248) states that the calculation of biodiversity uses many different semantics such as species-richness, -diversity or –uniqueness. However, there is no clear definition of the value of biodiversity to individuals. In this thesis, signs of ecological empowerment might be an increase in environmental awareness among the community members, a sustainable handling of their surroundings and protection of the local biodiversity. Signs of ecological disempowerment are negative effects of the ecotourism project on the environment such as more car traffic within a region because of a higher number of visitors.

2.1.6 Visitor empowerment

Visitor empowerment is a factor which is not officially recognised as a factor for community empowerment in existing literature. However, as the tourist is a very important stakeholder it seems logical to include it in the framework. The description of this new factor is mainly a combination of a research paper about the impact of tourists on destinations and its residents as well as personal observations on several journeys in third-world countries. Visitor empowerment or disempowerment is very difficult to measure as it relies mainly on personal experiences from tourists and those depend highly on a tourist's expectations, characteristics, time of visit and also factors which cannot be influenced such as a change in weather patterns.

Visitor empowerment can be seen as a mixture of all the other empowerment factors concerning the tourist. One important method of empowering visitors is appreciation of the local culture and religion by the

tourists, which is similar to psychological empowerment. Tourists should reconsider a give-and-take basis in order to empower local communities and to boost their self esteem. Of course, this can also work the other way if tourists show their wealth and treat local workers as low-grade people. Therefore, the emotional connection between tourists and locals is very important in order to show local residents that their culture is as rich as the tourist's culture. If this is performed in the right way, it can lead to a two-way education between tourists and locals. Finally, it is essential to know that visitor empowerment, as described, is mainly possible at destinations where there is a direct contact between tourists and locals and not in huge, locked up all-inclusive resorts.

2.2   Output of the research framework

The output of my conceptual model is 'community development'. As community development is a very broad term, it is necessary to split it into several categories in order to examine the success of the output. Based to personal experience, I have chosen three different categories - social, economic, ecological - to divide the outcome. This might be a good solution as this method is based on the pillars of sustainable development. All three aspects are interdependent of each other and it is important that all three aspects are satisfactorily fulfilled in order to assure successful community development.

2.2.1   Social aspects

The social effect of community development can be huge if the local community is willing to take the chance and to work towards a sustainable future. The highest effect probably lies in increasing education through an ecotourism project. For example, locals can be educated and trained to be guides for tourists which leads not only to increasing household incomes but especially to a knowledge transfer (Kerley et al. 2003:19 and Bookbinder et al. 1998). Another important factor is the willingness and understanding of a local community to see ecotourism not only as another way of earning money but also as a contribution to a bigger goal. It is important that the ecotourism project creates a positive 'inner image' within the community so that everyone there can identify with the project. However, this is just wishful thinking if the project is not conducted in the right way.

The social aspects of community development are the results of the influence of an ecotourism project in categories such as cultural identity of the community, advancement of social groups and integration of those into community life. If a positive image is created, the social cohesion within the community will fortify which can lead to less social discrepancies.

2.2.2   Economic aspects

From an economic point of view, community development occurs when the opportunity costs are lower than the value of community development. Unfortunately, the economic incentive is usually the most important one. Of equal importance as the incentives is the economic effect of community development on rural communities. An increase in incomes can be found as well as the creation of new jobs and more independence for rural communities.

2.2.3   Ecologic aspects

The ecological aspects of community development can be positive or negative. It mainly depends on how important the environment is on the community's agenda. Anyhow, as this thesis is about the positive effects of ecotourism, I will focus on those and show the positive effects community development can have on the environment. There can be increases in conservation efforts and in investments to enhance environmental purity and biodiversity. The ecological aspects of community development are everything concerning the environment that is influenced by community empowerment and ecotourism.

2.3   Control framework

The control framework is not influenceable and functions as stable which can clarify the community empowerment framework and the output of the model. It is important to mention that especially in this case, the control framework can vary highly between different countries and culture groups. Therefore, the control framework has a big influence on the outcome of the system - community development. Actions that may work in one region or in one culture may not work in another. The local and regional factors are very important and it should be clear that before adapting this framework to any project it is necessary to know as much as possible about the local and regional factors.

Those factors can be the political stability of a country or region, the climate, available infrastructure, general hospitality of the people living in a community, economic situation, etc. This short listing should show that the local and regional factors are very multifaceted and include nearly everything that might influence the project. Of course, it is clear that it is not possible to assess all necessary information about the control framework, however, the more information that is given, the more accurate the result will be.

2.4   Stakeholder framework

It is very important to differ between external and internal stakeholders. External stakeholders are seen as input to the project but are not included in the system. They serve the cause with material and non-material support but their influence on the project itself is limited. In contrast, internal stakeholders actively take part in the project and can directly influence its outcome. In many cases it is hard to differentiate between external and internal stakeholders because it might be that an institution acts as an external and internal stakeholder. However, if that is the case, problem solving thereof must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

2.4.1   External stakeholders

The external stakeholders of an ecotourism project can vary highly from project to project. As this conceptual model should serve the purpose of general use, I will name groups of external stakeholders which are likely to appear in ecotourism projects at a community level. Most of the time, the external stakeholders provide financial support, scientific knowledge, scarce resources (scarce in terms of 'hardly available' in the

region) and laws. Of course, the following list of external stakeholders is far from exhaustive and for every project, there are different stakeholders but the list covers the most important stakeholders in general terms. Some of the below mentioned stakeholders are based on a publication from UNEP and UNWTO (2005).

- Development cooperatives
  - o National and international NGOs
  - o United Nations organisations such as UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Environmental Program (UNEP), World Tourism organisation (UNWTO), Global Environmental Facility (UN-GEF) etc.
  - o World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IWF) (it is controversial to consider those institutions as development institutions)
  - o Scientific organisations such as Universities and research institutes
  - o etc.
- Regional and national government
  - o Tourism Department or Ministry
  - o Environmental and Conservation Ministry
  - o Infrastructure plans
  - o National Parks
  - o etc.
- Enterprises
  - o Energy providers (if necessary)
  - o Construction companies
  - o Transport companies
  - o etc.
- Tourism industry
  - o Travel agencies
  - o Guided tours
  - o etc.

2.4.2 Internal stakeholders

The number of internal stakeholders depends on the size of the community. Similar to external stakeholders, internal stakeholders can show a high variety of different characters and organisations. The internal stakeholders directly affect the project and thus, its outcome. This means that the internal stakeholders are the important actors in the community empowerment framework and this includes foreign visitors. The following list of internal stakeholders is not complete as every project has different internal stakeholders, but in general the most important are included. Again, some of the mentioned stakeholders are based on a publication from UNEP and UNWTO (2005).

- Enterprises (local)
  - o Provider of local food

- o Provider of local resources
- o Provider of locally created souvenirs (crafts, etc.)
- o etc.
- Community members
  - o Mayor and/or some kind of community government
  - o Representatives of different groups within the community such as farmers, craftsmen and also women.
  - o Every community member is an internal stakeholder in the project and can directly affect the outcome. However, not every community member might be equal in terms of influencing the project. A community is not a homogenous mass and therefore, community members cannot be seen as identical to each other, some members might be more participatory in decision making than others.
  - o etc.
- Project workers
  - o Foreign and local project officials
  - o Voluntary workers
  - o etc.
- Tourists
  - o Rich tourist (high society)
  - o Alternative tourist
  - o Backpackers
  - o etc.

2.5 Conceptual model of the research framework

To conclude this chapter, the conceptual model for successful community development of the thesis will be presented. It is a visualisation of the outcome of the aforementioned frameworks. Additionally to the description of the model, there will be a short excurse about systems science theory as it is important for understanding the model. The community where an ecotourism project is conducted can be seen as a system with inputs, outputs and boundaries.

2.5.1 Excurse: System science theory

In order to fully understand the model in the next subchapter, it is necessary to know some basics about systems science. Systems science is about interrelations and interdependencies in systems (Kreuzeder 2008). A system contains several components which have a specific connection to each other. Those components are:

- system elements
- system border
- function of the system

- system dynamic (Ossimitz 2003:3).

A system borders itself and its elements from the rest of the environment but, in complex versions, a system needs input of some kind and also creates an output of some kind. A very basic system would just connect a few simple variables with each other within its border and if one variable is changed, it will have an influence on the other variables (Ibid). There are many theories about system sciences which are highly complex but in order to understand my model it is just important to consider that a slight change in one variable or framework can have a high influence on the other variables. Another important factor is the system's border. It is necessary to clearly define it to avoid problems when analysing data from case studies, especially in this part of the evaluation of a project it is important to know the system's border.

2.5.2   Model for successful community development

The conceptual model for successful community development presented in Fig. *3* is the basis for the evaluation framework of this thesis. It contains all the frameworks which are presented in this chapter 2 and shows the necessary components of a system. To make it simpler, the model will be described from left to right. It is essential to know that the model description is simplified and it is about a best practice example.

The external stakeholders, such as development organisations, are in most cases highly important stakeholders in terms of financial support and knowledge transfer hence; they are mentioned separately in the model. External stakeholders give inputs to the system and vary largely from project to project. However, it is important to distinguish between external and internal stakeholders in the model. The internal stakeholders are part of the system and therefore, connected to the community empowerment and the control framework.

The internal stakeholders are a crucial part of the system and contain all the important actors of the system. The internal stakeholders are not equally important but every change of the internal stakeholders' intention will influence the whole system and change the outcome in some way. The internal stakeholders might be the most unstable element of the system and have the power to lead the outcome in a specific direction however, they are also very easily influenceable by external stakeholders and project members. It is important that the internal stakeholders work together in order to achieve the most efficient outcome of the system.

The evaluation framework is the practical part of the community empowerment framework. Through interviews and questionnaires with stakeholders of a project the evaluation framework gains data for the research. The evaluation framework contains a set of indicators with six main indicators and several sub-categories. With the use of those indicators data can be gained and measurements can be taken. It is a very important part of the model, because the evaluation has the highest influence on the outcome of the model. Successful community development highly depends on the internal stakeholders who evaluate the project.

The two main factors of in my model are 'Ecotourism' and the 'Community Empowerment framework'. Ecotourism as a factor has to be seen as described in the literature and defined by me in chapter 1.3. Generally, and in a simplified way, it can be said that 'Ecotourism' receives the system input from the external stakeholders and has a positive influence on the community empowerment framework. The connection between ecotourism and the community empowerment framework is a positive feedback loop (in a best practice example) as the frameworks in the system are interdependent of each other.

An exception is the control framework as this will not change through an alteration of the other elements in the system. The state of the control framework is stable and has an influence on the remaining elements of the system, therefore, the control framework has a special status in the system. The influence of the control framework on the system can be very high but also very low. In some cases a change in the control framework might change the whole system rapidly, such as a change in the political circumstances in a country, and in other cases the influence of the control framework can just be examined in a long term view, for example the change of regional weather patterns.

The outcome of the system is 'community development' and the answer to the research question. The outcome is changing the actual system and therefore, it is creating a changed community and a new system. The whole process from left to right in the model can be seen as a change of the actual system to a new system where community development was 'performed'. It is clear that every action taken within the borders of the system has an effect on the outcome and is immediately creating a response in the form of community development. Anyhow, to understand this easily, we assume that the crossing from the actual system to a new system occurs at a certain point of time, preferably after finishing an ecotourism project.

The last element of the system which is necessary to define in precise detail is the border of the system. It is important to know what part of the system is and which elements are put in to the system. In my model, the system contains certain elements such as the ecotourism project and local and regional factors. The biggest difficulties are defining the stakeholders. The internal stakeholders are within the borders of the system and therefore, part of it. However, it is difficult to decide whether a stakeholder is internal or external. In my point of view, all persons, enterprises and institutions which are directly concerned with the project in the community are internal stakeholders. Though it is not possible to make a general statement about the stakeholders, it is necessary to define them specifically for every project.

The following Fig. *3* shows the conceptual model for successful community development in the generalised version for ecotourism projects in communities.
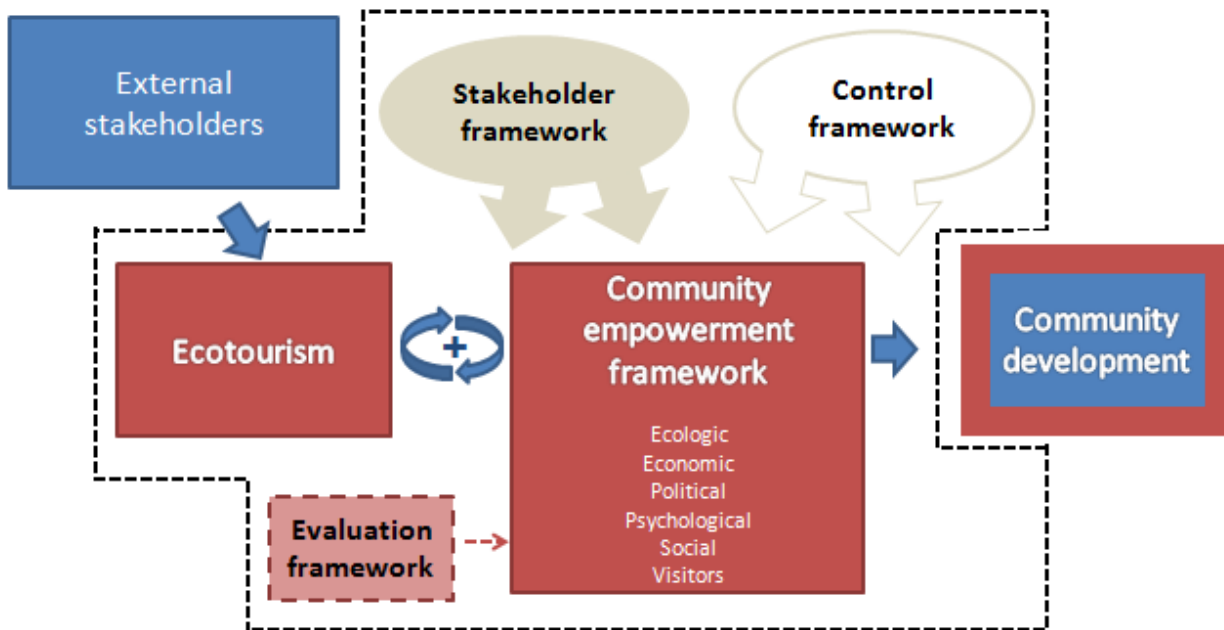
Fig. 3: Conceptual model for successful community development (Winkler 2012)

3 Indicators for the evaluation framework

3.1 Introduction to indicators

The main aim of this thesis is the evaluation of ecotourism projects in communities with the emphasis placed on community empowerment. This is also the scientific contribution of the thesis to the field of ecotourism. In order to achieve that, indicators will be used as an instrument of measuring the effect of an ecotourism project on community empowerment and development. In order to maintain a general view on this topic several indicators in several categories will be listed beneath and for each specific project it is necessary to take those which are necessary to achieve the required goal. By answering the indicators, the sub-questions mentioned in chapter 1.5 will also be answered through the data gathered in the case study. This set of indicators contains a maximum number of indicators and it is necessary for each project to choose different indicators. How this can look will be shown in chapter 4 when choosing indicators for case studies in Nepal. However, it is helpful to choose the same indicators if results are to be comparable.

In the following subchapter it will be explained why indicators are used in this thesis and how they can serve the aim of the thesis. I will elaborate on the purpose of the indicators and finally, specific indicators will be defined and categorised in several groups in order to serve multiple projects in multiple regions of the world.

It seems that a definition of indicators and its use in this work is essential to be fully capable of using them afterwards. Indicators are a measuring tool which should normally be used regularly in order to obtain comparable data. In this case, especially because of time restraints, the comparable data will be gleaned from different projects and not from different time periods. Normally, it takes a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a good set of answers and data. However, indicators are used for measuring different effects of ecotourism on community empowerment and development, such as:

- changes in the structure and internal factors of the (eco)tourism project;
- changes in external factors which influence the project from the outside;
- impacts of the project on the community (and its surroundings);
- stress and problems in the system;
- the current state of the project/system; and
- changes through management effort and actions (UNWTO 2004:8 and UNEP & UNWTO 2005:72).

In choosing the right indicators, which is a very important part of measurement, it is important to know that indicators cannot just measure certain factors and effects but can also help to clarify the required goal. For this reason it seems clear that a wrong choice of indicators can have a negative effect on the outcome, as it may lead to wrong conclusions. However, indicators are not always the best method of measurement and before choosing the right indicators, it must be determined if this is the best way of evaluating a project. Anyhow, as this thesis is working with indicators it would be too time consuming to do a comparison between different measuring methods and the benefits of well-chosen and precisely defined indicators can be numerous like:

- "better decision-making - lowering risks or costs;
- identification of emerging issues - allowing prevention;

- identification of impacts - allowing corrective action when needed;
- performance measurement of the implementation of plans and management activities –evaluating progress in the sustainable development of tourism;
- reduced risk of planning mistakes - identifying limits and opportunities;
- greater accountability - credible information for the public and other stakeholders of tourism fosters accountability for its wise use in decision-making;
- constant monitoring can lead to continuous improvement - building solutions into management" (UNWTO:9f).

The two biggest advantages of indicators in connection to this thesis might be the comparison of projects across regions (and even countries) and the inclusion of qualitative measurements in quantitative methods. Quantitative data such as:
- the current state of a project;
- numbers of employees;
- economic state of the community;
- numbers of tourists; and
- amount of external stakeholders

can be combined in a data analysis with qualitative data such as:
- opinions of visitors through surveys and interviews;
- activities and needs of stakeholder groups (internal and external) through questionnaires; and
- impact of tourism on the community through in-depth interviews, focus groups and household surveys (UNEP & WTO 2005:74).

3.2   Indicators for successful community empowerment through ecotourism

Some of the indicators used in this framework are modified from a study of UNEP and UNWTO (2005) and from a study of UNWTO (2004) about indicators for sustainable development for tourist destinations. In my opinion it makes sense that I use already existing indicators which were created by a supranational institution in cooperation with many scientists. It can be assumed, that those indicators are suitable for all kind of ecotourism studies and I tried to use those indicators for the thesis which are specifically defined to focus on community empowerment and community development through ecotourism. For a more structured work, I decided to use a classification of factors suggested by the UNEP and UNWTO (2005:18). The so-called "twelve aims for an agenda of sustainable tourism" (Ibid) are:
1. Economic Viability
2. Local Prosperity
3. Employment Quality
4. Social Equity
5. Visitor Fulfilment
6. Local Control
7. Community Wellbeing

8. Cultural Richness
9. Physical Integrity
10. Biological Diversity
11. Resource Efficiency
12. Environmental Purity

For the thesis, only eleven of those factors ('environmental purity' and 'physical integrity' will be combined) will be used and complemented by another one ('Impact of ecotourism development'). Additionally, 'Tourist Fulfilment' will be renamed to 'Tourist Satisfaction and Education'. These twelve factors will be categorized within the six empowerment sections (partly mentioned by Friedmann 1992 and Scheyvens 1999) of the community empowerment framework. In the following Fig. *4* the classification for the indicators are visually presented.
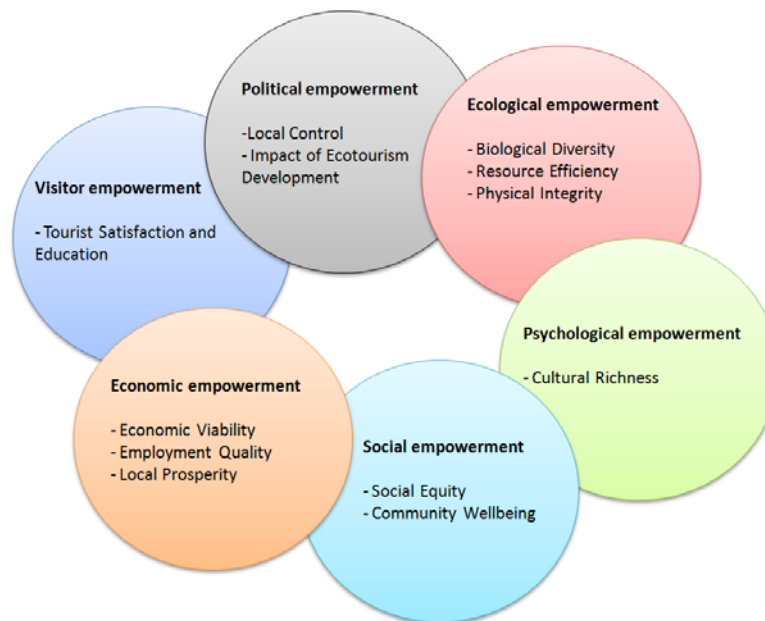
Fig. 4: Classification of indicators (Winkler 2012)

In choosing the right indicators for an evaluation it is necessary to have enough background information about the project and to know exactly what the goal of the evaluation should be. In the case of my thesis the goal is to evaluate projects on how ecotourism can benefit community empowerment and, subsequently, lead to community development. However, the indicators listed in the following subchapters do not all measure community empowerment specifically, but rather other important factors which are necessary for an ecotourism project to 'survive'. Those factors are, for example, economic viability in combination with image branding of the destination as well as visitor satisfaction. Visitor empowerment in particular might not directly empower the community but it plays an important part in getting a successful result out of the ecotourism project. Therefore, it can be argued that those factors are equally important to a community as, for example, cultural uniqueness is for the empowerment of the community. The main categories of empowerment are based on the community empowerment framework which I mainly adapted from Friedmann (1992) and Scheyvens (1999). The subcategories such as economic viability, social equite, biological diversity, etc. are based on the paper by the UNEP and UNWTO (2005) and the indicators are mainly from the publication of the

UNWTO (2004) and got adapted for this specific task. Therefore, the following list of indicators is a combination of those above mentioned scientific sources which were specifically choosen and adapted to serve as indicators for community empowerment.

The following list will give an overview of indicators in certain categories and will help in determining the right indicators for the right cause. Later on in the case study it will be seen that it is not possible to use all indicators for every project. Sometimes there is not enough information given and sometimes, which is the case with this thesis, there is a time constraint which does not allow for thorough research to gain enough information necessary for indicators. The next five subchapters will each explain the indicators in detail and give examples on how to 'apply' them. There will be main indicators which should be used for every project and lead to a result which is comparable. At the end of each indicator-subchapter there will be a short section about the indicator itself and which methods for acquiring data and information will be useful.

3.3 Evaluation framework for community empowerment

3.3.1 Indicators for economic empowerment

In order to achieve economic empowerment in a community, it is necessary not only to look on the economic side but to find the right balance between the "overall welfare of the community and that of the tourism industry" (UNWTO 2004:128). It is necessary to weigh the potential financial benefits against negative effects tourism can bring such as rising living cost and a change of lifestyle. There are some specific factors which are important to consider when talking about economic empowerment of a community and which also show that all the 'empowerment factors' are connected to each other. To assure economic viability and local prosperity, it is necessary that the overall image of the region, the community and the tourism project itself is positive. Additionally, to get a positive image it is important that the condition of the environment is alright, which will be measured through indicators concerning ecologic empowerment (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:26f).

The main indicators for economic empowerment, which should point out crucial factors to the project on an economic scale, are economic viability, local prosperity and employment quality. Those main indicators will be measured through observing the community, answering certain questions, interviewing locals, questionnaires, etc. It is necessary to mention again that not all the indicators might be useful for every ecotourism project and therefore, it is important which indicators are chosen to evaluate a project. However, it is my intention to provide rather general indicators which can be complemented by indicators serving specific local and regional conditions.

3.3.1.1 Economic viability

Economic viability as an indicator can show the long-term competitiveness of a tourism destination. For a tourism project it is essential to know what potential customers, the tourists, are looking for and what they expect (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:26). However, it is necessary to get the core principles of ecotourism across to the tourists. To ensure long-term viability, two important factors should be considered. On the one hand, the needs and satisfaction of tourists need to be fulfilled and, on the other hand, there has to be a financial benefit

for the community. However, as the fulfilment of the tourist seems quite important it will be a separate indicator shown in subchapter 3.3.6. If the community can benefit from an ecotourism project it will lead to economic empowerment of the community, and in order to show this, it is necessary to know how much of the tourism profits stay within the community and how much is relocated.

Main indicator for economic viability:	
Does the community as a whole benefit from the ecotourism project?	% of income which stays in the community
	Improvement of basic infrastructure since beginning of the project (existence of a sewage system, waste disposal, etc.)

Tab. 1: Main indicator for economic viability (Winkler 2012)

The reason for this indicator is to measure tourism's contribution to community incomes. It is an important indicator as it can show if an ecotourism project can survive in the tourism-market or not. In order to obtain data about the financial background of the project, it is necessary to interview the project leader(s) about the financial situation. The same goes for answering the other topic. To find out more about infrastructure improvements enhanced by the ecotourism project, it is necessary to talk to responsible people at the project and possibly confirm information with locals.

3.3.1.2 Local prosperity

Local prosperity is an important indicator as it shows the benefits tourism can bring to a tourist destination. Destinations have to bear certain costs in order to become (and remain) a tourist destination, therefore, it is essential that "economic benefits are secured at the place where costs are incurred" (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:28). This is an important factor of sustainable development because it will enforce the support of local businesses and the employment of local workers. Following these principles tourism can be sustainable and lead to local prosperity as a fair amount of tourism incomes are spent within the community in locally owned businesses (Ibid). Additionally, it will lead to an economic empowerment of the community, especially if the incomes are shared equally between the community's households and/or if anyone in the community can benefit from investments made by earnings from the tourism project. The project leaders have to ensure that supplies are purchased locally and to promote local goods.

Main indicator for local prosperity:	
Are the benefits from the ecotourism project shared equally within the community?	% community members who think that they can financially benefit from ecotourism
	% of local businesses and farmers supported by the project
	% of goods and services purchased locally (within the system and its stakeholders)

Tab. 2: Main indicator for local prosperity (Winkler 2012)

The reason for this indicator is to identify a link between the local businesses and the tourism project. It can show how strong this link is and if there are problems. For the data gathering it will be necessary to interview community members about their feeling concerning the tourism project. This can also be done in the form of questionnaires for locals, asking them if the personal financial situation has changed since the ecotourism project has started. Additionally, it will be necessary to take a closer look at stakeholders who are purchasing and selling local goods. Therefore, after identifying the stakeholders, interviews with local business owners will be necessary.

3.3.1.3 Employment quality

Employment quality is an indicator which shows the satisfaction of community members with their jobs within the project and the tourism industry. It is an important indicator because it can bring up problems with unfair salaries and quality of the working environment itself (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:30). This quality is necessary, on the one hand, to ensure that employees are satisfied with their jobs, and on the other hand, that they know what they are working for and identify themselves with their work and also with the ecotourism project. Good employment quality is empowering the community in terms of financial stability for its members and self-identification with the project and their jobs.

Main indicators for employment quality:	
Is the quality of the job (in the tourism industry) satisfying?	% of employees within the tourism business and the project who are from the local community
	% of community members who feel supported in their job by the ecotourism project
Is the salary fair and without discrimination?	Ratio of income of tourism jobs vs non-tourism jobs
	% of community members who consider their payment as 'fair'

Tab. 3: Main indicators for employment quality (Winkler 2012)

The reason for this indicator is the necessity of proving that the tourism industry can provide 'good' jobs for community members. Regular tourism often has the reputation of exploiting employees, especially in poor regions. An ecotourism project should provide fair wages and fortify people to start working in a tourist business. The measures for information gathering will be a comparison of salaries from workers within conventional tourist businesses and those working for an ecotourism project in a country. This can be done by looking up national data and interviewing workers to confirm the data. Additionally, it is necessary to do interviews or questionnaires with community members about their working situation and about the satisfaction with their occupancy.

3.3.2 Indicators for social empowerment

Social empowerment is a powerful factor which shows the harmony or disharmony an ecotourism project can bring to a community. It is essential that all groups within the project are working together as this

will ensure a rise in social empowerment within the community (Scheyvens 1999:247f). Another factor which accompanies cooperation is education. Education will lead to new and other insights in the project and can contribute to problem solving which, further on, should contribute to an increase of social empowerment. It has to be differentiated between education for tourists, which is given attention in subchapter 3.3.6, and between education for community members in terms of accepting and understanding different ways of living but not getting 'washed away' by them.

The indicators for social empowerment are social equity and community wellbeing. These two main indicators for social empowerment will be measured mainly through direct contact with locals. It will be necessary to ask them about their satisfaction with tourism in their community and about their opinion of equity and cooperation.

3.3.2.1 Social equity

Social equity as an indicator is about a fair distribution of social and economic benefits to all members of the community without discriminating a group. The perfect example for this topic is the equal treatment of men and women. However, in many cultures gender-based discrimination it is not common and therefore, this topic should be dealt with carefully. A big part of social equity in combination with ecotourism projects is a fair distribution of incomes and a fair distribution of power within the community and project. If the social equity is high the social empowerment will rise as there is the chance to eliminate social problems before they even arise (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:32f). This indicator is another example on how all of these topics (economic, social, ecological) are connected to each other as there are many similarities with the employment quality indicator.

Main indicator for social equity:	
Has social equity in the community risen since the introduction of the ecotourism project?	% of community members who profit from ecotourism
	% of community members who are participation in the project

Tab. 4: Main indicator for social equity (Winkler 2012)

The reason for the social equity indicator is to demonstrate disadvantages (if any exist) between different groups in the community and if those discriminations can be changed by an ecotourism project. It should show if an ecotourism project improves those conditions and in what way. The data gathering will be through observation of community life in cooperation with the project and interviewing locals about social equity.

3.3.2.2 Community wellbeing

The indicator of community wellbeing should show if an ecotourism project can strengthen social connections, structures and the quality of life itself. It is about the influence of tourism on the community which is directly connected to education of community members. Local satisfaction can change through education because of new insights into the necessity of topics like conservation and fair distribution of power.

Those factors, after learning about them, can strengthen the community wellbeing and, additionally, lead to social empowerment within the community. Tourism can lead to a positive effect on the community if locals can benefit from infrastructural improvements because of the ecotourism project. Anyhow, the impact of tourism can also have negative effects on community wellbeing as tourists might put pressure on the communities' services and facilities and might even trouble locals in exercising cultural habits (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:36f).

Main indicator for community wellbeing:	
Is the ecotourism project contribution to the wellbeing of the community?	% of locals who think that ecotourism is the right way for their community
	% of local satisfaction with tourism and tourists in general
	% of local satisfaction with ecotourism and the project
	Image of the ecotourism project within the community
	Satisfaction about information given by the project

Tab. 5: Main indicator for community wellbeing (Winkler 2012)

This indicator shows the effects of an ecotourism project on social structures within a community and how those might change through the external influence of tourists. Furthermore, it can show how information transfer potentially causes a change in community member satisfaction. This indicator is essential as a project can only 'survive' with the help and advocacy of the community. The methods employed for obtaining data will be interviews and questionnaires with community members about their relationship with tourists since the start of the project.

3.3.3 Indicator for psychological empowerment

The indicator for psychological empowerment in a community is dealing with self esteem issues of community members, identification issues with their own culture and the problems new lifestyles and foreign visitors can bring to a community. Through knowing and accepting their own culture, it can empower the community by increasing self-esteem of community members. It is necessary for them to know about their cultural assets and not to give them up because of foreign influences through tourism (Scheyvens 1999:247f). Teaching tourists about cultural habits and showing them their own cultural uniqueness can lead to psychological empowerment in the community. However, if community members are overwhelmed by foreign culture it might be the danger that they adapt (e.g. Americanisation) and forget about their own. This can lead to a decrease of self-esteem by seeing yourself as less valuable than foreign visitors. Furthermore, disruptions caused by tourism can also endanger psychological empowerment if traditions are commercialised because of tourism.

For this empowerment factor there is only one indicator chosen as, in my view, psychological empowerment is directly connected to the cultural assets of the community. It can be argued that self esteem

does not directly result from cultural heritage but also from personal attitude and job quality. Anyhow, the way someone looks at his/her job arises from the cultural background and the personal attitude towards certain topics is also tightly connected with the educational background and therefore, with the cultural settings.

3.3.3.1 Cultural richness

The indicator for cultural richness shows the awareness of people about their culture. It tries to show how cultural heritage is honoured (or not) and how important the conservation of traditions are for a people. Not conserving one's own heritage can lead to a loss of identity and continue to a decrease in self esteem as locals might not see themselves as equal to foreigners (from richer countries). An important issue is respect and acceptance of cultural diversity and diversities between people (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:38). This is an essential principle for everyone who is visiting another country or even another continent. A way of enhancing respect for other cultures is to give information to foreign visitors. It is important to let them know about the cultural heritage of the community they are visiting and, of course, it is also necessary to provide information for the host community about what they might be confronted with (Ibid:39). Giving enough information and raising awareness about cultural habits and traditions will lead to psychological empowerment within the community and increase self esteem of the community as a whole.

Main indicator for cultural richness:	
Does the ecotourism project boost local values and culture?	% of locals who are aware of the uniqueness of their culture
	% of people who are proud about the community's history and about their culture
	% of locals who think that their culture is not being influenced by tourism and that its authenticity is still intact
	Increase/decrease of community/ cultural/ traditional events since the beginning of the project
	% of tourists who are joining community/ cultural/ traditional events?
	% of residents who are continue to wear local costumes, use local language, etc.?
	Reported misuse of cultural sites

Tab. 6: Main indicator for cultural richness (Winkler 2012)

This indicator shows the connection between ecotourism, cultural heritage and self esteem of a community. It provides information about the cultural awareness of the community members and about their acceptance of other cultures. It can also show if the project is contributing to boost cultural values and habits such as wearing traditional costumes. The methods for gathering data will be a mixture of personal observation of cultural habits in the community and interviews with locals about the culture and their knowledge about their heritage.

3.3.4   Indicators for political empowerment

The indicators for political empowerment are concerned with the power of decision making and how this power is distributed. Political empowerment of communities occurs when all the community members have a (theoretical) chance of deciding over crucial parts of the project in their community. It is necessary to have some kind of forum for decision making where everyone is given the possibility to participate and influence decisions concerning the project.

The indicators for political empowerment in a community are local control and, additionally, the impacts of ecotourism development. The second one might not fit perfectly within the topic as described but it has also to do with political factors. If people do not understand the impact of ecotourism development on their community it might not get supported and this would lead to a loss of political power. Another important factor, which is not named as an indicator are development cooperatives and their impact on political empowerment. However, it is part of the local control indicator as well as of the indicator about impacts of ecotourism development.

3.3.4.1   Local Control

The indicator regarding local control has many facets such as engaging and empowering "local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of [eco]tourism in their area" (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:34). To achieve political empowerment, it is essential to give people the opportunity to have control over their lives and an ecotourism project should support this issue. Project leaders should have the aim of assisting locals in influencing decisions about their community and the tourism project which might have a big influence on their lives (Ibid:34f). The chance of changing something with just a little effort is quite high in this field as people are encouraged to step up and raise their voice to get more political power. In this specific case, the indicator relates more to participating in decision making of tourism-related processes.

Main indicator for local control:	
Is the ecotourism project increasing the political participation of community members?	Ratio of locals to ousiders working for an ecotourism project
	Ratio of locals to outsiders decision makers within the project
	% of local support for the ecotourism project (non-monetary)
	Enough community members are working for the project
	Satisfaction about participation level of locals within project (using four levels of participation: information-inclusion-decision-making-participation)

Tab. 7: Main indicator for local control (Winkler 2012)

This indicator shows the (political) power that lies behind a well organised ecotourism project. It can help to give political power to people and, through that, enhance political empowerment of communities. The indicator shows the amount of support a project has within the community and whether there is a sufficient amount of participation from community members. The data gathering process will include a mixture of screening official records of the project to find data about the project members and interviewing locals regarding their opinion concerning their political power within the project.

3.3.4.2 Impact of ecotourism development

The impact of ecotourism development is an indicator which should show if ecotourism can have an influence on community development by introducing ecotourism principles and standards. For achieving political empowerment it is necessary that ecotourism development demonstrates an impact on the community and its members in order to secure their support for the project.

Main indicator for impacts of ecotourism development:	
Are community members aware of the ecotourism project's values and goals?	% of residents who think to have a clear understanding of the ecotourism project in their community (what are the goals, for what does ecotourism stands for, etc.).
	% of residents who support ecotourism for their community.
	Level of awareness for the project within the community
	Satisfying information and promotion of the project within the community and in its surroundings
	How big is the political influence of the NGO/ Development program involved?

Tab. 8: Main indicator for impacts of ecotourism development (Winkler 2012)

The reason for this indicator is the political power ecotourism development can have on a community. It shows influential prospects of a project and also how it is dependent on the support of the community members. Without support from them, it might not have a chance to succeed. The indicator gives an idea about the popularity of the ecotourism project in the community and if the locals have enough information about the goals and values this project has. To gather data for this indicator, it is necessary to have a look at involved development programs and find out about their influence on the ecotourism project. This might be difficult in some cases. Additionally, interviews of community members about their awareness level of the project and about their support are needed and a questionnaire about the level of information might be helpful as well.

3.3.5 Indicators for ecological empowerment

Tourism can be a threat to conservation of the environment but, in my opinion, it has to be seen as an opportunity to boost conservation and install national parks in rural areas. Therefore, tourism could lead to developing a collective conscience for environmental protection in regions where environmental protection is not the number one concern of the people. However, it has to be made clear that, most of the time, the environment is the biggest asset a region can have. Enhancing this collective consciousness will also boost the ecological empowerment of a community and the community members will be able to make decisions about their own resources. Furthermore, it is likely that the conservation of the ecological assets will lead to long-term financial benefits for the community.

It has to be mentioned that most tourism actions do inherently facilitate actions which can be harmful to the environment and local infrastructure. Very often, it is necessary to have transportation to and from the tourism project and this is most of the time not without emissions. However, in this thesis I try to focus on the actions a community can take, the actions which are within the system.

The indicators for ecological empowerment are biological diversity, resource efficiency and physical integrity (of nature). All these indicators show logical similarities as well as disparities. I believe that all indictors are equally important and that only a positive result from all three indicators can lead to ecological empowerment of the community.

3.3.5.1 Physical Integrity

The indicator of physical integrity is about minimizing and avoiding damage to the environment through tourism. Landscapes and places should be preserved in the best way possible in order to avoid "physical and visual degradation of the environment" (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:39). This is not just important for the environment itself but also for the overall wellbeing of the community and the satisfaction of tourists. A long-term outlook of this topic is essential as environmental degradation can occur over time and lead to severe environmental problems. Such problems can easily disempowering the community in the sense of ecological uniqueness and richness. Again, education is a very important factor; only education can show people how they depend on an intact environment (Ibid:39ff).

Main indicator for physical integrity:	
Is the ecotourism project influencing the physical integrity of the community and its surrounding environment?	Obvious increases/decreases of environmental purity through the ecotourism project
	Condition of the environment surrounding the community
	Contribution of the ecotourism project to environment protection
	% of ecotourism benefits used for environmental protection
	Km² of protected areas in the surroundings of the community per inhabitants

Tab. 9: Main indicator for physical integrity (Winkler 2012)

The reason for using this indicator lies in the power ecotourism can have on preserving natural landscapes in maintaining and enhancing its quality. It is important to find out about this effect of ecotourism and to determine where the problems are. The effect of an ecotourism project on the environment can be high or low and therefore, it is necessary to measure it with this indicator. It can be difficult to choose the right methods for gathering information about the physical integrity. Especially in the beginning of a project it is hard to say if it can have a significant influence on the environment's physical integrity. However, I believe the best method is interviewing community members who have lived long enough in the area to recognise changes in the physical integrity. Additionally, simple research will be needed to find data about investments in environmental protection made by the project and about the size of protected areas and national parks.

3.3.5.2 Biological Diversity

The indicator for biological diversity supports the conservation of natural areas in order to preserve life forms and their natural habitat. For many (eco)tourism projects, an intact nature is essential for acquiring visitors - the more undamaged the nature, the more interesting the area is for tourists. This topic is a narrow ridge as an increase in tourist numbers threatens biological diversity but might also contribute to conservation in terms of donations or volunteer work. To put it more precisely: it is necessary to protect nature from the negative effects of tourism and an ecotourism project is the best chance of doing so. Therefore, ecotourism projects and community members who are aware of environmental dangers have an obligation to transfer their knowledge about biodiversity to foreign visitors. The priorities are to minimise damage made by tourists and, if necessary, to regulate tourist numbers in an area. Awareness building for locals and also for tourists through education is the most important part. This is the best way to increase ecological empowerment in the community and to enhance cooperatives between the tourism businesses and conservationists (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:41ff).

Main indicator for biological diversity:	
Is the ecotourism project contribution to a rise in biological diversity in the area surrounding the community?	Comparision of the official numbers of biological diversity before the ecotourism project and now (if available)
	% of residents who thinks that the project is contribution to biodiversity conservation
	Increase of biodiversity since ecotourism project was implemented (if interviewee knows about biodiversity)
	Cooperations between the tourism industry and conservationists

Tab. 10: Main indicator for biological diversity (Winkler 2012)

The reason for this indicator is the influence an ecotourism project can have on biodiversity. It is proven that tourism can have a positive impact on biodiversity but can also destroy natural habitats. Therefore, it is important to use this indicator to check if a specific ecotourism project is contributing to the overall enhancement of biodiversity. In order to obtain data, it would be ideal if there are some official numbers about

the biodiversity rate of an area. If those numbers are available it is possible to make long-term comparisons over time. However, unfortunately very often there will not be any data meaning it is quite difficult to measure a rise or decline in biodiversity. For this reason, when there are no official numbers of biodiversity, it would be logical to concentrate on the level of environmental awareness in the community and on cooperatives between the community and a conservation zone/national park. In order to obtain answers, it will be necessary to take a closer look at the community's surroundings and interview locals about their opinion of environmental conservation and if it has changed since the introduction of the ecotourism project.

3.3.5.3 Resource Efficiency

The indicator about resource efficiency should show the rate of renewable resources in a community. It is essential for communities with rising tourist numbers to think about a long-term solution for energy consumption. It should be the duty of an ecotourism project to promote energy conservation and introduce 'green' energy sources. The same goes for water use and recycling. There are two ways of boosting resource efficiency; it has to be done within the community and by tourists. Therefore, it is necessary to promote recycling, sustainable water use and energy saving measures within the community and inform tourists about methods on how to use resources more efficiently. In order to persuade tourists to use less resources, it might be necessary to hand over information about energy saving and recycling (UNEP & UNWTO 2005:44ff). Again, education plays an essential part in this topic. The efficient use of resources should lead to more independence of the community from resource suppliers and, in turn, boost ecological empowerment through more self-determination.

Main indicator for resource efficiency:	
Is the ecotourism project supporting efficient energy use?	% of renewable energy to total energy usage in the community
	Increased use of renewable energy sources through the ecotourism project
	Increase of recycling conducted in the community since the start of the project
	Investments of the ecotourism project in sewage treatment and drinking water protection

Tab. 11: Main indicator for resource efficiency (Winkler 2012)

The main reason for this indicator is to measure the amount of renewable energy which is used for a specific ecotourism project, the rate of recycling and the handling of (drinking) water resources. Using this indicator, it should be possible to identify problems concerning these issues and continually show possible ways of improvement. For gathering information about the efficient use of resources, it will be necessary to have a mixture of personal observation, interviewing responsible people from the project and looking at data regarding renewable energy.

3.3.6   Indicator for visitor empowerment

The indicator for visitor empowerment is not directly bound to community empowerment but to a combination of the other empowerment factors. The satisfaction of the tourist is essential for the economic empowerment of the community. Without a positive reputation, it is not possible to survive within the tourism market. The tourist can play a big role on social empowerment as well. Tourists bring new thinking to a community which can influence people to re-evaluate topics such as discrimination and tolerance. On the other hand, it can also lead to a suppression of groups if tourism is not protecting them, such as women and sex tourism. Psychological empowerment of a community is highly connected with the attitude a tourist brings with him/her and ecological empowerment relies on the tourist's ability to learn about environmental topics and accept certain 'discomforts' in order to conserve nature. Visitor empowerment may not seem a very important factor at first glance, but after a second thought it will be clear how powerful the tourist itself can be.

3.3.6.1   Tourist satisfaction and education

The indicator for tourist satisfaction and education focuses mainly on the personal opinions of tourists visiting the community and on the necessity of learning about the community and its people. As the monitoring of tourist satisfaction is not the main topic of this thesis, there are only a few ways for getting data for this indicator presented including some general information about tourist flows.

Main indicator for tourist satisfaction and education:	
Are tourists satisfied with a stay at the community?	Increase/decrease of tourist per day/week/season (in comparison with national tourist numbers) since the start of the project
	Expectations of tourists (hospitality, good value for money, what are the main complains, etc.)
Is the ecotourism project providing enough information about the community and its environment?	% of project money put into information and marketing (info board, folders, personal information, etc.)?
	% of tourists contribution to environmental conservation (monetary (fees, donations), voluntary work, etc.)?
Are tourists aware of the local culture?	% of tourists who are aware of ecotourism in the destination area
	% of tourists who are interested in local culture

Tab. 12: Main indicator for tourist satisfaction and education (Winkler 2012)

The reason for this indicator is to determine everything tourists might like or dislike during their stay as they are a very important factor for the project. Therefore, it is very important to regularly question tourists about their stay in the community. Additionally, the educational factor is finally addressed with this indicator. As mentioned several times, education is important for an ecotourism project and with this indicator it is

possible to check if there is enough information about crucial topics concerning the community and its surroundings. Additionally, the indicator can be used to find out about the psychological influence of tourists on the local residents and their self-esteem about their culture and religion. The best method of gathering data for this indicator might be an exit questionnaire for tourists.

3.4 Conclusion

The following Tab. *13* is a collection of the empowerment factors with the main indicators and the main questions. This list cannot be seen as complete as every project needs special attention and therefore, it might be possible to include other indicators or use less. However, it was my intention to provide a rather big and general set of indicators in order to serve as many projects as possible.

Empowerment factor	Main Question	Main Indicator
Economic empowerment	Does the community as a whole benefit from the ecotourism project?	Economic viability
	Are the benefits from the ecotourism project shared equally within the community?	Local prosperity
	Is the quality of the job (in the tourism industry) satisfying?	Employment quality
	Is the salary fair and without discrimination?	
Social empowerment	Did social equity in the community rise since the introduction of the ecotourism project?	Social equity
	Is the ecotourism project contribution to the wellbeing of the community?	Community wellbeing
Psychological empowerment	Does the ecotourism project boost local values and culture?	Cultural richness
Political empowerment	Is the ecotourism project increasing the political participation of community members?	Local control
	Are community members aware of the ecotourism project's values and goals?	Impact of ecotourism development
Ecological empowerment	Is the ecotourism project influencing the physical integrity of the community's and its surrounding environment?	Physical integrity
	Is the ecotourism project contribution to a rise in biological diversity in the area	Biological diversity

	surrounding the community?	
	Is the ecotourism project supporting efficient energy use?	Resource efficiency
Visitor empowerment	Are tourists satisfied with a stay at the community?	Tourist satisfaction and education
	Is the ecotourism project providing enough information about the community and its environment?	
	Are tourists aware of the local culture?	

Tab. 13: Summary of indicators (Winkler 2012)

4   Case Studies

4.1   Ecotourism in Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked country between China in the north and India in the east, south and west. It is famous for the highest mountain range of the world – the Himalaya with a few of the highest peaks of Earth. Tourism in Nepal is mainly centred on trekking tourism and religious tourism. On the one hand, the country offers a substantially diverse range of different trekking tours with varying levels of difficulty, and on the other hand, it offers some very important religious sites for Buddhists as well as for Hindus.

Nepal's main tourist assets are its rich biodiversity, the impressive Himalayan mountain range and important Hindu and Buddhist sights such as Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha or Pashupathinath, the holiest Hindu temple of the country. However, as Nepal experiences all the problems and troubles of a developing country, it is not always easy to perform sustainable tourism therein. Most persons working in Nepal's tourism industry do not know what sustainable or ecotourism is about even if they label their companies with the prefix 'eco-'. Therefore, most of Nepal's tourism industry has to be seen as nature-based tourism (Prachanda Man Shrestha, personal communication, March 12th 2012).

Ecotourism in Nepal is irrevocably connected to the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). The project was started in 1986 with the help of the WWF Wildlife and Human Needs Program and USAID. It was the first project in Nepal which tried to reverse the effects trekking had on the region (Honey 2008:91). ACAP is the most important tourism region in Nepal and receives around 25,000 trekkers each year and before the political turmoil, the numbers were up to 67,000 visitors per year (Bhatt 2006:162 & Visit Nepal n.d.). By the mid-1990s, several hundred people received training to work in eco-lodges and education centres. Within a few years, this project was generating more than one million US dollars per year just through entrance fees with funds going towards maintenance of the trekking trails, environmental conservation, etc. (Honey 2008:91). However, so far, this is one of just a few examples of big scale ecotourism in Nepal even though "Nepal is a natural ecotourism destination" (Bhatt 2006:155).

Nepal's political unrest after 2000 saw it drop as a tourist destination significantly the following year. Since the King resigned in 2006, the numbers are starting slowly to grow again and it can be assumed that the numbers will also rise in future if the country remains stable (Honey 2008:91).

4.2   Projects

The main reason for choosing Nepal as the country for case studies is the fact that mostly all ecotourism activities in Nepal are community-based. Therefore, it provides the perfect conditions for implementing the evaluation framework of this thesis. Furthermore, I had the chance to evaluate a project which was already underway for a few years and one project which was just in its infancy.

The first project which will be evaluated in this thesis is the 'Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail' (KVCTT) launched by the 'Nepal Environment and Tourism Initiative Foundation' (NETIF) in 2009. NETIF was founded in 2006 and was listed as an NGO in 2008. Its main objectives are:

- "To promote community-based sustainable tourism and good environmental practices.
- To support the local communities and tourism entrepreneurs with training and awareness programmes to increase local livelihoods and enhance the local environment and cultural heritage.
- To enhance the locals to conduct various types of income-generating and self-employment oriented programs in the field of tourism and environment.
- To campaign against environmental degradation.
- To investigate alternative methods to minimise the negative impact of tourism on the environment and society.
- To work with and link local, national and international organizations and stakeholders, experts, and government offices working in the sectors of Environment and Tourism" (NETIF-Nepal 1 2012).

In order to meet these objectives, NETIF started the Nepal Tourism, Outdoor and Environment Development Project (NTOEDP) who developed the KVCTT by following their ultimate vision "Environmental tourism for a better economy" (Ibid).

The second project is the Homestay Program in the village of Bhujung, at the east-southern edge of the Annapurna Conservation Area. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) is the most important trekking destination of Nepal and was founded in 1986. ACAP is situated north of the Pokhara Valley and covers more than 6700 km² (NTNC 2012). The region is very high in biodiversity and is home of more than 1200 species of flowering plants, including the biggest rhododendron forest of the country, around 470 different bird species, and around 100 different kinds of mammals (Ibid). ACAP's main objectives are:
- ´"Conserve the natural resources of ACA for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Bring sustainable social and economic development to the local people.
- Develop tourism in a way that it will have minimum negative impact on the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments" (Ibid).

The main goal of ACAP is stated on their website (Ibid) as follows: "To achieve sustained balance between nature conservation and socio-economic improvement in the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) thereby assist National Trust for Nature Conservation in achieving its goal."

Nowadays ACAP has to face problems caused by increasing numbers of tourists and construction of new roads along one of the popular trekking route. Therefore, ACAP tries to promote less popular areas for trekking tourism such as the area around the village of Bhujung in the Lamjung district.

4.2.1   NETIF - Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trial

The first phase of the project started in 2009 and was finished in 2011. In this first phase, NETIF wanted to implement three major features for developing the trekking trail. They sought the participation of the communities and wanted to raise awareness about the need to conserve the environment and a social mobilisation through local institutions (NETIF-Nepal 2 2012). NETIF sees themselves as "a bridge between the local hospitality entrepreneurs and communities, using the environment as a catalyst for both groups to collaborate together to provide services for the visiting tourists and livelihoods for the local communities" (Ibid).

The major achievements of the first phase were the construction of local institutions, maintenance and construction of small buildings such as tourist shelters and two community houses which were built from local

material using local labour. Furthermore, two public toilets were established along the trek and several trash bins and incinerators. Additionally, NETIF conducted several livelihood training sessions such as organic and mushroom farming, briquette making, handicraft making and local guide courses. In one of the villages a windmill for electricity production was partly financed and in another location 5,000 trees were planted. Furthermore, there were several promotional activities organised by NETIF such as a promotional hike and a mountain biking event as well as brochures, guidebooks detailing the trek, information boards along the trek and the KVCTT was part of two master theses of Nepali students (Ibid).

The second phase of the project started in 2011 and will last for another three years until 2013. In this second phase, there are several tasks to fulfil. The KVCTT will be extended to the actual trail and its surroundings will be monitored closely. The emphasis will lie on integrating responsible tourism principles through capacity building, waste management, water conservation and tree planting initiatives and awareness building through environmental education as well as the initiation of a toilet program following Nepal's 'Sanitation and Hygiene Masterplan'[4] (NETIF-Nepal 3 2012).
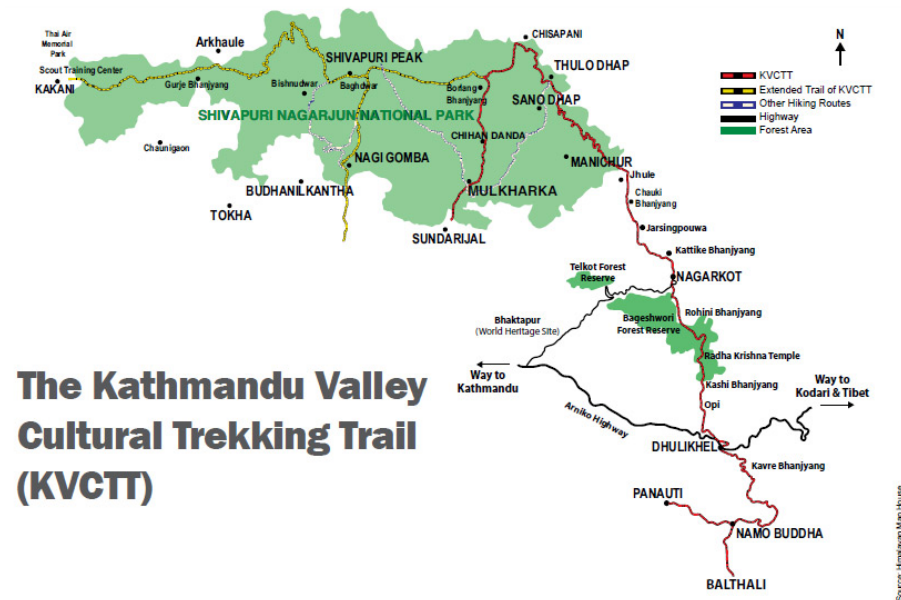
Fig. 5: Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail and its future extension (NETIF-Nepal 2012)

The trekking trail itself starts at Sundarijal, a village one hour north of Kathmandu and leads on the first day through the village of Mulkharka, which is within the Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, to the hill station Chisapani which is a main junction for trekkers to Helambu and Langtang National Park. The second day-hike leads from Chisapani south to the tourist village of Nagarkot and the last hike is from Nagarkot to Dhulikhel which will soon become the main junction between the highways from Kathmandu to India and China (Tibet).

4.2.2 ACAP – Homestay Program Bhujung

Bhujung is the biggest Gurung settlement in the Lamjung district. The Gurung people are one of the various ethnic groups of Nepal which are famous for being part of the British Gurkha army. In Bhujung are

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[4] The Nepal government wants to reach a 53% toilet coverage by 2015 (Sahih 2011)

around 350 to 360 households and most of the inhabitants, about 99%, are working in the agriculture sector. However, since ACAP started a local office in the village in 1993, many significant improvements were made, such as, the instalment of a micro hydro power plant and of a rope line to transport the crops from the fields to the village (Purushottam Mudarby, personal communication, May 5th 2012).

The homestay program in Bhujung started in 2011 and since then the village established a total of 14 homestay opportunities. As the Gurung Heritage Trekking Trail is still in its infancy there is hope for more tourists and this will probably lead to more accommodations (Ibid).

In 2009 the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and the ACAP introduced home stay tourism in the villages of Ghalegaun, Bhujung and along the new established Gurung Heritage Trail (Fig. 6) which includes several villages in the Lamjung district. Five percent of the income through tourism goes to the committee's fund for conservation and community development (Paudyal 2009). The Gurung Heritage Trekking Trail starts in the capital of the Lamjung district, Besishahar, leads through several Gurung villages, such as Ghalegaun, Bhujung, Pasgaun and ends near Pokhara after five to eight days of trekking.

Fig. 6: Gurung Heritage Trail in the Lamjung District (Winkler 2012)

The concept of home stay tourism was emerging within the last few years in Nepali tourism industry and ACAP is also promoting it in the region. Nepal has a great potential to develop as a village tourism destination and the government sees a good opportunity in home stay tourism for rural poverty alleviation. In 2010 ACAP supported a feasibility study of a home stay program in Bhujung and helped constructing toilets and bathrooms for basic sanitation needs. In addition, trainings for tourism management, health and sanitation, and cooking were held by ACAP in 2011 in Bhujung with almost 30 attendees (ACAP 2 2011:2f).

4.2.3 Operationalisation of indicators

Data collection will occur mainly via a survey containing three different data-gathering components questionnaires, personal observation and a few interviews. The surveys have been tailored to three separate target groups: community members; project workers; and tourists. Data for the first project (Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail - KVCTT) will be gathered within a period of nine days in four different villages along the

trekking trail. Data for the second project (Annapurna Conservation Area Project -ACAP - Homestay Program) was gathered through a period of 5 days in the village of Bhujung in the Lamjung area. More and detailed information on the questionnaires can be found at appendix 1 were the questionnaires for tourists, community members and project workers are presented.

Measuring the indicators could prove difficult as Friedmann (1997) does not really touch on this topic. Therefore, it might be best to use a matrix which includes the 'state of the art' of the indicator, 'problems' and possible 'responses' to those problems. The indicators have been determined based on the research of the literature outlined above whereas the findings of the case study have been determined through interviews and questionnaires. In order to assess the actual 'state of the art' nature of an indicator, a four-staged ordinal scale from one to four and in steps of 25% will be used, depending on the interview/questionnaire questions. All %-questions will be answered in increments of 25% while an ordinal scale from one to four will be used for the other questions, with "one" indicating 'highly agree' and "four" indicating 'disagree'. Using these methods will make it possible to obtain comparable results through the evaluation of the project. In order to obtain to this four-step ordinal scale, it was necessary to calculate the median for all questions asked in the questionnaires. Some medians will not result in natural numbers due to the method of calculating the median. However, even though an irrational number cannot be defined for my four-step-scale it will be used in order to achieve statistical accuracy. For an easier understanding, if the result of an indicator is for example 1,5 it means that the answer is between 'highly agree' and 'agree', respectively 75%. Additionally, there are a few yes/no and open questions as part of the formulation of the indicators in order to get background information about certain topics. Fig. *7* provides a basic overview of the measurement of the indicators and how they could appear in this thesis.
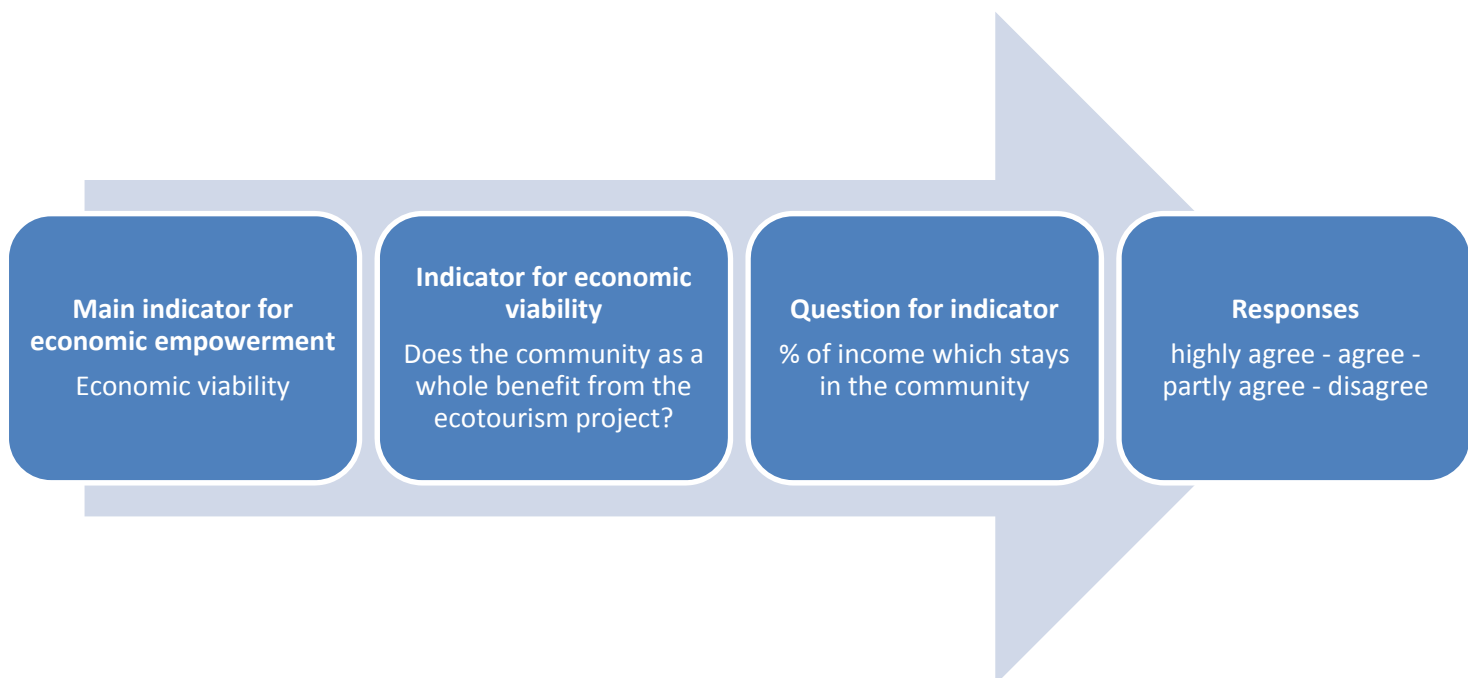
Fig. 7: Process of indicator measurement (Winkler 2012)

The results of this matrix are both quantitative and qualitative as they may include the personal opinions of respondents given the data gathering is highly dependent on interviews and questionnaires. However, some issues regarding indicators are necessary to mention and consider:

- feasibility: is the research possible, is there enough data, is the research fundable?
- credibility: who is the source of information, what about objectivity?
- comparability: can the indicator be used for other projects, is the indicator reusable over time? (UNWTO 2004:486f).

4.3 Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

4.3.1 Data gathering

Data gathering at the KVCTT was mainly through questionnaires which were provided for project workers, community members and tourists. However, personal observation also played a role in the data gathering process as NETIF members presented some results of their work to me such as organic vegetable farming, mushroom farming and cooking training. Additionally, Arun Shrestha, the president of NETIF was interviewed about certain aspects of the KVCTT and his future plans for the project.

According to a former researcher of NETIF (Sujata Shrestha, personal communication, March 13th 2012) there are approximately 320 households in the research area which are in some way connected to NETIF. The total 42 questionnaires received from community members (with each representing one household) means the sample size of this research covers more than 13% of all households in the area. Furthermore, four village coordinators who are working for NETIF filled out a questionnaire as well as two additional project workers. Along the trek, I had the occasion to question 21 tourists from six different countries about their opinion of the KVCTT and their stay on the trekking trail. That is about two percent of the visitors of the whole Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park in the month of Chaitra (mid March to mid April) (DNPWC 2010:23). Additionally to the questionnaires, some indicators were answered through my personal observation in the villages and on the trek[5].

In each of the four main villages – Mulkharka, Chisapani, Nagarkot and Dhulikhel 8 to 12 community members were questioned, whereas approximately half of them are directly related to tourism such as hoteliers or shopkeepers along the trail and the other half is indirectly related to tourism such as farmers or household members.

Number of questionnaires:	42					
Gender	male	29	female	7	households	6
Age	0 - 18	1	19 - 30	21	31 - 45	7
	46 - 60	5	> 61	2		
Occupation	Tourism	17	Shopkeeper	5	Farming	8
	Student	7	Others	6		

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[5] those answers are marked with a * in the analysis

Village	Mulkharka	12	Chisapani	10	Nagarkot	12
	Dhulikhel	8				

However, before commencing analysis of the gathered data it is necessary to mention certain aspects which cause bias to the results of the questionnaires. The first one is the language. Hardly any of the community members could answer the questionnaire in English and many of them also had troubles with the Nepali version as the level of education in the villages can be low. Therefore, it was only possible for me to question community members with the help of local NETIF workers. This might lead to another bias as these workers probably brought me mainly to people who appreciate the NETIF project in their village. However, as there are also many people who do not speak either English or Nepali but another tribal language, the number of potential interviewees was even further reduced.

Anyhow, I do not think that I could have done it another way without learning Nepali and spending at least a few weeks in each village to earn the trust of the locals and have them share more information with me. Therefore, as I am aware of these biases, it is possible to take that into account when analysing and interpreting the data.

4.3.2 Data analysis

In order to analyse the gathered data it is necessary to return to the set of indicators presented in chapter 3.2. For the NETIF project, several of those indicators were chosen to evaluate the KVCTT. The analysis will depend on a four-step scale which is already described shortly in chapter 4.2.3 and the interpretation of open questions and personal observation by the researcher. The following subchapters will include the answers from the KVCTT questionnaires in the set of indicators for community empowerment. The results of the questionnaires will not be mentioned in detail but just as an element of a four-step scale. However, a more and detailed result of the evaluation can be seen in appendix 2. For an easier understanding, the explanation of the four-step scale is shown in the following Tab. *14*.

1 is either	**highly agree**	or	**< 75%**
2 is either	**agree**	or	**50% - 75%**
3 is either	**partly agree**	or	**25% - 50%**
4 is either	**disagree**	or	**> 25%**

Tab. 14: Four-step scale (Winkler 2012)

In order to obtain to this four-step ordinal scale, it was necessary to calculate the median for all questions asked in the questionnaires. Some medians will not result in natural numbers due to the method of calculating the median. However, even though an irrational number cannot be defined for my four-step-scale it will be used in order to achieve statistical accuracy. For an easier understanding, if the result of an indicator is for example 1,5 it means that the answer is between 'highly agree' and 'agree', respectively 75%.

4.3.2.1 Indicators for economic empowerment

The main indicators for economic empowerment are 'economic viability', 'local prosperity' and 'employment quality'. The questions of these indicators (in relation to the evaluation of the NETIF project) are about the economic benefits from the ecotourism project and its equal sharing within the community, as well as about the quality of an employment post in the tourism business and its salary.

Main indicator for economic viability:		
Does the community as a whole benefit from the ecotourism project?	% of income which stays in the community	3
	Improvement of basic infrastructure since beginning of the project (existence of a sewage system, waste disposal, etc.)	1
Main indicator for local prosperity:		
Are the benefits from the ecotourism project shared equally within the community?	% community members who think that they can financially benefit from ecotourism	1
	% of goods and services purchased locally (within the system and its stakeholders)	2
Main indicators for employment quality:		
Is the quality of the job (in the tourism industry) satisfying?	% of employees within the tourism business and the project who are from the local community	1
	% of community members who feel supported in their job by the ecotourism project	2
Is the salary fair and without discrimination?	Ratio of income of tourism jobs vs non-tourism jobs	2,5
	% of community members who consider their payment as 'fair'	2
		1,81

Tab. 15: Evaluation of the indicators for economic empowerment (Winkler 2012)

As can be seen in Tab. *15*, the evaluation of economic empowerment is fairly positive, however the only negative point which is necessary to mention is the percentage of tourism income which stays within the community. The majority of the questioned people think that only 25% - 50% of tourism income stays within the community. The best results for NETIF can be acquired via infrastructure improvement and over 75% of the interviewees think that they can financially benefit from sustainable tourism. These survey results lead to an overall evaluation of the indicator of economic empowerment of 1,81 on a scale from one to four.

4.3.2.2 Indicators for social empowerment

The main indicators for social empowerment are 'social equity' and 'community wellbeing'. In order to get the necessary information for these indicators, the locals were asked about their opinion on the sustainable tourism project in their area and about tourists in general and also about their personal benefit from the project and participation in it. The question about the image of the project in the communities was answered through personal observation and conversation with community members.

Main indicator for social equity:		
Has social equity in the community risen since the introduction of the ecotourism project?	% of community members who profit from ecotourism	1
	% of community members who are participation in the project	2
Main indicator for community wellbeing:		
Is the ecotourism project contribution to the wellbeing of the community?	% of locals who think that ecotourism is the right way for their community *(locals who think that NETIF is sustainable)*	1
	% of local satisfaction with tourism and tourists in general	1,5
	% of local satisfaction with ecotourism and the project	1
	Image of the ecotourism project within the community *	1
	Satisfaction about information given by the project	2
		1,36

Tab. 16: Evaluation of the indicators for social empowerment (Winkler 2012)

Tab. **16** shows the mostly positive evaluation of the indicators for social empowerment. Important to mention is the fact that the community members seem to be very satisfied with the ecotourism project and they think that it is the right way for their community to develop further. My personal observation about the image of the project in the communities showed me that the initiatives of NETIF and the help which it is provided are highly appreciated. However, the result also shows that more information about NETIF and the KVCTT project should be provided.

4.3.2.3 Indicators for psychological empowerment

The main indicator for psychological empowerment is 'cultural richness'. This indicator evaluates if culture is important for locals and what they think about it. Furthermore, it can be determined if locals are intimidated by foreign cultures and if their own culture and customs might be affected by tourism. Additionally, this indicator includes tourists' willingness to learn about the host country's culture and to adapt to it.

49

Main indicator for cultural richness:		
Does the ecotourism project boost local values and culture?	% of locals who are aware of the uniqueness of their culture	1
	% of people who are proud about the community's history and about their culture	1
	% of locals who think that their culture is not being influenced by tourism and that its authenticity is still intact	3
	% of tourists who are (planning to) joining community/cultural/traditional events?	2
		1,75

Tab. 17: Evaluation of the indicator for psychological empowerment (Winkler 2012)

Tab. 17 clearly shows that the locals in the area of the KVCTT are very fond of their culture and that they know about its uniqueness. It also provides insight into tourists' willingness to learn about the local culture and take part in local customs as well as there being a certain influence on Nepal's culture as a result of foreign tourists. It also shows that 50-75% of the interviewed community members and project workers think that tourism has an influence on the local culture.

4.3.2.4 Indicators for political empowerment

The indicators for political empowerment are 'local control' and 'impacts of ecotourism development'. The community members were asked about their involvement in the project and the political power of NETIF in this area. Furthermore, it was evaluated how many locals know about ecotourism in general and if there is enough information given by the project to local communities. In this case it is necessary to mention that, because of my cooperation with NETIF, the answer for this indicator may be a little bit biased as I predominantly had contact with community members who already knew about NETIF and the KVCTT.

Main indicator for local control:		
Is the ecotourism project increasing the political participation of community members?	Ratio of locals to ousiders working for an ecotourism project	1
	% of local support for the ecotourism project (non-monetary) *	2

	Enough community members are working for the project	4
	Satisfaction about participation level of locals within project	2
Main indicator for impacts of ecotourism development:		
Are community members aware of the ecotourism project's values and goals?	% of residents who believe they have a clear understanding of the ecotourism project in their community (what are the goals, for what does ecotourism stands for, etc.).	4
	Level of awareness for the project within the community *	2
	Satisfying information and promotion of the project within the community and in its surroundings *	2
	How big is the political influence of the NGO/ Development program involved?	3
		2,50

Tab. 18: Evaluation of the indicators for political empowerment (Winkler 2012)

The evaluation of the indicators for political empowerment shows a variety of answers. A few answers are based on my personal observation during the trek and my visit to the villages. Those questions focus on the non-monetary local support of NETIF, the level of awareness of the project within the community and also about the promotion of the KVCTT in the communities and its surroundings. The local support within the community is high as the project is very much appreciated. However, there are some small inconsistencies about the long-term involvement of NETIF and also about some future activities. Most of the community members are satisfied with the promotion of NETIF but, especially in Nagarkot and Dhulikhel, people want more promotion for their area. I rated the level of awareness with two even though it is very high compared to other regions in Nepal but it is still necessary to work on it. The last question, concerning the involvement of development programs, was rated with three as there is just one external stakeholder involved, the Finnish outdoor organisation Suomen Latu[6], and its political influence seems quite low.

The results of this part of the evaluation show that every NETIF-employee with whom I spoke was from the local village. Additionally, the satisfaction level with the project in the communities is quite high. However, I also found out that hardly any of the questioned community members, including many hoteliers, knew about the principles of ecotourism, at least not in a scientific way. Many people know that it is important to clean the roads from garbage otherwise the tourists will complain. However, in this field more education is needed.

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[6] More information about Suomen Latu and its role in the KVCTT project will be mentioned in chapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**

4.3.2.5 Indicators of ecological empowerment

The main indicators for ecological empowerment are 'physical integrity', 'biological diversity' and 'resource efficiency'. People were asked about NETIF's contribution to environmental protection and about investments made in the environment. Furthermore, I wanted to find out if community members are aware of the necessity of environmental and biodiversity protection as well as the importance of waste management and recycling.

Main indicator for physical integrity:		
Is the ecotourism project influencing the physical integrity of the community and its surrounding environment?	Condition of the environment surrounding the community *	2,5
	Contribution of the ecotourism project to environment protection	1
	% of ecotourism benefits used for environmental protection	2,5
Main indicator for biological diversity:		
Is the ecotourism project contribution to a rise in biological diversity in the area surrounding the community?	% of residents who thinks that the project is contribution to biodiversity conservation	1
	Cooperations between the tourism industry and conservationists	2
Main indicator for resource efficiency:		
Is the ecotourism project supporting efficient energy use?	Increased use of renewable energy sources through the ecotourism project	2
	Increase of recycling conducted in the community since the start of the project *	2
		1,86

Tab. 19: Evaluation of the indicators for ecological empowerment (Winkler 2012)

Tab. **19** shows the evaluation of the indicators for ecological empowerment and reveals interesting facts. On the one hand, NETIF receives a positive evaluation concerning its contribution to environmental conservation especially regarding waste management. Additionally, many locals are aware of the necessity of environmental protection which in its total might not be completely clear to the locals. Environmental protection for them is mainly about waste management and sometimes tree planting campaigns. On the other hand, NETIF has not been so successful in promoting alternative energy. It did help to build a windmill in Chisapani and also conducted several training in briquette making instead of using wood for heating. However, during my stay in this area it was apparent that the use of briquettes was low and the windmill, unfortunately, broke down. The condition of the environment in the area was rated with two point five because, outside of the national park there is still a lot of rubbish on the ground and sometimes just the trekking path and the immediate surrounding is clean. Additionally, deforestation is still a problem in many areas of Nepal and also in this one because people still us wood for cooking and heating.

Anyhow, the overall evaluation of these indicators show that NETIF is definitely contributing to overall ecological empowerment and will most likely be able to encourage more conservation through more and better education and training sessions.

4.3.2.6 Indicators for visitor empowerment

The main indicator for visitor empowerment is 'tourist satisfaction and education'. 21 tourists from six different countries were interviewed about their satisfaction with the KVCTT in terms of hospitality, given information, etc. Additionally, it was important to determine if the tourists knew that they stayed in an area with sustainable tourism and if they were willing to contribute to environmental conservation in the area in any way.

Main indicator for tourist satisfaction and education:		
Are tourists satisfied with a stay at the community?	Expectations of tourists (hospitality, good value for money, what are the main complains, etc.)	1
Is the ecotourism project providing enough information about the community and its environment?	% of project money put into information and marketing (info board, folders, personal information, etc.)?	3
	% of tourists contribution to environmental conservation (monetary (fees, donations), voluntary work, etc.)?	3
	% of tourists who are aware of ecotourism in the destination area	4
Are tourists aware of the local culture?	% of tourists who are interested in local culture	1
		2,4

Tab. 20: Evaluation of the indicator for visitor empowerment (Winkler 2012)

The evaluation of the indicator for visitor empowerment shows that more than 75% of the tourists are satisfied with their stay on the KVCTT. However, many tourists did not know about NETIF's involvement in the trekking trail and the promotion of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, many tourists requested more information about the area itself and its flora and fauna, which is a direct responsibility of NETIF regarding future promotion work. Overall, it can be stated that tourists are satisfied with their stays on the KVCTT and that they are very interested in the local culture but need more information about sustainable tourism in the area and more facts about the location.

Visitor empowerment can highly vary from one location to another. In the case of the KVCTT, and maybe in the case of tourists in Nepal in general, it can be argued that many of them are more aware of the environment than e.g. party-tourists in Mallorca. If tourists go to a country to experience trekking and wildlife it can be assumed that those people are more interested in an intact environment in their holiday location than tourists with different interests. During my research at the KVCTT I had the impression that many foreign

tourists are concerned about the state of the environment on the trek and that they appreciated the clean-up campaigns of NETIF and the village committees. I think, the majority of Nepal tourists are, to some extent, aware of environmental problems and many of them try to avoid harming the local environment (e.g. by using water purification instead of buying bottled water during trekking).

4.3.2.7 *Conclusion of the evaluation*

Finally, I interviewed the president of NETIF, Arun Shrestha (personal communication, April 2nd 2012), and he mostly confirmed the results of my research. The interview centred mainly on the influence of NETIF on the local communities, their contribution to tourism and also about future plans. Some parts of the interview are already included in the evaluation above.

In summary, it can be said that NETIF has been successful in introducing a waste management system in the area around the KVCTT, especially in the villages which are located in the national park. Raising the awareness among locals about environmental conservation and its connection to tourism development is the most important contribution NETIF has made to the ecological empowerment of the communities. Another successful result of NETIF on the local community's tourism structure is the implementation of the local tourism development institutions in the four villages of Mulkharka, Chisapani, Nagarkot and Dhulikhel. Those four institutions represent the local internal stakeholders such as the hoteliers, shopkeepers, handicraft makers, etc and are responsible for political and economic empowerment. All the money spent by NETIF in the villages is managed by those institutions. Obviously, NETIF's most important contribution to social and economic empowerment is the hosting of training sessions which provide more information about organic farming, craft making, etc. and also help young people to find jobs in the tourism industry through cooking and hospitality sessions.

The only downsides that are necessary to mention are the lack of understanding of locals about the meaning of ecotourism which has its influence on ecologic and also economic empowerment. It is definitely necessary for NETIF to educate locals and teach them about the principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism and its connections to successful community and tourism development. Another factor where NETIF still has some work to do is visitor empowerment. During my research, many tourists were surprised to hear about sustainable tourism in this area and that there is a local NGO promoting it. My suggestion for NETIF is to provide more information about the region, the trek, the villages, flora and fauna and about sustainable tourism principles on the KVCTT.

Mr. Shrestha, president of NETIF, told me that their main goal was to form a bridge between the tourism entrepreneurs in the area, the tourists, local governments and municipalities. For this reason, the four tourism development institutions were established and have been gaining power and independence over the last years since the project started. Mr. Shrestha said this was "all done through a participatory approach" (Ibid). At the beginning there is an educational period in which NETIF helped the local institutions to develop. The second period can be seen as the participatory period when the local institutions are in close cooperation with NETIF organising activities. Finally, these institutions are supposed to take over the project when NETIF is backing out in 2013, which can be considered as the self-regulatory period. In combination, this advancement will lead to community development (Ibid). It is important that the villages learn to sustain themselves and not rely on the funds from NETIF. The village committees need to start to manage everything by themselves

because more funds will not lead to more sustainability. On the contrary, more 'free' money can make people lazy and "maybe we cannot handle more money, that's the fact" (Ibid, May 9th 2012)

However, Mr. Shrestha also mentioned that actions which occur over the next two years will determine whether NETIF can really hand over the project to the local institutions. From my point of view, this will be very challenging for NETIF as most of the locals I have talked to expressed their desire for a long-term relationship with NETIF. Anyhow, Mr. Shrestha also emphasised that NETIF will not back out before the local institutions are capable of handling the project themselves in cooperation with the local government and the rest of the communities (Ibid, April 2nd 2012).

The immediate goals of NETIF for 2012 are the implementation of responsible tourism principles in the trekking area. There were and will be responsible tourism workshops in the villages to educate them and, additionally, there are plans for small coffee/tea and souvenir shops in the villages which would boost the income of the villages (Ibid, May 9th 2012).

The overall evaluation of the NETIF project KVCTT of the indicators for community empowerment is positive. The overall evaluation for the indicators for community members is 1,87 ([1,81 + 1,36 + 1,75 + 2,50 + 1,86] / 5 = 1,87) out of 4 and the evaluation for tourists - visitor empowerment - is 2,40 (out of 4). The results show that the NETIF project is on the right path, but they also show that there is still work to do in certain areas, as mentioned above.

4.3.3 Adapted research framework for the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

The following subchapters show the adapted research framework which ends up in an adapted conceptual model for successful community development. This adapted model includes all components of the original model but with the specific data of the KVCTT.

4.3.3.1 Community empowerment framework of the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

As mentioned in chapter 2.1 there are six (dis)empowerment factors in my community empowerment framework. All these factors are equally important and determine the conceptual model. In this specific case study the evaluation for the indicators for economic empowerment is 1,81 out of 4 which can be considered as positive evaluation. Economic empowerment is not just about gaining profit, but it is also about creating new jobs in the community and its surrounding area and shows if the income from tourism is equally shared within the community. In the case of the KVCTT it can be seen that most of the community members think that they can benefit from ecotourism; however, between 50%-75% of the incomes achieved through tourism are not spend in the communities but somewhere else.

The indicators for social (dis)empowerment are also rated positively with 1,36. This value can be interpreted as a good cooperation between the NGO and groups within the communities. The image of the KVCTT in the villages is very good and almost every questioned community member is supporting the project. The only small downside is some missing information about the project for community members.

Psychological (dis)empowerment indicators are also evaluated highly with 1,75. The self-confidence within the communities is very high and people know about the uniqueness of their culture. This can lead to increasing self-respect especially when tourists are interested in the local culture und customs. Important to

mention is the fact that also women, who are sometimes considered low-status groups, are integrated in the project as they are get trainings in craft making, cooking, farming, etc.

The factor for political (dis)empowerment is rated with 2,50. This is the second lowest rating, because people do not know what sustainable tourism is about and many are not really interested in the decision making process of the project. Most of the questioned persons are happy with the level of participation they have now, but do not want to take a more active part in the project. In every community there are development committees which make all the decisions (in consultation with NETIF), but community members have to opportunity to be part of it.

The indicator for ecologic (dis)empowerment with 1,86 out of 4. This is a very important indicator which shows the state of the environment and whether tourism incomes are used for environmental protection, if renewable energy sources are used and boosted, and if there is a protected area around the community. NETIF is contributing to environmental protection through clean-ups, but a big share of their money is also used for other activities (e.g. trainings). The most positive point to mention is the increasing awareness of environmental problems which NETIF showed to the locals. This led to a more conscious handling of the environment.

Visitor (dis)empowerment is the only empowerment factor which is not focusing on the community members but on the tourists. The indicator for visitor empowerment is rated 2,40 which is the lowest rating. This mainly results from missing information about the trekking trail and the area itself. However, when I left Nepal new information boards for tourist were already planned and should be installed by now.

4.3.3.2 Output of the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

The output of the conceptual model is successful community development. For an easier definition of successful community development the term was split up in social, economic and ecological aspects of community development.

The social aspect of community development of the KCVTT is carried out in various trainings conducted by NETIF in cooperation with the local development institutions. These trainings give the locals the opportunity to gain new knowledge and prepare for employment in the tourism business. Especially young people can highly benefit from this opportunity. Additionally, the 'inner image' of the project in the community is very important. During my research I met hardly one person who was not satisfied with the work NETIF has done within the last few years. Therefore, the project's image in the area is very positive and people appreciate the cooperation with NETIF. So far, it can be stated that, from the social perspective, the community development is successful. However, the project has not ended yet and the most critical time, the handover of the project to the local institutions, is still to come. NETIF has to continue the empowerment of community members in the villages and to ensure that all of them are integrated in community development.

The economical aspect of community development might be the most important one on a short-term view. If ecotourism cannot lead to economic benefits, people won't think about implementing it. Three of the four villages of the KVCTT highly depend on tourism as a main source of income. Therefore, the economic incentive for tourism promotion is definitely there, but I was told that tourism numbers, especially the numbers of trekkers, did not rise significantly since the project started. Additionally, many tourists did not know about sustainable tourism in this area. This shows that promotion of the area needs a boost in order to

acquire higher incomes for the community. The strategy of promoting the KVCTT should have an emphasis on environment conservation and social responsibility. I think that NETIF has done a great afford to boost economic benefits through tourism, but missed promoting the area for foreign tourists. However, this has mainly to do with limited funding, which are needed for trainings rather than for simple promotion. In order to get more self-sufficient NETIF is planning to start two tea houses along the KVCTT which should also sell small handicrafts and postcards (Arun Shrestha, personal communication, April 2nd 2012). Such actions are needed especially when NETIF and Suomen Latu are finishing the project and its funding.

The ecological aspect of community development is definitely a high concern of NETIF. One of their main program activities was and is cleaning of the villages and especially along the trek. They started awareness campaigns for locals to teach them what to do with garbage and how to use bins. On my trek through the research area I recognised that the trek is most of the time clean and, especially in the Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, the villagers are very aware of the garbage problem. NETIF helped them by providing trash bins, incinerators and employing trash pickers. Additionally, NETIF organised tree-planting campaigns and held trainings in organic farming and briquette making in order to reduce deforestation.

4.3.3.3 Control framework of the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

The control framework can be considered as stable and granted and cannot be easily changed by the researcher or others. However, over time the control framework can change and lead to different conclusions of an evaluation. The control framework for this conceptual model contains language, education, the political condition of Nepal and the cooperation with the Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park.

The language in the area is one factor which cannot be disregarded easily. Many people in the villages speak just enough English for 'tourism conversations', but cannot discuss tourism development. Additionally, many do not speak English at all or even Nepali. Uneducated community members sometimes only speak their tribe language (e.g. Newari or Lama) which is completely different from Nepali. However, aside from the language discrepancies, especially the lack of education can be a problem as people just do not understand the principles of environment conservation or sustainable tourism.

The political condition in Nepal has been stable since 2008, however, there are still Maoist-encouraged protests in the centre of Kathmandu. The government is considered very weak as there is a lack of cooperation within its own rows. At the moment the political situation is stable and it seems that this won't change any time soon. However, a disruption would have extreme effects on tourism in Nepal which highly depends on this business area.

Another factor is the national park, were parts of the KVCTT are located. The national parks in Nepal are owned and managed by the government. This means that the entrance fees are collected by the government and it can raise the fee if necessary. A higher fee might lead to less trekker in this area as many trekkers just pass through the Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park to reach another national park in the north. However, I think that only a major raise in fees would have an effect on tourist numbers.

4.3.3.4 Stakeholder framework of the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

The Finnish association for recreational sports and outdoor activities, Suomen Latu, is the only external stakeholder in the KVCTT project. Suomen Latu started its cooperation with NETIF in 2006 and extended it after the first phase of the project until 2013. Suomen Latu is a 72-years old NGO with an astonishing 75.000 members in Finland. At the beginning, Suomen Latu was purely a national NGO, but in 1997 they started a development project in Tanzania, followed by the cooperation with NETIF (Suomen Latu 2012).

Suomen Latu is part of a development cooperation program financed by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which expects a local partner implementing a project. The Finnish NGO offers technical and financial support and therefore, gets funded by Finland. Suomen Latu gets their 75% of their funds from the government of Finland. The rest is covered by the organisation itself (Könönen, e-mail, April 3rd 2012). According to Panu Könönen (Ibid) from Suomen Latu NETIF was recommended by the Finnish Embassy of Nepal to the organisation. It is necessary that NETIF meets all the requirements which are stated by the Finnish government in order to receive funding from Suomen Latu. However, Suomen Latu is very satisfied with their cooperation with NETIF and the improvements achieved in the area (Ibid).

Finally, it is necessary to mention that NETIF completely relies on the funding from Suomen Latu as this funding represents 100% of NETIF's budget. Suomen Latu's funding for the years 2010-2012 is € 247.078 equally distributed over these three years (NETIF-Nepal 4 2010). The following Tab. *21* shows a short abridgement of Suomen Latu's funding for NETIF for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Purpose	2010	2011	2012	Total
Personnel costs	27.120	25.697	25.000	**77.817**
Activity costs (e.g. training)	17.250	18.500	18.197	**53.947**
Materials, procurements of investments	15.650	15.500	15.000	**46.150**
Operations and maintenance	7.320	7.320	7.320	**21.960**
Monitoring, evaluation and information	6.800	7.100	8.600	**22.500**
Administrative costs	8.234,92	8.235	8.235	**24.704.92**
Total costs	**82.374,92**	**82.352**	**82.352**	**247.078,92**
Self financing by Suomen Latu	12.374, 92	12.352	12.352	**37.078,92**
Project support from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	**70.000**	**70.000**	**70.000**	**210.000**

Tab. 21: NETIF funding by Suomen Latu for the years 2010-2012 (NETIF-Nepal 4 2010)

This project shows that foreign funding, or foreign aid, can highly contribute to an area or a region in a developing country. Furthermore, it proves that foreign aid through tourism development projects, done in the right way, has a positive long-term effect on underdeveloped regions. Additionally, it contributes to a stable and sustainable community development in the local villages along the KVCTT by implementing local tourism development institutions.

Those local tourism development institutions can be considered the internal stakeholders of the project as it is their duty to represent the hoteliers, shopkeepers, handicraft producers, farmers, etc. of the villages. NETIF was able to establish a local institution in each of the four villages which were subject of the research.

- Mulkharka Environment and Tourism Development Society
- Chisapani Environment and Tourism Development Forum
- Nagarkot-Naldum Tourism Development Committee
- Dhulikhel Environment and Tourism Promotion Committee (NETIF – Nepal 2 2012).

The local development institutions should become the driving force of the project after NETIF backs out. This means that the internal stakeholders eventually will become the leading decision makers of the project. Since then, they will represent the community members of the four villages. All the money NETIF invests into the project will be invested through the local institutions which use the money for infrastructural improvements, social trainings, promotion and funding (Arun Shrestha, personal communication, April 2nd 2012).

4.3.3.5 Adapted conceptual model of the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail

The adapted conceptual model for successful community development presented in Fig. **8** is based on the original conceptual model (Fig. 3) which is the basis for the evaluation framework of this thesis. It contains all the frameworks from the KVCTT case study which are presented in chapter 4.3.3 and shows the necessary components of a system. To make it simpler, the model will be described from left to right.

The external stakeholders of the KVCTT are NETIF (which is funded by Suomen Latu) and the travel agencies. The first one is responsible for the installation of the trekking trail and all the development which was done in the region. The second stakeholder is necessary to bring trekkers to the area. NETIF is responsible for knowledge transfer and for financial support. The travel agencies are responsible for the financial benefits of the communities along the KVCTT.

The internal stakeholders in this model are the tourism development committees in each village. They are one of the most important factors for achieving community development. These committees should take over the KVCTT within the next few years, and hence become the driving force in promoting the trek and developing the area. The intentions of the internal stakeholders influence the whole system, and many trainings were conducted due to suggestions of the committees. The cooperation between the committees in the different villages will be the most important factor in the future (tourism) development of the region.

The control framework contains 'Language', the 'Level of education' and the 'Political condition' in Nepal. The first two mentioned had an effect on the research, the last one, 'Political condition', has an effect on tourism in the country in general. In Nepal every ethnic group got its own language and sometimes, in remote areas, people do not speak Nepali but just their 'tribe-language'. Many Nepali understand English to a certain extent, but most of the time their language level is not good enough to have more complex conversations. The same goes for the level of education - many Nepali are poorly educated and, therefore do not understand the concepts of ecotourism and environmental conservation. These conditions are influencing research to a certain extend and sometimes might even falsify some results. Another important element of the control framework is the political condition in Nepal, a country which is still without a legal constitution. Strikes can happen anytime and paralyse the whole country. A change in this control framework can have a huge impact on tourism in the whole country.

The main elements of the adapted model for successful community development are 'Ecotourism along the KVCTT' and the 'Community empowerment framework' which results from the evaluation done in the villages along the KVCTT. 'Ecotourism along the KVCTT' can be seen as the actions NETIF was and is taking to

introduce sustainable tourism principles in the area. The 'Community empowerment framework' shows the six different indicator categories and the result of the evaluation framework for each indicator. The better the result, the higher the positive feedback could loop and boost ecotourism in the area.

The outcome of the system is 'Community development' and is divided in three different sectors (which can be seen in subchapter 4.3.3.2). Trainings and raising social responsibility are part of the social aspect of community development. Both actions increase the awareness of the locals for more environmental protection and the uniqueness of their environment. This leads directly to environmental conservation, which is conducted through clean-up campaigns, tree planting programs and using briquettes instead of wood for cooking. Promotion is an important part of the economical aspect of community development, because without promotion for the KVCTT and the region itself, no tourists will enjoy ecotourism in this area.

It is necessary to define the borders of the system which is quite difficult for the KVCTT. The system contains all the villages and actors along the trekking trail. The along the trail are the internal stakeholders who are almost all represented by the tourism development committees (at least all people who are connected to tourism in the area).
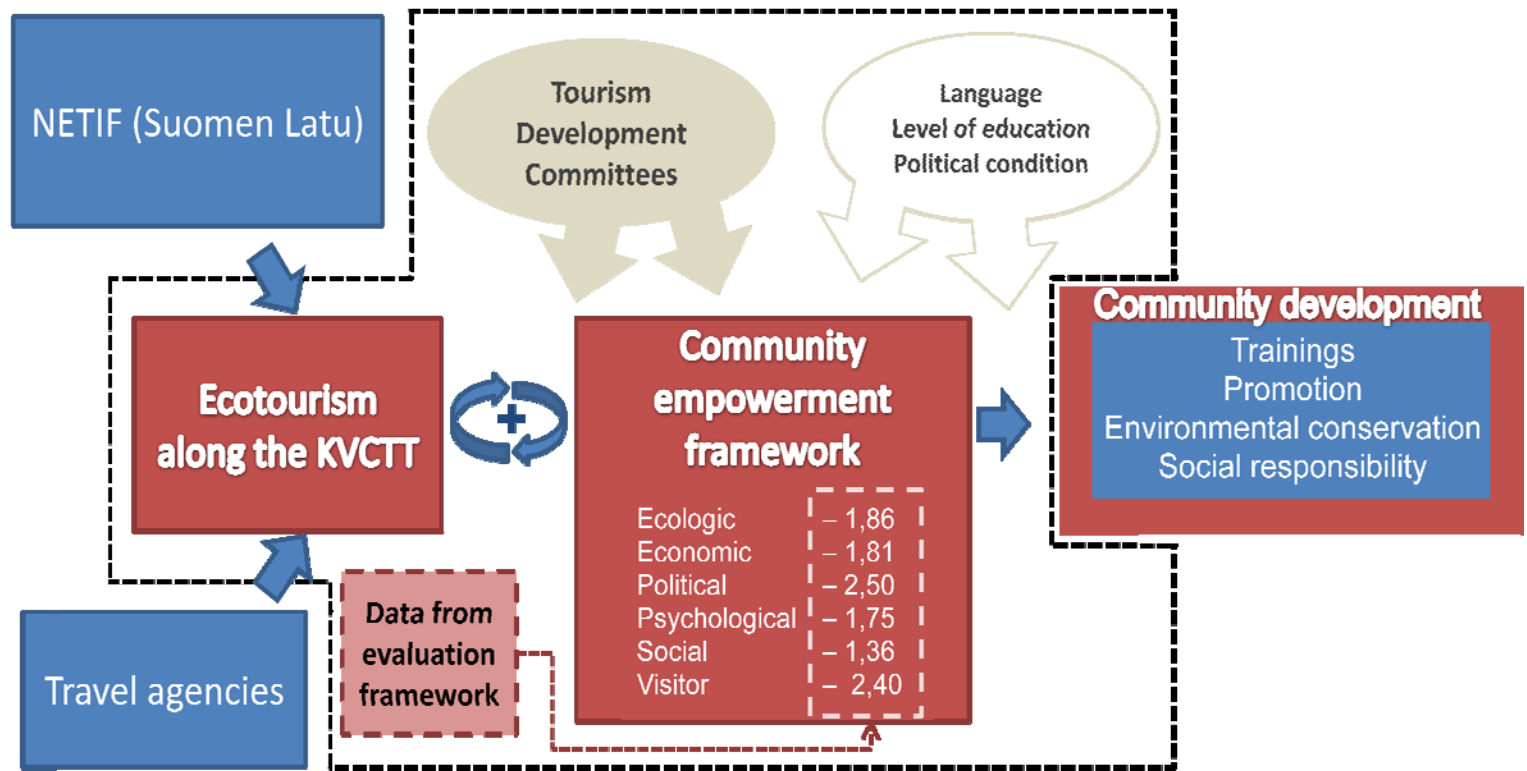
Fig. 8: Adapted conceptual model for the Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail (Winkler 2012)

4.4   ACAP – Homestay Program Bhujung

4.4.1 Data gathering

In Bhujung data was mainly gathered through questionnaires which were provided for project workers, community members and tourists. However, personal observation also played a role in the data gathering process as I spent some days in the village and got an impression of the every-day life village.

According to Purushottam Mudarby (personal communication, May 4th 2012) there are approximately 350-360 households in the village. In receiving 31 questionnaires from community members, each representing one household, the sample size of this research covers roughly 9% of all households within the area. This is not as many as expected, but the answers were extremely clear. Therefore, I assumed that more interviews would not change the result of the survey. Furthermore, five ACAP employees of Bhujung filled out questionnaires. Additionally to the questionnaires, some indicators were answered through my personal observation in the villages and on the trek[7]. However, the main downside of the survey in Bhujung is that there were no tourists available to question during the time I was there. I was told that there are usually hardly any tourists in the village which, of course, is a big problem for the homestay program.

In Bhujung 31 community members, each representing one household, were questioned, whereas approximately one third of them are directly connected to tourism as they are homestay owners. The rest is indirectly connected to tourism, such as farmers or shopkeepers.

Number of questionnaires:	31					
Gender	male	13	female	18	households	6
Age	0 - 18	0	19 - 30	0	31 - 45	14
	46 - 60	12	> 61	5		
Occupation	Tourism	12	Shopkeeper	5	Farming	22
	Ex-Army	6	Others	4		

Tab. 22: General information about community members in Bhujung (Winkler 2012)

However, before starting with the analysis of the gathered data, it is necessary to mention certain aspects which are a bias to the results of the questionnaires. The first one is language. None of the community members could answer the questionnaire in English and many of them had troubles to answer the questions at all, as the education level in the village is very low. Therefore, it was only possible for me to question community members with the help of an ACAP worker. This might lead to another bias, as the villagers might not criticise ACAP in front of an ACAP employee. Additionally, it is important to know that almost every inhabitant in Bhujung is really happy with the work and support from ACAP. Before ACAP established an office in the area there were no toilets in the village and the rate of education was very low (Sudip Adhikari, personal communication, May 6th 2012). ACAP invested a lot of money in this area and therefore, no one in the village would try to complain about ACAP actions.

Still, I do not think that I could have done it another way without learning Nepali and spending at least a few weeks in the village to earn the trust of the locals in order for them sharing more information with me. Therefore, as I am aware of these biases, it is possible to take that into account when analysing and interpreting the data.

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[7] those answers are marked with a * in the analysis

4.4.2 Data analysis

For analysing the gathered data it is necessary to return to the set of indicators presented in chapter 3.2. For the ACAP Homestay project in Bhujung several of those indicators were chosen to evaluate it. The analysis will depend on a four-step scale which is already described shortly in chapter 4.2.3. The interpretation of open questions and personal observation is given by the researcher. The following subchapters will include the answers from the ACAP Homestay Program Bhujung questionnaires in the set of indicators for community empowerment. For an easier comparison with the project by NETIF the same indicators are being used. The results of the questionnaires won't be mentioned in the text in detail, but more detailed result of the evaluation can be seen in annex 2. For an easier understanding, the explanation of the four-step scale is given in the following Tab. *23*. In order to get to this four-step scale it was necessary to calculate the median for all questions asked in the questionnaires. Some medians will not result in natural numbers due to the method of calculating the median. However, even though an irrational number cannot be defined for my four-step-scale, it will be used in order to achieve statistical accuracy. For an easier understanding, if the result of an indicator is for example 1,5 it means that the answer is between 'highly agree' and 'agree', respectively 75%.

1 is either	**highly agree**	or	**< 75%**
2 is either	**agree**	or	**50% - 75%**
3 is either	**partly agree**	or	**25% - 50%**
4 is either	**disagree**	or	**> 25%**

Tab. 23: Four-step scale (Winkler 2012)

4.4.2.1 Indicators for economic empowerment

The main indicators for economic empowerment are 'economic viability', 'local prosperity' and 'employment quality'. The questions of these indicators, in order to evaluate the ACAP project, are about the economic benefits from the ecotourism project and its equal sharing within the community, as well as about the quality of an employment in the tourism business and its salary.

Main indicator for economic viability:		
Does the community as a whole benefit from the ecotourism project?	% of income which stays in the community	3
	Improvement of basic infrastructure since beginning of the project (existence of a sewage system, waste disposal, etc.)	1
Main indicator for local prosperity:		
Are the benefits from the ecotourism project shared equally within the community?	% community members who think that they can financially benefit from ecotourism	1,5
	% of goods and services purchased locally (within the system and its stakeholders)	2
Main indicators for employment quality:		
Is the quality of the job (in the	% of employees within the tourism business and	2

tourism industry) satisfying?	the project who are from the local community	
	% of community members who feel supported in their job by the ecotourism project	1
Is the salary fair and without discrimination?	Ratio of income of tourism jobs vs non-tourism jobs	3
	% of community members who consider their payment as 'fair'	2
		1,94

Tab. 24: Evaluation of the indicators for economic empowerment (Winkler 2012)

As it can be seen in Tab. **24** the evaluation of economic empowerment is fairly positive, however the only really negative point, which needs to be mentioned, is the percentage of tourism income which stays within the community, similar to the evaluation of the NETIF project. The majority of the questioned people think that less than 25% of tourism income stays within the community. The best results can be acquired in infrastructure improvement and in the project's support of the villager's jobs as every interviewed person highly agreed with these questions. The question about the fairness of the payment lead to some discussions as there is a fixed rate on vegetable and meat in the village. Almost everyone in the village is a farmer and therefore, this factor is very important to the people. Some were not satisfied with the fixed rate as it is lower than in other surrounding villages (Purushottam Mudarby, personal communication, May 4th 2012).

These survey results lead to an overall evaluation of the indicator of economic empowerment of 1,94 on a scale from 1 to 4.

4.4.2.2 Indicators for social empowerment

The main indicators for social empowerment are 'social equity' and 'community wellbeing'. In order to get the necessary information for these indicators the locals were asked about their opinion on the sustainable tourism project in their area, about tourists in general, and also about their personal benefit from the project and their participation in it. The question about the image of the project in the communities was answered through personal observation and conversation with community members.

Main indicator for social equity:		
Has social equity in the community risen since the introduction of the ecotourism project?	% of community members who profit from ecotourism	1,5
	% of community members who are participation in the project	3
Main indicator for community wellbeing:		
Is the ecotourism project contribution to the wellbeing of the community?	% of locals who think that ecotourism is the right way for their community	1
	% of local satisfaction with tourism and	1

	tourists in general	
	% of local satisfaction with ecotourism and the project	1
	Image of the ecotourism project within the community *	2
	Satisfaction about information given by the project	1
		1,50

Tab. 25: Evaluation of the indicators for social empowerment (Winkler 2012)

Tab. **25** shows the very positive evaluation of the indicators for social empowerment. Important to mention is the fact that community members are highly satisfied with the activities of ACAP, as well as the fact that they state that it is the right way for their community to develop further. However, there is one big problem in the community – there are hardly any tourists in this area. Therefore, the question about the image of ecotourism in the community was rated two as some villagers complained about the lack of tourists in their village. The image of ACAP itself is overwhelmingly positive and most of the villagers are thinking that the homestay program is satisfactory, but, at the moment, the program is not sustainable. Additionally, there are just a few people in the village who are actively participating in the project, probably, also due to the lack of tourists and the fact that not more people are required at the moment. Concluding, the overall rating for the social empowerment indicator is 1,50 which can be considered high.

4.4.2.3 Indicators for psychological empowerment

The main indicator for psychological empowerment is 'cultural richness'. This indicator will evaluate if culture is important for locals and what they think about it. Furthermore, it can be determined if locals are intimidated by foreign cultures, and if their own culture and customs might be affected by tourism. This indicator was supposed to include tourists' willingness to learn about the host country's culture and to take part in it. Unfortunately, there were no tourists in Bhujung during the time I was visiting the village.

Main indicator for cultural richness:		
Does the ecotourism project boost local values and culture?	% of locals who are aware of the uniqueness of their culture	1
	% of people who are proud about the community's history and about their culture	1
	% of locals who think that their culture is not being influenced by tourism and that its authenticity is still intact	1
		1,00

Tab. 26: Evaluation of the indicator for psychological empowerment (Winkler 2012)

Tab. *26* clearly shows that the villagers of Bhujung are very fond of their culture and that they know about its uniqueness; everyone interviewed saw their culture as highly unique. The Gurung people are very proud about their cultural heritage and, as an outsider in the village, you can recognise this pride. Therefore, the rating for the psychological empowerment indicator is 1,00, even though tourists' opinions are not included in this indicator.

4.4.2.4 Indicators for political empowerment

The indicators for political empowerment are 'local control' and 'impacts of ecotourism development'. The community members were asked about their involvement in the project and the political power of ACAP in their area. Furthermore, it was evaluated how many locals know about ecotourism in general and if there is enough information given by the project to local communities. In this case it is necessary to mention that the answer for this indicator may be a little bit biased as ACAP in its whole is highly appreciated, and the community members would never say anything negative about it.

Main indicator for local control:		
Is the ecotourism project increasing the political participation of community members?	Ratio of locals to ousiders working for an ecotourism project	3
	% of local support for the ecotourism project (non-monetary) *	1
	Enough community members are working for the project	2
	Satisfaction about participation level of locals within project	1
Main indicator for impacts of ecotourism development:		
Are community members aware of the ecotourism project's values and goals?	% of residents who have a clear understanding of the ecotourism project in their community (what are the goals, for what does ecotourism stands for, etc.).	4
	Level of awareness for the project within the community *	1
	Satisfying information and promotion of the project within the community and in its surroundings *	3
		2,14

Tab. 27: Evaluation of the indicators for political empowerment (Winkler 2012)

The evaluation of the indicators for political empowerment shows a variety of answers. A few answers are based on my personal observation during the visit of the village. Those questions are about the non-monetary local support of ACAP, about the level of awareness for the project within the community, and also about the promotion of the homestay program in the communities and its surroundings. The last question,

concerning the involvement of development program cannot be answered as there is not really an external stakeholder involved with ACAP[8].

The results of this part of the evaluation show that no one of the interviewed villagers knew about ecotourism in detail. They knew that it is important to clean their village and to save the forest, but people thought that the reason for these measures was to make the village more attractive for tourists. Overall, the villagers stated that they are satisfied with the amount of information provided about the project, but some mentioned that the tourism program needs to better planning. In my point of view, more promotion for the village as well as for the Gurung Heritage Trekking Trail is needed in order to attract tourists to come to this area. However, a very positive point to mention is the awareness level of the homestay project of ACAP in general in the community. The villagers know how much they gained from ACAP.

4.4.2.5 Indicators of ecological empowerment

The main indicators for ecological empowerment are 'physical integrity', 'biological diversity' and 'resource efficiency'. People were asked about ACAP's contribution to environmental protection and about investments made in the environment. Furthermore, I wanted to find out if community members are aware of the necessity of environmental and biodiversity protection as well as the importance of waste management and recycling.

Main indicator for physical integrity:		
Is the ecotourism project supporting efficient energy use?	Condition of the environment surrounding the community *	1,5
	Contribution of the ecotourism project to environment protection	1
	% of ecotourism benefits used for environmental protection	2
Main indicator for biological diversity:		
Is the ecotourism project contribution to a rise in biological diversity in the area surrounding the community?	% of residents who thinks that the project is contribution to biodiversity conservation	1
	Cooperations between the tourism industry and conservationists	1
Main indicator for resource efficiency:		
Is the ecotourism project influencing the physical integrity of the community and its surrounding environment?	Increased use of renewable energy sources through the ecotourism project	1
	Increase of recycling conducted in the community since the start of the project *	1
		1,21

Tab. 28: Evaluation of the indicators for ecological empowerment (Winkler 2012)

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[8] more information about ACAP 'stakeholders' can be found in subchapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**

Tab. **28** shows the evaluation of the indicators for ecological empowerment and reveals interesting facts. It shows that ACAP is definitely contributing to environmental protection. ACAP introduced and funded energy efficient stoves and implemented rules on conservation which need to be followed by the inhabitants of the area around the Annapurna Mountain Chain. ACAP told the villagers how to clean their community and keep it clean by burning the waste (not the best method, but there is no other way to deal with garbage). One of the main actions of ACAP in the Bhujung area is the instalment of a micro-hydro power plant which produces enough electricity for the whole area. Therefore, this remote village got more electric power than the capital Kathmandu. My personal observation showed that the environment around the village is very clean and that there are many activities to enhance environmental protection. Additionally, ACPA taught the villagers how to clean up their village and installed an incinerator. The overall rating of the indicators for ecological empowerment shows that ACAP is dealing with the environment in a very sustainable way, as well as with the natural resources in this area.

4.4.2.6 Indicators for visitor empowerment

During my stay in Bhujung there were no tourist in the village. Unfortunately, there are hardly any tourists in this area in general, at least no foreign tourists, as other trekking routes and areas of the ACAP are much more popular with trekking tourists. For this evaluation it is necessary to mention that there is no data on the visitor empowerment. Therefore, in the overall evaluation, the absence of visitors has to be considered in some way.

The main problem is the lack of promotion for the area. As mentioned, the main trekking routes are in different regions of the ACAP and, even though Bhujung is a very authentic Nepali village, many tourists want to trek on the main routes around or through the Annapurna Mountain Chain. I was told that some kind of promotion campaign for the area will be launched this year, and that more tourists should come to do the Gurung Heritage Trekking Trail.

4.4.2.7 Conclusion of the evaluation

At the end of my stay in Bhujung I had the opportunity to do a short interview with the ACAP Officer in Charge, Mr. Sudip Adhikari (personal communication, May 6th 2012) which was mainly about ACAP activities in the village and about the lack of tourists.

ACAP built toilets and incinerators in the village, they help to raise money and partly funded the micro hydro power plant and the rope line. ACAP built a childcare centre and pays the salary of one of the employees, etc. In terms of development work ACAP very successful in this area. In 2010/11 they started with tourism development as well - which is still in its infancy. However, ACAP's 'Village Tourism Destination Promotion' has lead about 2000 tourists and visitors in the Bhujung area since 2010, but compared to about 20.000 trekkers in the Jomson area it is still a very small share (ACAP 1 2011:2). ACAP also held trainings on tourism development and tourism awareness camps in Bhujung, which were attended by about 25 people each (Ibid:3f).

"(...) ACAP, (...) is planning, in cooperation with the Tourism Management Sub-Committee (TMsC), to promote and develop the Bhujung area for visitors and increase the number of tourists. One of the current

programs, which shall initiate development in the tourism sector, is the establishment of several Home stay possibilities within the local households" (ACAP 2 2011:1). This is a statement from the progress report of the home stay program in Bhujung from last year. It clearly shows that ACAP is aware of the problem and tries to increase promotion for this area.

The overall evaluation of the home stay project in Bhujung of the indicators for community empowerment is positive. The overall evaluation for the indicators for community members is 1,56 ([1,94 + 1,50 + 1,00 + 2,14 + 1,21] / 5 = 1,56) out of 4. The evaluation for the ecological factor is that high, because the village is not even connected to a road at the moment and the paths in the village are cleaned weekly. The psychological factor got the highest rating, because all the interviewed people were very aware of the uniqueness of their culture and there is no influence by tourism (yet). Unfortunately, there is not evaluation for visitor empowerment, because of the lack of tourist in the village during my research. Considering this fact, the very positive result of the evaluation has to be revised a little bit, for the village is very pure and not influenced by outside effects. The result shows that ACAP is doing go work in terms of village development, but the home stay program in Bhujung is still in its infancy and needs more promotion to attract tourists to this area.

4.4.3   Adapted research framework for the ACAP homestay program

The following subchapters show the adapted research framework which ends up in an adapted conceptual model for successful community development. This adapted model includes all the components of the original model, but with the specific data of the home stay program in Bhujung.

4.4.3.1   *Community empowerment framework of the ACAP homestay program*

As mentioned in chapter 2.1 there are six (dis)empowerment factors in my community empowerment framework, but for this specific case study I can only use five factors because of the lack of tourists. All these factors are equally important and determine the conceptual model. In this specific case study the evaluation for the indicators for economic empowerment is 1,94 out of 4 which can be considered as a positive evaluation. Economic empowerment is not just about gaining profits, but it is also about creating new jobs in the community and its surrounding area, given that the income from tourism is equally shared within the community. In case of the home stay program in Bhujung it can be seen that most of the community members think that the program is supporting them in their jobs and that ACAP improved the village's infrastructure. However, between 50%-75% of the incomes are not spent in the communities but somewhere else.

The indicators for social (dis)empowerment are also rated very positively with 1,50. This value shows that community members are very satisfied with ecotourism in general and this project in particular. Almost everyone was very satisfied with tourist behaviour, even though, as already mentioned, the number of tourists was very low. However, in my opinion, this highly positive result of the social empowerment indicator is a little bit biased, for the interviewed people are very happy with ACAP's work and therefore, would never criticise the organisation.

Psychological (dis)empowerment indicators are all evaluated with 1,00. Self-confidence within the communities is very high and people know about the uniqueness of their culture. Important to mention is the fact that also women, who are sometimes be considered as low-status groups, are integrated in these project

as they offered trainings in craft making, cooking, farming, etc. Even though, this is the highest rating possible it has to be considered that this might change with an increase in tourist numbers, which can sometimes lead to problems within a community.

The factor for political (dis)empowerment is rated with 2,14. This is the lowest rating of all indicators for this case study, because people do not know what sustainable tourism is about, and many are not really interested in the decision making process of the project. Additionally, the lack of promotion for the area is another downside for this indicator, which leads to this rating. Furthermore, there is no cooperation with any other organisation aside from ACAP in the village.

The indicator for ecologic (dis)empowerment with 1,21 out of 4. It is a very important indicator, showing the state of the environment, if tourism incomes are used for environmental protection, if renewable energy sources are used and boosted, and if there is a protected area around the community. This high rating depends on the contribution of ACAP to renewable energy sources, such as the micro hydro power plant, and to more efficient stoves. Additionally, the overall condition of the environment in and around the village is satisfying and the locals are aware of the necessity of environmental protection.

4.4.3.2 Output of the ACAP homestay program

The output of the conceptual model is successful community development. For an easier definition of successful community development the term was split up in social, economic and ecologic aspects of community development.

The social aspect of community development in Bhujung are, on the one hand, the trainings on tourism management and cooking, conducted by ACAP, and on the other hand, the improvement of certain institutions in the village, such as the construction of the childcare centre. These trainings give the locals the chance to gain new knowledge and prepare them for employment in the tourism business. The childcare centre gives parents the opportunity to work on the fields even while caring for a baby at home.

The reputation of ACAP in the village is very high, mainly because of ACAP's affords that lead to an improvement in living standards. It can be stated that, from the social perspective, the community development of ACAP is successful, but not because of the tourism development program instated in the village, but because of other activities. The home stay program has not yet contributed a lot to community development. However, it has to be considered, that the project has just been started, and expectations are that with good promotion Bhujung and the other Gurung villages can profit from (sustainable) tourism in the future.

The economic aspect of community development might be the most important aspect on a short-term view. If ecotourism cannot lead to economic benefits then people will not think about implementing it. In Bhujung some interviewees complained about the lack of tourists and that they cannot make their living just from tourism incomes. In my point of view, many people were disappointed by this fact, but hardly anyone wants to criticise ACAP. The promotion of the area definitely needs a boost in order to acquire higher incomes for the community. The strategy of promoting the home stay program should have an emphasis the cultural background of the area. I think there is a high touristic potential in this area, because of the pureness of the region and the villages. If anyone wants to experience true Nepali culture with little or no influence by

foreigners, Bhujung is a perfect place to be. The economic aspect of community development for the home stay program in Bhujung is, due to the lack of tourists, not met yet.

The ecological aspect of community development is a big concern of ACAP in the whole region. ACAP is providing funds and help to get donations for several activities and actions concerning environmental conservation, such as the construction of micro hydro power plants, the installations of incinerators, trainings about clean-ups, etc. During my research at the village I recognised the clean streets and paths through the village and there is electricity almost 24 hours a day which is much more than in the capital Kathmandu. Again, it can be stated that ACAP is successful in environmental conservation, but the tourism program in Bhujung is not contributed yet.

4.4.3.3 Control framework of the ACAP homestay program

The control framework can be considered as stable and granted and cannot be easily changed by the researcher or others. However, over time, the framework, or some elements of it, can change and lead to different conclusion of an evaluation. The control framework for this conceptual model contains the language barriers, educational level and the political condition of Nepal.

The language in the area is one factor which cannot be disregarded easily. Hardly anyone in the village speaks English and some did not even speak Nepali. Especially undereducated community members sometimes only speak their tribe language (in this case Gurung), which is completely different from Nepali. However, aside from the language discrepancies, the lack of education is a problem in Bhujung, as people just do not understand the principles of environment conservation or sustainable tourism. No one of the interviewees had an idea what 'sustainability' is about and ecotourism was just about cleaning up the garbage. Considering this aspect in my interviews, turned out to be a challenge as far as the wording of my questionnaire was concerned. The political condition in Nepal has been stable since 2008, but there are still Maoist-encouraged protests in the centre of Kathmandu. The government is considered weak, as there is a lack of cooperation between the different parties, and it seems that this won't change any time soon. However, a disruption would have extreme effects on tourism in Nepal which highly depends on this business.

4.4.3.4 Stakeholder framework of the ACAP homestay program

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) is the only external stakeholder of the home stay program in Bhujung. This is difficult to define, because ACAP is well integrated in the village politics and therefore it cannot completely be seen as an external stakeholder. However, if the focus is exclusively set onto the home stay program as an ecotourism project, this statement is accurate. The input of the external stakeholder is the conduction of trainings, the construction of toilets and bathrooms for guests, and hopefully, in the future, promotion of the home stay program.

The internal stakeholders are the home stay owners and a local Tourism Management Subcommittee, which coordinated the tourism development in Bhujung (ACAP 2 2011:2). This local development institution should develop the Bhujung area for tourists and increase tourist numbers.

4.4.3.5 Adapted conceptual model of the ACAP homestay program

The adapted conceptual model for successful community development presented in Fig. **9** is based on the original conceptual model for successful community development (Fig. 3), which is the basis for the evaluation framework of this thesis. It contains all the frameworks from the Bhujung case study that are presented in chapter 4.4.3, and shows the necessary components of a system. To make it more simple, the model will be described from left to right.

The external stakeholder of the home stay program in Bhujung is ACAP which provides knowledge in trainings, and support in the social sector through a construction of a childcare centre and improvement of the village's infrastructure.

The internal stakeholders are the home stay owners and the Tourism Management Subcommittee in Bhujung. This subcommittee is responsible for tourism development in the village and to increase tourist numbers within the coming years.

The control framework contains the language barrier, the lack of education, and the political condition of Nepal. The first two had an effect on my research, because the language barrier and the lack of education led to problems in understanding my questionnaire, as well as the basics about sustainable tourism. It seemed to me that sometimes my interpreter did not exactly translate my questions correctly, and furthermore, the concepts of sustainability and ecotourism could not be grasped. Another important element of the control framework is the political condition of Nepal, a country still without a legal constitution and where strikes could happen any time, paralyzing the whole country. A change in this element could have a huge impact on tourism in the whole country.

The two main factors in the adapted conceptual model for successful community development are 'Ecotourism in Bhujung' and the 'Community empowerment framework', which results from the evaluation done in the village. 'Ecotourism in Bhujung' can be described as the results of the home stay program so far (which are not many). The 'Community empowerment framework' shows the five different indicator categories (visitor empowerment is missing) and the result of the evaluation framework for each indicator. The better the result, the higher the positive feedback could loop and boost ecotourism in the area.

The output of the system is 'Community development' and is divided in three different sectors (which can be seen in subchapter 4.4.3.2). Trainings and raising social responsibility (through construction of childcare centre) are part of the social aspect of community development. Both actions increase the awareness of the locals for more environmental protection, as well as recognizing the uniqueness of their environment. This leads directly to environmental conservation, which is conducted through clean-up campaigns and the promotion for renewable energy. An important part of the economical aspect of community development is promotion, which still needs to be extended in order to raise tourism numbers in the Bhujung area.

It is necessary to define the border of the system which contains all the community members of Bhujung. Those actors are the internal stakeholders, which are (will be) represented by the Tourism Development Subcommittee. This Subcommittee will, at least, represent all people who are connected to tourism in the area.
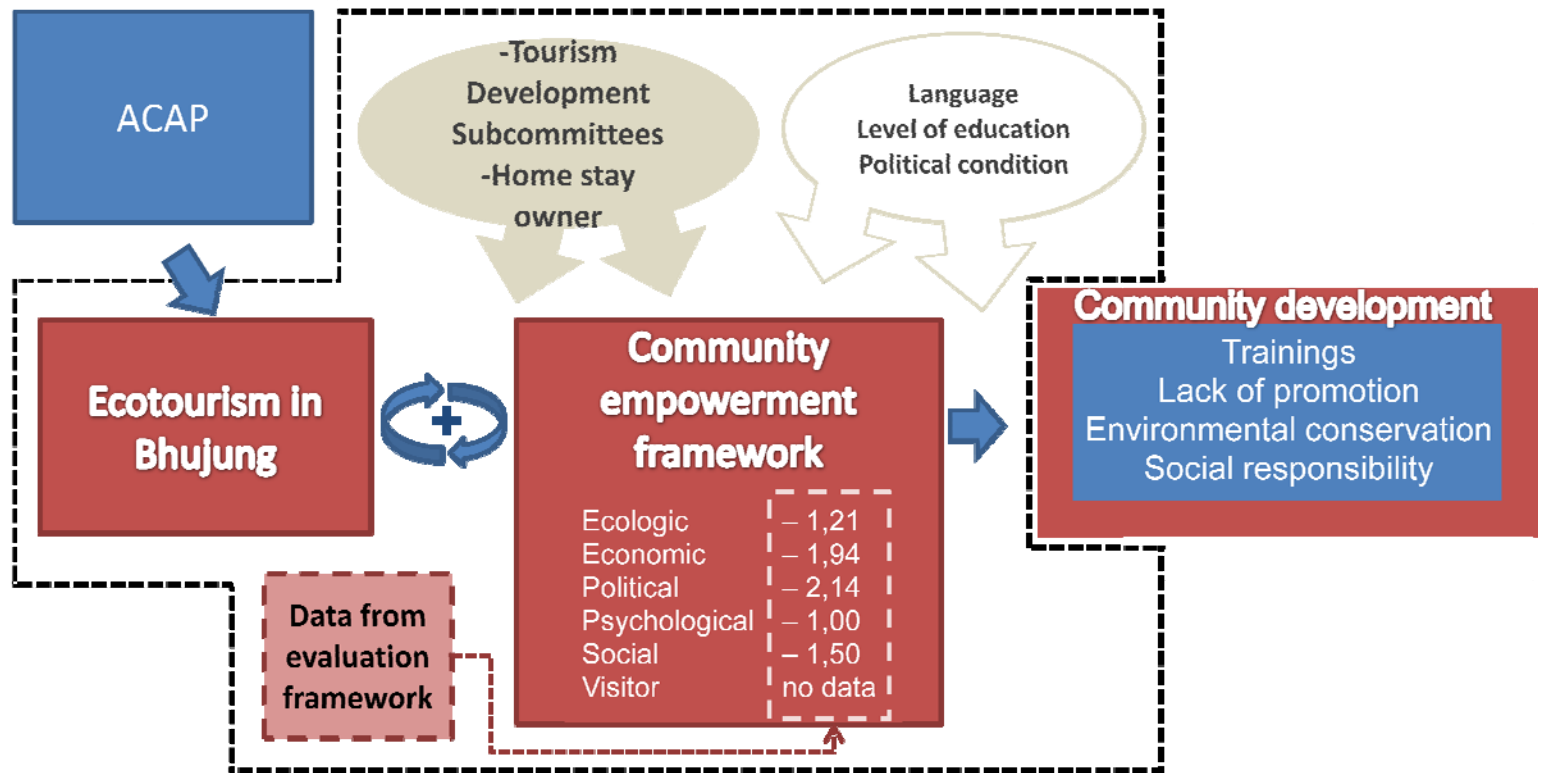
Fig. 9: Adapted conceptual model for the home stay program in Bhujung (Winkler 2012)

4.5 Comparison

One of the main goals of this thesis is to create an evaluation framework which can be used for evaluation and comparing different ecotourism projects. The easiest way to compare different projects is, if they are from the same country, having the same background (control framework) and starting points. However, even if the projects are situated in different countries this evaluation framework can be adapted to it. A comparison between ecotourism projects makes sense in order to enhance efficiency and it is easier to learn and adopt certain aspects from other projects. Additionally, if the evaluation framework is used for a bigger comparison than just two projects it is possible to find out if there are similar weaknesses in many projects which can maybe be seen as a general weakness of ecotourism projects, however, this would need more research in order to get useful results.

I was researching two case studies in Nepal which show many inequalities. The NETIF-project is a trekking trail which was implemented a few years ago and is soon to be finished. The ACAP-project only operates in one village in the Annapurna region and it is still in its infancy. A comparison of these two projects is a bit difficult because they do not have many factors in common. As mentioned the KVCTT is already at the peak of project development as the homestay program in Bhujung is still at the beginning. Another big difference are the external stakeholders of the projects. Whereas the KVCTT is promoted by the Nepali NGO NETIF and funded by the Finnish NGO Suomen Latu, the homestay program in Bhujung is organised, promoted and funded by ACAP which is also a Nepali NGO but with close connections to the national government which is also funding it partly. The main problem in comparing these two projects is the fact that there is hardly any

promotion for the homestay program yet. Therefore, there were no tourist in the Bhujung village and this is of course a big downside for the project. However, using the main indicators for community empowerment it is still possible to compare the projects with each other and get useful data. This shows that even with all those differences the evaluation framework can adapt and produce data to get clear information about the empowerment factors but it is necessary to have a closer look on how the data derived.

	Economic empowerment	Social empowerment	Psychological empowerment	Political empowerment	Ecological empowerment	Visitor empowerment
KVCTT	1,94	1,36	1,75	2,50	1,86	2,40
Bhujung	1,88	1,50	1,00	2,14	1,06	no data

Tab. 29: Comparison of Kathmandu Valley Culture Trekking Trail and home stay program in Bhujung (Winkler 2012)

Tab. *29* shows that the home stay program in Bhujung got better rating in almost all categories (except economic empowerment, which is almost equal to NETIF's rating). In Bhujung the inhabitants were generally very happy with the development work of ACAP and this is reflected in the better rating. Anyhow, the rating for both projects are very good but also show were problems might be. In the field of political empowerment the lower rating derives from the missing knowledge about ecotourism in general and the, in some cases, disinterest in decision making. Both NGOs should work on this problem by teaching locals more about ecotourism principles and why they should clean their villages from trash. Many community members answered that trash picking is just for tourists to please them. Both projects have strong local tourism committees which are part of the decision making process, but just NETIF is planning to give the project in the hands of those committees soon.

The economic empowerment factor is rated very similar for both projects and this is conforming to the answers I got from the questionnaires. In both projects the community members think that they can earn money trough ecotourism, or tourism in general, but some are still not satisfied with their incomes. I talked to many people who cannot afford to just work as a tourism entrepreneur but also need to work on the fields. This fact shows that NETIF and ACAP provide the knowledge to convert farmers to homestay owners but the salary in Nepal is so low that they cannot earn enough money.

The social and the ecological empowerment for both projects is very good. The reputation of the projects is very high within the communities and many locals can identify themselves with the projects. In these areas the NGOs worked well and their work can be seen as a good example for other projects. The ecological empowerment in Bhujung is rated very high because of the energy independence through their micro hydropower plant which provides the village with electricity all day long (which cannot be taken for granted in Nepal). Along the KVCTT there is still opportunity for a more efficient use of alternative energy sources. Even though a windmill was built in one of the villages, many hotels could use solar power for heating. The biggest negative point of Bhujung is the lack of tourists. Unfortunately, there is no tourist data from Bhujung and therefore, I cannot compare this factor with the visitor empowerment from the KVCTT. Along the KVCTT the only noteworthy critics were the dirty paths in some areas, which had to do with missing garbage pickers and the lack of information for tourists. Many tourists did not know about the project and that they are hiking in an ecotourism area. This problem was something NETIF was working on when I left Nepal. They

intended to install information boards along the trek to inform tourists about the project, the villages, the flora and fauna and how to behave in a national park.

The values in the table above confirm that the evaluations made on these two projects are in many ways similar. However, this does not mean that the projects are similar, for they are not. It only shows that in each category there are similarities between the two projects, even though they are in different stages. It is necessary to have a closer look on how the numbers derived. It is important to reconsider the different stages of project development when looking at the evaluation and to think about the different backgrounds of the projects. NETIF has the big advantage that they just need to concentrate on this one project but ACAP is responsible for a region 50 times bigger with dozens of villages and thousands of trekker every year. Additionally, Bhujung is not along the main trekking routes which cannot be said for parts of the KVCTT which is the connection between Kathmandu and Langtang National Park. Even thought the homestay program in Bhujung got a better rating, I think it can be stated with some confidence that the NETIF project is much more mature and therefore, also more successful than the home stay program in Bhujung.

5 Conclusion and suggestions

The main goals of this thesis were, on the one hand, to proof the working hypothesis and to show under which conditions ecotourism projects result in successful community development. On the other hand, I wanted to create an evaluation framework for ecotourism projects, which can be used for various kinds of projects all around the world, and compare them to each other. In order to achieve these goals it was necessary to define what ecotourism, conducted in the right way, is about, as well as to circumscribe it from other forms of tourism.

5.1 Conclusion

In order to answer the research question and the sub-questions it is very helpful to look at the conceptual model of the thesis again and then answer the questions one by one. This thesis shows that ecotourism is a working tool for community development when the ecotourism project is conducted according to the ecotourism principles mentioned in this thesis, and that it is profitable. Without an economic benefit even the best ecotourism project won't last long.

After using this model and doing research in Nepal the answer to the main research question '*Under which conditions can ecotourism projects result in successful community development?*' can be summarized in a few sentences by combining the answers to the sub-questions. First, it is very important that local communities can benefit from the project within a short period of time. Community members need to see that ecotourism can help them financially and, additionally, preserve the surrounding nature. Second, the managing organisations need to provide trainings for community members to teach them necessary skills for the tourism sector. In the case studies I could observe, the locals where very eager to learn. Third, it is necessary that the NGOs have a long term plan how to give locals more participation in a project over time. At the beginning of a project community members depend on the knowledge from outside, but when time passes they should start to think for themselves and to start managing the project in their area.
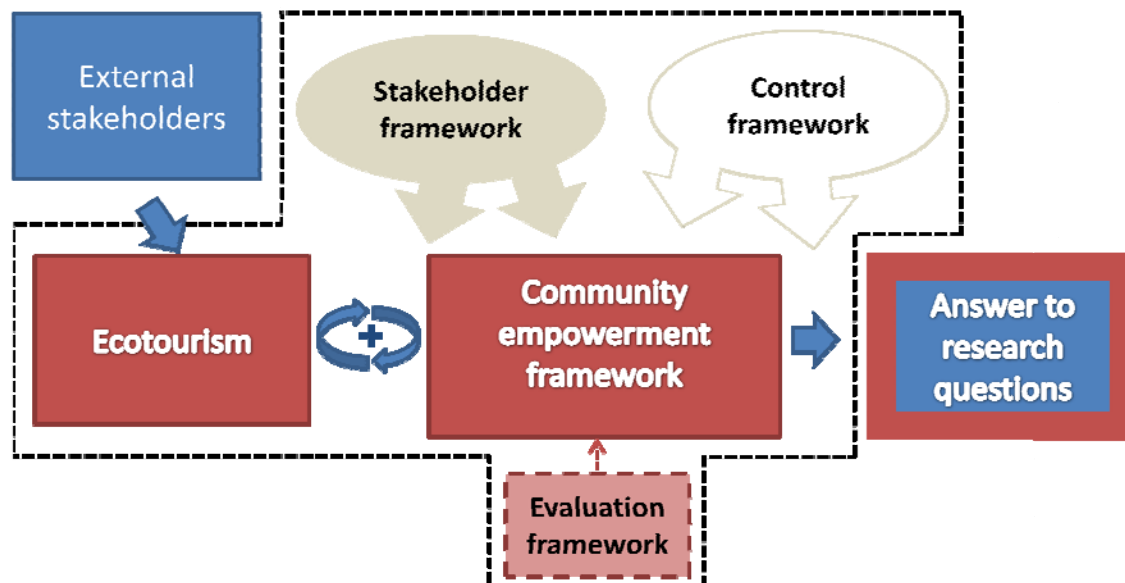

Fig. 10: Conceptual model of successful community development (Winkler 2012)

What are the most important factors contributing to ecotourism implementation?

This thesis shows that some small development efforts through ecotourism can have a rather big effect on a local community. To get this effect, the implementation of an ecotourism project has to include some factors such as *mobilisation* of the local population and some form of *environmental and tourism education*. Very often locals depend on some kind of *trainings* by professionals to enhance their abilities in the sustainable tourism sector. Especially the NETIF case study shows the success of trainings conducted by the NGO to teach locals how they can become a part of the ecotourism project in their area. People who got training were very proud of what they learned and many of them were asking for more education. This shows that they recognised how to earn money with tourism and preserve the surrounding environment and their natural resources which are other important factors. Tourists want to see pure and clean nature and they pay for that. Therefore, it is essential to *preserve the local environment*, stop deforestation, us alternative energy and start recycling and trash collecting programs. In order to get a successful ecotourism project it is very important that the local community is included in the decision making processes and that community members can identify themselves with the project.

What are the most important influences of ecotourism on community development and empowerment and what are the positive and negative effects of the project in the host country?

One of the most important stakeholders of ecotourism projects are the tourists. When thinking about the effect of ecotourism projects on community development it is necessary to include the influence of foreign tourists on a community and simultaneously the effect of the stay on the tourist. NETIF is providing information about flora and fauna in the area surrounding their project and give tourists insights in Nepali country life. However, I do not think that local culture benefits highly from the connections with the tourists. Especially along the KVCTT the time of stay is too short to really get in touch with locals. This might be different in Bhujung if tourists start to come. Bhujung is very traditional and the inhabitants seemed very interested in my presence there, but the reason might be that there are not many tourists in this area (yet). Summarising, I think that tourists can benefit and learn from a stay in the two case study areas but *I doubt that the locals have the same amount of benefit*.

Another important influence of ecotourism on community development and empowerment is the fact that *locals can earn money with tourism and preserve the nature* which they need for their fields and cattle. The economic viability of a project is one very important indicator when planning community development. Without some kind of economic benefit it is very hard to convince people to conduct sustainable tourism. During my time at the projects in Nepal it came clear that many locals preserve the environment because of the economic benefit which comes along with satisfied tourists. The locals know that they depend on tourism incomes and therefore, try to please them. With the help of NETIF and ACAP the locals were taught how to reach this goal while following the principles of ecotourism and sustainable development. However, this shows that for many community members to economic benefit is the biggest driver for (sustainable) development. Another very important indicator when planning community development through ecotourism is the *resource efficiency*. NETIF told locals to use briquettes or kerosene (which also leads to problems) instead of copping firewood and also started forestation. Additionally, alternative energy sources such as a windmill in Chisapani or a micro hydropower plant in Bhujung were realised and gave the community some energy independence.

However, solar power has still great potential in some areas of Nepal and needs to be supported on a bigger scale.

Another factor which is a bit questionable is the *uneven distribution* of tourism incomes in Nepal. Only very few regions in Nepal benefit from (sustainable) tourism but the majority is still very poor. If a village is along a popular trekking route the villagers are wealthy, compared to those from communities somewhere else. The future tourism planning of Nepal will show how the government can react to these discrepancies. I think, if mass tourism grows even bigger in certain areas that ecotourists will try to find more pristine places for their travels and this could lead to a fairer distribution of tourism incomes over the country. However, at the moment many ecotourism projects in Nepal are successful and hopefully, those projects can convince many others to follow.

Which steps should be taken into consideration when planning community development?

When planning community development a few steps have to be taken into consideration such as the *understanding of ecotourism* and why people should preserve nature. This understanding can be achieved through *knowledge transfers* from professionals to community members. In the next step the locals need to see that they can *benefit from ecotourism* and also help their community to rise. With more understanding of the project community member are likely to demand *more participation* and to become active stakeholders of the project. For this step the project managers need the full trust of the community and vice versa. The ideal last step would be to hand over the project to local decision makers and to give them the opportunity of developing their own community and area.

Under what circumstances is ecotourism in developing countries effective?

Under the right circumstances ecotourism can be very effective in Nepal. It is important that the leading NGO has a *good reputation among the community members* and that there is an apparent benefit for the community. Many community members I met were extremely motivated about working in the tourism industry and had very high expectations for the projects. It is very important that organisations such as NETIF and ACAP get enough *cooperation from the government* to enhance ecotourism in rural areas. For now, I think it is best for Nepal if NGOs handle tourism projects in the country as long as the government is still in trouble with announcing a new constitution and still fighting with the aftermath of the war.

How is the acceptance of the ecotourism projects in the host country?

In both case studies the *reputation of the projects was very good* within the communities and many interviewees were satisfied with the work of the NGOs. NETIF has a very good reputation, especially in those villages which are completely dependent on trekking tourism. The villagers were *very thankful about the cooperation with NETIF* and about the skills they learned through trainings. In Bhujung the *reputation of ACAP was already very high* before the start of the homestay program, because of all the development work the institution organised in the village. These events might cover the starting problems of the missing tourists and the lack of promotion for the area.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the evaluation framework?

The set of indicators, provided for the evaluation framework, can be used for all kinds of ecotourism and sustainable tourism projects in different countries. This is an important advantage of the evaluation framework, which is not only useful for Nepal, but also *for projects in other countries*. Using this framework a *comparison* between projects in different countries is much easier. The results of the evaluation of the two case studies in Nepal - the KVCTT and the homestay program in Bhujung - show that a comparison of those two projects is possible. However, in some ways those projects are very different, for they are not in the same stages of project development; the financial background is completely different, as is the history of the helping organisations. It is important to mention that it is necessary to have a closer look at the results, and where those numbers derived from. By having a closer look on the background information some of the results can appear in a different light, especially when the interviewees are not very critical about a project.

During my research in Nepal I also discovered some problems and disadvantages connected to the projects as well as with my evaluation. One of the main problems regarding my research was the language barrier and the low *level of education*. In the main tourist areas of Nepal most of the people speak English, but on the countryside some people even do not speak Nepali but some other tribe language. Additionally, some of my translators had difficulties to explain my questionnaires to locals because they did not know anything about sustainability. Most of the time the questions about environmental protection in the villages were answered with garbage cleaning. Some of the questions were hard to understand for community members such as the question about a fair payment and what they know about ecotourism. Very soon it was clear that hardly anyone know what ecotourism is really about aside from cleaning the environment and stop deforestation. Especially in Bhujung the level of education was very low with many illiterates. Another problem was the *bias* I got by the project workers who helped me interviewing community members. In two villages I had the impression that the project worker just brought me to community members who were very fond of the project. However, without their help and translation my research would not have been possible without learning Nepali. Especially in Bhujung the locals were very fond of ACAP and even though the homestay program was not promoted and there were no tourists the locals spoke very highly about the project. I think that the whole community of Bhujung is so happy with the development work of ACAP that no one would say something negative, especially not in front of a foreigner and an ACAP employee. Those factors might lead to a bias in my evaluation, but as long as I know about this fact I think that this situation can be handled easily.

5.2   Suggestions

How should ecotourism in the host country be managed and by whom should it be managed?

At the moment the best way the organise ecotourism projects in Nepal is *through local NGOs* which get funded by development cooperatives. This would, on the one hand, help those NGOs to gain professional knowledge from outside their country, and on the other hand, leave the project to people who are really dedicated to it. In my opinion it makes sense that local NGOs organise and manage *small projects in rural areas* and focus on exactly those areas. In the future it will be necessary to combine many small projects under on 'umbrella' preferably organised by a governmental institution. However, the national government of Nepal is somehow stable at the moment, but there are so many administrative barriers which make it hard to organise

an ecotourism project with foreign investors. Additionally, the government is still in a rebuilding phase which regularly leads to demonstrations in the capital and other bigger city and has a bigger focus on mass tourism than ecotourism. Very often governmental organisations focuses on more on economic interests than on ecological which is understandable in a country like Nepal with so many people living below poverty level.

It is clear that this topic needs more research in order to proof that the evaluation framework can be adapted to different kinds of ecotourism projects in different countries. It is also necessary to use the evaluation framework for more case studies in different countries in order to get useful data to compare those projects. The set of indicators needs to be adapted as some questions were hard to understand for locals. It would help a great deal to speak the local language because sometimes I do not think that my questionnaires were translated precisely. Specifically for the second case study in Bhujung it would make sense to conduct research on the whole Gurung Heritage Trail and then compare it with the KVCTT. Anyway, this research is not really accurate at the moment because the Gurung Heritage Trail is not completed yet and not promoted at all. The comparison of the two projects shows that it is possible to compare projects in different stages of development and implementation, but then the results have to be questioned. I think, in some years, this new and easy trekking trail will be a good opportunity for tourists to acclimatise for further trekking such as the KVCTT (or parts of it) are now, and then a another comparison would make much sense.

I would highly appreciate if funding ecotourism would be seen as development aid in order to enhance more ecotourism projects all over the world. It is obvious that ecotourism, as described in this thesis, cannot work everywhere, but I think that it is necessary to give it a chance. My suggestion is to use 'best-practice-examples' to set standards for ecotourism projects with the help of an evaluation framework. This would help present as well as future projects to improve their efficiency, the state of the environment and lead to fairer distribution of tourism incomes. Especially in a country like Nepal with many trekkers who are fond of an intact nature local tourism companies try green washing almost everything. Setting (national) standards would help to prevent this fact and give good and save information to tourist. However, it is pretty clear that this has to be initialised by the government which do not seem capable at the moment. Therefore, I suggest to conduct more studies in order to get data for standards for ecotourism projects, first on a national level, and then international. By using a big set of indicators it will be able to use those standards for many projects in many different locations.

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Personal and e-mail communication

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- Prachanda Man Shrestha, personal communication, Ex-CEO Nepal Tourism Board, March 12th 2012.
- Purushottam Mudarby, personal communication, ACAP Bhujung Livestock Development Assistant Manager, May 4th and 5th 2012.
- Sudip Adhikari, personal communication, Conservation Officer/Officer in Charge, ACAP Bhujung, May 6th 2012.
- Sujata Shrestha, personal communication, NETIF researcher, March 13th 2012.

Figures

- Fig. 1: Core principles of ecotourism
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- Fig. 10: Conceptual model for successful community development based on Fig. 2 created by Thomas Winkler (2012).

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Questionnaires

Questionnaire for tourists

Gender: M ◯   F ◯   Age: _____   Occupation: _____

Nationality: _____

a) **Why are you here?**

Please circle the right answer	highly agree	agree	partly agree	disagree
b) **I enjoy my stay at this destination**	1	2	3	4
c) **All my expectations are met**	1	2	3	4
d) **I am here because of the sustainable tourism idea**	1	2	3	4
e) **I was informed about sustainable tourism before coming here**	1	2	3	4
f) **I learned something new about the surrounding environment during my stay**	1	2	3	4
g) **Enough information about the project is provided**	1	2	3	4
h) **I would like to learn more about the local culture and traditions**	1	2	3	4
i) **I took/will take part in local festivals or local customs**	1	2	3	4
j) **I am actively contributing to environmental conservation in this area (entrance fee, voluntary work, etc.)?**	1	2	3	4

Comments on your stay:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!!

☺

Questionnaire for community members

Gender: M ◯   F ◯   Age: _____   Occupation: _____

a) **Are you participating in the tourism project?**

      Yes   No

      ◯   ◯

If yes: What do you do?

b) **What do you know about ecotourism/sustainable tourism (goals, participation, environment, etc.)?**

c) **What do you think about the sustainability of the tourism project in your community?**

d) **How much of the project's income stays within the community?**

    < 75%   50% - 75%   25% - 50%   > 25%

     ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯

Please circle the right answer	highly agree	agree	partly agree	disagree
e) I can financially benefit from sustainable tourism	1	2	3	4
f) There was an improvement in infrastructure in the community since the project started (sewage treatment, waste treatment, etc.)	1	2	3	4
g) I think that my payment is fair	1	2	3	4
h) The project is supporting me in my job	1	2	3	4
i) I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project	1	2	3	4
j) I am satisfied with tourists and tourists' behaviour in general	1	2	3	4
k) There is enough information about the project	1	2	3	4
l) My culture is unique	1	2	3	4
m) Tourism is influencing the local culture[9]	1	2	3	4
n) Following (old) traditions is a good thing	1	2	3	4
o) The project is protecting the environment	1	2	3	4
p) The project encourages me to think about renewable energy	1	2	3	4
q) I am satisfied with the level of participation I have in the project	1	2	3	4

[9] Question m) in the questionnaire for community members is reversed in the analysis for an easier understanding

Questionnaire for project workers

Gender: M ○ F ○   Age: _____   Occupation: _____

a) Are you a local resident in this community?

Yes ○   No ○

b) Do you think that you earn more in this job than outside tourism business?

Yes ○   No ○

c) How much of the projects income stays within the community?

< 75% ○   50% - 75% ○   25% - 50% ○   > 25% ○

d) How much of the projects benefits are used for environmental protection?

< 75% ○   50% - 75% ○   25% - 50% ○   > 25% ○

Please circle the right answer	highly agree	agree	partly agree	disagree
e) Enough goods and services are purchased locally	1	2	3	4
f) Enough community members are participating in the project	1	2	3	4
g) I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project in this community	1	2	3	4
h) There is enough information about the project available	1	2	3	4
i) The project is influencing the local culture	1	2	3	4
j) Participation of community members is high	1	2	3	4
k) The project's political influence in the community is high	1	2	3	4
l) More locals should work for the project[10]	1	2	3	4
m) The project is contributing to environmental protection	1	2	3	4
n) There are good cooperations between the project and national parks/conservationists	1	2	3	4
o) The project is increasing the awareness of environmental protection	1	2	3	4

Comments:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!! ☺

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[10] Question l) in the questionnaire for project workers is reversed in the analysis for an easier understanding

Appendix 2 – Evaluations

Analysis of survey "Questionnaire for community members" on KVCTT (March 16th - 24th)

General Information						
Number of questionnaires	42					
Gender	male	29	female	7	household	6
Age	0-18	1	19-30	21	31-45	7
	46-60	5	> 61	2		
Occupation	Tourism	17	Shopkeeper	5	Farming	8
	Student	7	Others	6		
Village	Mulkharka	12	Chisapani	10	Nagarkot	12
	Dhulikhel	8				

a) Are you participating in the NETIF project?	yes	27	no	14	
If yes, what do you do?	* promoting tourism * attending meetings * cleaning campaign * sanitation facilities * pickle making training * food hygiene training		* tree planting * mushroom farming * briquette making * organic farming training * cooking training * herbal farming		

b) What do you know about sustainable tourism/ ecotourism?	* cleaning of village/track * preserve the forest * facilities for tourist

c) Do you think that NETIF is sustainable?	yes	35	no	3	

d) How much of tourism income stays within the community?	< 75%	6	50% - 75%	14	25% - 50%	11
	> 25%	9				

	highly agree "1"	agree "2"	partly agree "3"	disagree "4"	answers	Median
e) I can financially benefit from sustainable tourism	22	11	9	0	42	highly agree
f) There was an improvement in infrastructure in the community since the NETIF project started (sewage treatment, waste treatment, etc.)	23	8	8	1	40	highly agree
g) I think that my payment is fair	8	18	10	1	37	agree
h) NETIF is supporting me in my job	10	10	11	5	36	agree
i) I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project	21	11	6	3	41	highly agree
j) I am satisfied with tourists and tourists' behaviour in general	18	13	4	1	36	highly agree - agree
k) There is enough information about NETIF	13	8	17	4	42	agree - partly agree
l) My culture is unique	32	2	2	2	38	highly agree
m) Tourism is not influencing the local culture	5	4	17	16	42	partly agree
n) Following (old) traditions is a good thing	31	7	1	3	42	highly agree
o) The project is protecting the environment	25	9	6	0	40	highly agree

	highly agree "1"	agree "2"	partly agree "3"	disagree "4"	answers	Median
p) The project encourages me to think about renewable energy	13	12	5	9	39	agree
q) I am satisfied with the level of participation I have in NETIF	19	6	10	5	40	agree

Comments	* more training, longer trainings, more advanced trainings, trainings for young people * Financial support for more goats, financial support for plastic * support for more hygiene, more toilets *long-term cooperation with NETIF for promoting ecotourism and environment conservation *clean and green trekking trail

Analysis of survey "Questionnaire for NETIF workers" on KVCTT (March 16th - 24th)

General Information					
Number of questionnaires	6				
Gender	male	6	female	0	
Age	0-18		19-30	2	31-45	3
	46-60	1	> 61		
Occupation	Tourism	3	Student	1	Farming	1

a) Are you a local resident?	yes	6	no	0	

b) Do you think that you earn more in this job than outside tourism business?	yes	3	no	3	

d) How much of tourism income stays within the community?	< 75%	1	50% - 75%	1	25% - 50%	3
	> 25%	1				

d) How much of the project's benefits are used for environmental protection?	< 75%	2	50% - 75%	1	25% - 50%	3
	> 25%					

	highly agree "1"	agree "2"	partly agree "3"	disagree "4"	answers	Median
e) Enough goods and services are purchased locally	2	2	2	0	6	agree
f) The number of locals who should work for the project is enough	0	1	1	4	6	disagree
g) I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project in this community	3	3	0	0	6	highly agree - agree
h) There is enough information about the project available	2	2	2	0	6	agree
i) The project is influencing the local culture	1	2	1	2	6	agree - partly agree
j) Participation of community members is high	1	3	2	0	6	agree
k) The project's political influence in the community is high	0	2	4	0	6	partly agree
l) The project is contributing to environmental protection	4	2	0	0	6	highly agree
m) There are good cooperations between the project and national parks/conservationists	1	4	0	0	5	agree

n) The project is increasing the awareness of environmental protection	4	0	2	0	6	highly agree

Comments:	* highly satisfactory with NETIF and hoping for more programs in the future * NETIF should work for more years on tourism development and environmental conservation * more trainings for locals

Analysis of survey "Questionnaire for tourists" on KVCTT (March 16th - 24th)

General Information					
Number of questionnaires	21				
Gender	male	10	female	11	
Age	0-18	0	19-30	6	31-45	4
	46-60	10	> 61	1	
Occupation	driver, flower seller, vice president, manager, designer, teacher, student, dentist, carpenter, printer, fitter				
Nationality	Sweden	7	Australia	6	Netherlands	4
	France	2	Switzerland	1	Germany	1
a) Why are you here?	trekking	15	culture	6	nature	
	charity	3	holiday	7	other	1

	highly agree "1"	agree "2"	partly agree "3"	disagree "4"	answers	Median
b) I enjoy my stay at this destination	12	7	1	0	20	highly agree
c) All my expectations are met	9	11	1	0	21	agree
d) I am here because of the sustainable tourism idea	0	3	6	8	17	agree
e) I was informed about sustainable tourism before coming here	0	4	4	10	18	disagree
f) I learned something new about the surrounding environment during my stay	5	7	5	3	20	agree
g) Enough information about NETIF is provided	3	3	5	9	20	partly agree
h) I would like to learn more about the local culture and traditions	12	9	0	0	21	highly agree
i) I took/will take part in local festivals or local customs	10	8	3	0	21	agree
j) I am actively contributing to environmental conservation in this area (entrance fee, voluntary work, donations, etc.)?	6	4	8	3	21	partly agree

Comments on your stay	* concerns about the rubbish in villages * satisfaction about the hospitality * compliments on the trail maintenance * one wouldn't recommend to trek to his friends (no view due to clouds) * request for more information about ecotourism

Additional calculations for combined indicators

					answers	Median
How much of tourism income stays within the community? *community members question d)* *project worker question d)*	< 75%	7	50% - 75%	15	46	partly agree
	25% - 50%	14	> 25%	10		
I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project in this community *community members question i)* *project worker question g)*	24	14	6	3	47	highly agree
There is enough information about the project available *community members question k)* *project worker question h)*	15	10	19	4	48	agree
Tourism is influencing the local culture *community members question m)* *project worker question i)*	17	19	5	7	48	agree
The project is contributing to environmental protection *community members question o)* *project worker question m)*	29	11	6	0	46	highly agree
Expectations of tourists *tourist quest b) & c)*	21	18	2	0	41	highly agree
% of project money put into information and marketing *tourist quest f) & g)*	8	10	10	12	40	partly agree
% of tourists who are interested in local culture *tourist quest h) i)*	22	17	3	0	42	highly agree
% of tourists who are aware of ecotourism in the destination area *tourist quest d) e)*	0	7	10	18	35	disagree

Analysis of survey "Questionnaire for community members" in Bhujung (May 3rd - 6th)

General Information						
Number of questionnaires	31					
Gender	male	13	female	18		
Age	0-18	0	19-30	0	31-45	14
	46-60	12	> 61	5		
Occupation	Tourism	12	Shopkeeper	5	Farming	22
	Ex-Army	6	Others	4		
a) Are you participating in the Homestay project?	yes	12	no	19		
If yes, what do you do?	* Homestay					
b) What do you know about sustainable tourism/ ecotourism?	* cleaning footpath *saving forest *saving environment		*respect tourists *fulfil tourist's wishes			

c) What do you think about the sustainability of the homestay project in your community? (How can you sustain tourism in Bhujung?)	*providing guests with local products *not enough tourists *clean houses to sustain tourism *good tourism management is necessary					

d) How much of tourism income stays within the community?	< 75%	4	50% - 75%	7	25% - 50%	8
	> 25%	12				

	highly agree "1"	agree "2"	partly agree "3"	disagree "4"	answers	Median
e) I can financially benefit from sustainable tourism	9	9	0	0	18	highly agree - agree
f) There was an improvement in infrastructure in the community since the ACAP project started (sewage treatment, waste treatment, etc.)	31	0	0	0	31	highly agree
g) I think that my payment is fair	8	20	2	1	31	agree
h) NETIF is supporting me in my job	31	0	0	0	31	highly agree
i) I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project	20	11	0	0	31	highly agree
j) I am satisfied with tourists and tourists' behaviour in general	29	2	0	0	31	highly agree
k) There is enough information about ACAP	29	2	0	0	31	highly agree
l) My culture is unique	31	0	0	0	31	highly agree
m) Tourism is not influencing the local culture	27	0	0	4	31	highly agree
n) Following (old) traditions is a good thing	27	2	2	0	31	highly agree
o) The project is protecting the environment	31	0	0	0	31	highly agree
p) The project encourages me to think about renewable energy	29	2	0	0	31	highly agree
q) I am satisfied with the level of participation I have in ACAP	27	4	0	0	31	highly agree
Comments	*ACAP encourages to think about alternative energy through funding micro-hydro, improved stove, rice cookers *homestay income is not sufficient --> field work still necessary *there is a fixed rate for vegetables and meat in the village *before ACAP there were no toilets in the village, no knowledge					

Analysis of survey "Questionnaire for ACAP workers" in Bhujung (May 3rd - 6th)

General Information					
Number of questionnaires	5				
Gender	male	5	female		
Age	0-18		19-30	1	31-45	2
	46-60	2	> 61		
Occupation	ACAP	5			
a) Are you a local resident?	yes	2	no	3	

b) Do you think that you earn more in this job than outside tourism business?	yes	1	no	2			

d) How much of tourism income stays within the community?	< 75%	0	50% - 75%	0	25% - 50%	0
	> 25%	0				

d) How much of the project's benefits are used for environmental protection?	< 75%		50% - 75%	3	25% - 50%	2
	> 25%					

	highly agree "1"	agree "2"	partly agree "3"	disagree "4"	answers	Median
e) Enough goods and services are purchased locally	0	3	2	0	5	agree
f) The number of locals who should work for the project is enough	0	3	2	0	5	agree
g) I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project in this community	1	1	3	0	5	partly agree
h) There is enough information about the project available	2	1	1	0	4	highly agree - agree
i) The project is influencing the local culture	1	1	0	3	5	disagree
j) Participation of community members is high	5	0	0	0	5	highly agree
k) The project's political influence in the community is high	0	2	3	0	5	partly agree
l) The project is contributing to environmental protection	5	0	0	0	5	highly agree
m) There are good cooperations between the project and national parks/conservationists	5	0	0	0	5	highly agree
n) The project is increasing the awareness of environmental protection	5	0	0	0	5	highly agree

Additional calculations for combined indicators

					answers	Median
How much of tourism income stays within the community?	< 75%	4	50% - 75%	7	31	partly agree
community members question d) *project worker question d)*	25% - 50%	8	> 25%	12		
I am satisfied with the sustainable tourism project in this community *community members question i)* *project worker question g)*	21	12	3	0	36	highly agree
There is enough information about the project available *community members question k)* *project worker question h)*	31	3	1	0	35	highly agree
Tourism is influencing the local culture *community members question m)* *project worker question i)*	5	1	0	30	36	disagree
The project is contributing to environmental protection *community members question o)* *project worker question m)*	36	0	0	0	36	highly agree

Appendix 3 – Documents

Letter of support: Tribhuvan University

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

9 March 2012

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that Mr Thomas Winkler (winkler.thomas@gmx.at), an Austrian citizen, is a Master's student of the Universität Graz - Institut für Geographie und Raumforschurung (Heinrichstraße 36, A-8010) at Graz, AUSTRIA. He is now in Nepal for his master's thesis field work study. Under the memorandum of agreement between the Central Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University and Department of Geography and Regional Science, Graz University, Austria, Mr Winkler is doing field research here in Nepal under my close supervision, affiliating to this department. Therefore, I would like to sincerely request all concerned organisations to assist Mr Winkler in making available necessary data and information and others related to his thesis research, upon his request.

I appreciate for the kind cooperation and consideration in advance.

I wish Mr Thomas Winkler's staying will remain enjoyful during the whole field study period in Nepal.

Prof Pushkar K Pradhan, PhD
Head

नेपाल सरकार
वन तथा भू-संरक्षण मन्त्रालय
राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्ज तथा वन्यजन्तु संरक्षण विभाग
(....................इकोलोजि...................शाखा)

फोन नं.: ४२२०८५०
         ४२२०९१२
         ४२२७९२६
फ्याक्स नं.: ४२२७६७५

पो. ब. नं. – ८६०
बबरमहल, काठमाडौं
Email: info@dnpwc.gov.np
http//:www.dnpwc.gov.np

संकेत नं.:-
पत्र संख्या :- २०६८।०६९ ईको नं. २६२
चलानी नं. :- २३८६

मिति :- २०६८।१२।२३

श्री शिवपुरी नागार्जुन राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्ज कार्यालय
पानिमुहान, काठमाण्डौं ।

विषय :- <u>अध्ययन अनुसन्धान अनुमति दिइएको वारे ।</u>

प्रस्तुत विषयमा वन तथा भू-संरक्षण मन्त्रालयको पत्र संख्या : वाता ०६८/६९ चलानी नं.: १२६ मिति २०६८।१२।१९ को पत्रानुसार Karl Franzens University, Graz Austria का बिद्यार्थी S.Mag Thomas Winkler ले त्यस निकुञ्ज क्षेत्रमा "Ecotourism as a Tool for Community Developement" विषयमा मिति April, 2012 देखि July, 2012 सम्मका लागी तपशिलमा उल्लेख गरीएका शर्तको आधारमा रही अध्ययन अनुसन्धान गर्न अनुमति दिने भन्ने मिति २०६८।१२।१२ को नेपाल सरकार (सचिवस्तर) को निर्णयानुसार अध्ययन अनुमति दिइएको व्यहोरा जानकारीको लागि अनुरोध छ ।

शर्तहरु :

१. अध्ययन अनुसन्धान कार्य गर्दा रा.नि.तथा व.ज.सं.ऐन, २०२९ र अर्न्तगतका नियमावली र अन्य प्रचलित ऐन नियमहरु अनुसार गर्नु पर्ने ।
२. अध्ययनको लागि पेश भएकोप्रस्ताव १ प्रति सम्बन्धीत कार्यालयमा पेश गर्नु पर्ने ।
३. अध्ययन पश्चात १/१प्रति Report यस विभाग र सम्वन्धित कार्यालयहरुमा अनिवार्य रुपमा बुझाउनु पर्ने ।
४. कार्यालयले तोकेको प्रतिनिधीको रोहवरमा अध्ययन अनुसन्धान कार्य गर्नु पर्ने ।

डा. महेश्वर ढकाल
इकोलोजिष्ट

वोधार्थ :-
श्री S.Mag Thomas Winkler :- सम्बन्धित राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्ज कार्यालय संग समन्वय गरी अध्ययन अनुसन्धान गर्नुहुन ।

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