Response of local communities to the development of national park-based tourism

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Background

- Declining economy and community life in rural villages
- Contribution of protected areas to rural development
- National parks are an attraction for rural tourism
Tourism attractions and services in the countryside
The aim of the study

..was to investigate how national parks create economic, social and cultural benefits for the surrounding rural communities, how the visitors find their needs are serviced in those rural communities, and how the rural communities have responded the demand for tourism services.
National parks in Finland

- 37 national parks
- Area 9789 km²
- 5 oldest established in 1938
- 2 million visits in 2010
- Typical visitor is well-educated, employee, man
  (Metsähallitus Visitor Surveys)
Data

- Surveys to locals
  - surveys to entrepreneurs (n=123)
  - surveys to inhabitants (n=1621)
  - surveys to decision makers (n=75)

- Visitor surveys
  - Metsähallitus visitor surveys
  - Metla surveys
    - Linnansaari N=345
    - Seitseminen N=503
    - Repovesi N=331
Demand for recreation tourism services
Use and interest of tourism services in Repovesi N.P.

Repovesi national park

- Restaurant service
- Guided canoe trip
- Canoe rentals
- Cottage rentals
- Sauna rentals
- Independent fishing trip
- Hiking trails outside park
- Snowshoe trip
- Rowing boat rentals
- Camping site
- Souvenirs

% of visitors

- Interested
- Used
Responses of locals

Enterpreneurs

Inhabitants

Decision makers
Tourism and recreational service enterprises within 30 km radius of Linnansaari, Seitseminen and Repovesi national parks (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Linnansaari</th>
<th>Seitseminen</th>
<th>Repovesi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants &amp; cafés</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport (land &amp; water)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism &amp; recreational programme services</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary production (direct farm sales, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; kiosks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of visitors (2009)</td>
<td>31 000</td>
<td>45 500</td>
<td>74 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of services per 1000 visitors</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average visitor spending (€)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of visitor satisfaction with tourism services</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enterpreneurs’ plans to use national park visitors as clients for business

- No enterprise plans
- Considering
- Just starting

Legend:
- Linnansaari
- Seitseminen
- Repovesi
ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE GROUPS

- DEMAND- AND RESOURCE AWARENESS (Adaptors)
  1. Enterprise resource awareness
  2. Demand awareness

- IDEA- AND RESOURCE AWARENESS (Adopters)
  1. Awareness of sources of business ideas
  2. Enterprise resource awareness

- INFORMED SATISFICERS
  1. Satisficing attitude towards business
  2. Demand awareness
  3. Awareness of sources of business ideas
  4. Enterprise resource awareness

- SATISFICERS
  1. Satisficing attitude towards business
Entrepreneuer Groups by National Park

- Satisficers
- Informed Satisficers
- Idea-s and Resource Awareness
- Demand and Resource Awareness

Legend:
- Repovesi
- Seitseminen
- Linnansaari
ENTREPRENEURS' PERCEIVED BUSINESS PROBLEMS

- INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS
  1. Labour costs
  2. Taxation
  3. Legislation and regulations
  4. Local business atmosphere

- OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS
  1. Seasonality of business
  2. Marketing difficulties
  3. Financial constraints
  4. Lack of firms for inter-business cooperation

- CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY NATURE PROTECTION REGULATIONS
  1. Nature protection area regulations
  2. Inflexibility of officials

- TOURISM SEGMENT PROBLEMS
  1. Over-supply of services
  2. Over-dependence on single customers
Resident’s economic benefits from local national park

**Segment**
- Accommodation
- Water transp.
- Fishing
- Adventure holidays
- Farm holidays
- Wilderness guide
- Water transp.

**% respondents**
- Linnansaari: 1.5%
- Seitseminen: n. 2%
- Repovesi: 3%

**Employer benefits**
- Emp. by NP
- Family memb. employed by NP
- Own ent. benefits
Municipality keypersons’ opinion of the role of the national park for the local economy

National park tourism's multiplier effects in home commune

- Linnansaari
- Seitseminen
- Repovesi
- Series4

Bars represent the opinions of keypersons from different municipalities, categorized by the importance of the national park for their local economy.
## Decision-makers' assessment of tourism enterprise development needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development requirement</th>
<th>LINNANSAARI</th>
<th>SEITSEMINEN</th>
<th>REPOVESI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of information and know-how and the development of cooperation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement of business acumen and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector support for enterprise development</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of cooperative channels for enterprise support (e.g. Leader)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support from regional structural funds</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary and Conclusions

1 The economic and social impacts of national parks in surrounding rural communities are developing over time; parks of different ages are in different phases.

2 A national park can be a key attraction for the rural tourism. If the park is the only attraction, the impact and benefits may be low.

3 Even high number of visitors does not generate high income flow to the region if 1) there is no tourism services; 2) the park is the only tourism attraction.
In our cases:

4 There is a lot of demand for more rural services.
   - In young park, the latent demand is bigger
   - Fast growing number of visitors increase the gap between demand and supply

5 Demand potential
   Recreation home owners are regular visitors to the region, and they make a ’steady’ visitor flow, and are potential clients also for tourism service providers

6 It seems to take time that the region gets benefits of the national park tourism. The question is how to shorten the time needed for positive development of rural tourism?

7 Problem: Decision makers are often committed to support the traditional businesses and livelihoods of the region, mot national park tourism

7 Decision makers and entrepreneurs ideas of needed actions of development are often not into same direction
Thank You