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Chapter 2.2

Knowledge dynamics in the tourism - social entrepreneurship nexus

Giang Thi Phi, Michelle Whitford, Dianne Dredge¹

Abstract

Tourism is often employed as a vehicle for facilitating social-economic development, however its usefulness has been somewhat limited in relation to addressing social issues, and in particular, those issues relating to poverty. This is partly due to the lack of cross-sectoral interactions and knowledge exchange between private, public and third sectors that are needed to create effective and appropriate initiatives to leverage tourism for social benefits. Such traditional sectoral boundaries can be broken down through social entrepreneurship approaches which concomitantly, facilitate the creation and synergizing of social innovation that addresses persistent social issues. Yet to date, the utility of cross-sectoral knowledge dynamics still remains largely under-researched in both the social entrepreneurship and tourism literature. This chapter introduces readers to the concept of knowledge dynamics and discusses knowledge dynamics in the tourism and social entrepreneurship nexus via a case study of community-based tourism in Mai Hich, Vietnam. We argue that by gaining an enhanced understanding of cross-sectoral knowledge dynamics, we can strengthen the overall praxis of tourism and social entrepreneurship, and in particular, assist policymakers in fostering conditions that generate increased innovation.

2.2.1 Introduction

Talented and passionate social entrepreneurs are often perceived as the key innovators behind the rapid rise of initiatives that help to tackle complex social issues. Not surprisingly then, early studies focusing on social entrepreneurship in tourism have explored the various attributes of individual social entrepreneurs and their respective, innovative social enterprises (e.g., Dzisi and Otsyina 2014; Heyniger and Lamoureaux 2007). Social innovation however, rarely occurs in isolation or within individual organizations but is empowered by collaborative ecologies that transcend organizations and sectors to become social movements. For instance, a social entrepreneur would need access to local knowledge and market knowledge possessed by diverse actors, located in diverse information networks ranging from local/international business associations, local/international NGOs to local community groups and government departments at different levels. Therefore, the role that collaborative and

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inter-sectoral knowledge dynamics plays is important to understand social entrepreneurship, yet this concept still remains largely overlooked in the academic literature (Tanimoto 2012). This chapter aims to address this gap by critically exploring the knowledge dynamics within the tourism and social entrepreneurship nexus. By gaining an enhanced understanding of cross-sectoral knowledge dynamics, we can strengthen the overall praxis of tourism and social entrepreneurship, and in particular, assist policymakers in fostering the enabling conditions that give rise to innovations where tourism can be used as a means to help to deal with persistent and complex social issues. A case study of community-based tourism (CBT) in Mai Hich, Vietnam is used to illustrate the knowledge dynamics that emerged in this socially innovative tourism venture.

2.2.2 Knowledge Dynamics and Innovation

Traditional research on business innovation and entrepreneurship tends to focus on an individual-centered perspective of knowledge creation (e.g., Olson 1985; Wood 2002). In recent years, a more social and process-oriented perspective on innovation is gradually gaining attention, which better takes into account the knowledge dynamics that unfold during the generation and dissemination processes of new knowledge creation (Steinberg 2005).

There exists a plethora of innovation models such as the model of knowledge creation by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995); the model of expansive learning by Engeström (1999); the model of knowledge building by Bereiter (2002); the model of knowledge management within organizations by Easterby-Smith and Lyles (2003); and the model of knowledge management between external organizations by Carlson (2003). While each model possesses certain unique characteristics, most emphasize that innovation entails much more than the simplistic view of individuals' spontaneous moments of discovery based on their existing knowledge bases (Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen 2004). On the contrary, innovation often involves ambiguity and 'creative chaos' where uncertainty, non-linearity and actor heterogeneity become central factors (Gilbert, Ahrweiler and Pyka 2014).

It is argued that institutional and geographical settings, along with actors' ontological and epistemological perspectives, have created knowledge and cognitive boundaries which frame the way actors think and learn (see e.g., Dredge, 2014). During the shared or collaborative innovation process, social interactions provide essential tools and resources to transcend 'cognitive boundaries' or 'conceptual thresholds' and in turn, allow participating actors to transform their thinking and improve their current understanding of the problem (Dredge, 2014; Paavola et al. 2004). Unsurprisingly, in a review of various innovation models, Paavola et al. (2004, p.564) noted that innovation is fundamentally a social process that evolves over sustained periods of time, to which knowledge dynamics play a significant role:

'New ideas and innovations emerge *between* rather than *within* people... Knowledge creation is not primarily a matter of creative individuals, but instead requires fundamental reorganization of the practices of the whole community'.

2.2.3 Knowledge Dynamics in Tourism and Social Entrepreneurship

Arguably, an enhanced understanding of knowledge dynamics has more significance in a social entrepreneurship context than in an economic focused business context, as social entrepreneurship essentially thrives on its ability to transcend traditional sectoral and geographical boundaries to effectively create and disseminate new knowledge (Zebrowski 2009). There are several reasons for this.

First, the rise of social entrepreneurship has drawn attention to the traditional division of the economy into public, private and non-profit sectors, which for a long time has limited the cross-sectoral interactions and knowledge/value exchange needed for a full understanding of complex social issues and the development of innovative solutions (Yunus 2005). Traditional sectoral boundaries are clear in tourism, creating a dichotomy between 1) the ‘development first’ approach which focuses on social developmental goals and is led by the non-profit sector, and 2) the ‘tourism first’ approach which focuses on private sector, market-led, industry expansion and economic growth (Burns 2004). This leads to the situation where, on the one hand, NGOs and often, local government, may be equipped with local knowledge but lack practical business expertise to develop commercially viable tourism products. On the other hand, tourism experts from the private sector are too often, not interested in participating in tourism projects that are underpinned and/or driven by a social mission. Arguably, without the integration of business acumen, social projects that utilize tourism cannot be competitive or financially sustainable in the long run and fall under the ‘charity replace market’ category, where local communities may enjoy the benefits for a short while but revert back to their previous conditions when the projects end (Polak, 2009). According to Phills, Deiglmeier and Miller (2008, p. 1): ‘Most difficult and important social problems can’t be understood, let alone solved, without involving the nonprofit, public, and private sectors’. It is within this context, that the social entrepreneurship-tourism nexus is creating and presenting new pathways and solutions through the cross-sectoral exchange of ideas and values to create sustainable solutions that work in the long-term.

Second, while business firms often seek to hold new knowledge internally to maximize competitive advantage and financial gain, the end purpose of knowledge creation in social entrepreneurship is to harness this knowledge in a way that can create wider social change (Shockley and Frank, 2011). Knowledge flows in social entrepreneurship must therefore also emphasize the externalization of knowledge to build collaboration and social synergies so that the value of the whole becomes much greater than the sum of efforts of the individual social entrepreneurs. In recent years, the advancement of technology (e.g., in communication and transport) has enabled knowledge to move rapidly beyond geographical boundaries, fueling social entrepreneurship with dynamic knowledge flows that transcend sectors and territories.

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Clearly knowledge dynamics occupies a central role in social entrepreneurship, yet research on this topic is still in its infancy. Apart from a small collection of work that touches on the dynamic interactions between the social entrepreneurs and their embedded structures (i.e., social system/context) (e.g., Garud, Hardy and Maguire, 2007; Shaw and de Bruin, 2013; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2009), only a handful of authors (e.g., Tanimoto 2008, 2012; Montgomery, Dacin and Dacin, 2012) have explored the social entrepreneurship process from a 'multi-stakeholder' or 'collective social entrepreneurship' perspective, where various actors (including the social entrepreneur) co-create ideas and co-contribute resources to bring a social innovation to success. More specific to the concept of knowledge dynamics is the notion of 'community of practice' in social entrepreneurship by Popoviciu and Popoviciu (2011), which explores the communication and interaction dynamics of individuals or groups of people who share certain interests or objectives, and who are engaged in a shared problem-solving process to generate new perspectives/knowledge.

The scarcity of research on knowledge dynamics is partly explained in a meta-review of social entrepreneurship literature by Mair and Martí (2006). These authors observed that social entrepreneurship studies are under the strong influence from, and hence closely resemble, the empirical and theoretical evolution of research on business entrepreneurship. Consequently, there has been an abundance of studies identifying the social entrepreneurs' personalities and leadership qualities, compared to studies of social entrepreneurship processes (including knowledge dynamics). In the field of tourism, while knowledge dynamics has been increasingly explored within the context of networks and innovation (e.g., Hjalager, 2002; Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad 2005; Weidenfeld, Williams and Butler 2010; McLeod and Vaughan 2014), a thorough search of the literature revealed that the study of knowledge dynamics in tourism social entrepreneurship is almost non-existent.

Beyond addressing the gap in academic literature, studies of knowledge dynamics in tourism and social entrepreneurship also have important implications in practice. First, by understanding knowledge dynamics in social entrepreneurship, actors can take active steps to increase the frequency and channels of knowledge flows as well as the quality of knowledge interactions within and between communities of practices to create even greater synergies. Second, in a newly emerging knowledge-based economy, where the production, distribution and use of knowledge are replacing physical assets as key drivers for economic and social development, policymakers are facing the challenge of having to develop relevant policies and strategies that promote knowledge generation and encourage the 'optimal utilization' of new knowledge (Cooper 2014). In developing countries, where social issues are well-entrenched and governments often have limited capacity to assist, there is a heightened need for policymakers to understand the nature of knowledge dynamics in various contexts (e.g., the social entrepreneurship-tourism nexus) to foster conditions (or at the very least, not contribute to conditions that impede) the generation and sharing of knowledge that contributes to social innovations aimed at addressing persistent and complex social issues.

2.2.4 Research Approach

To critically explore knowledge dynamics within the tourism and social entrepreneurship nexus, this study undertook an exploratory case study of CBT development in Mai Hich, Vietnam. In line with Yin (2003), an exploratory case study, as opposed to an explanatory or descriptive case study, is used to explore these knowledge dynamics because there has been little to no research previously conducted. An exploratory study allows us to map out the dynamics and to identify aspects, relationships and dimensions for further research.

The collection, analysis and interpretation of data were guided by an innovative methodological tool known as ‘innovation biography’ and/or ‘knowledge biography’. Knowledge biography was first developed as part of EURODITE, which was a five-year research project investigating knowledge dynamics in innovation processes within and between organizations, regions and in wider contexts (i.e., national and global scales) (Halkier, Dahlström, James, Manniche and Olsen, 2010). Utilizing a qualitative approach with specific guidelines for data collection and analysis of semi-structured interviews, the knowledge biography approach enables the reconstruction of an innovation process and its related knowledge flows and evolution over time and space, and it is also not limited to geographical or sectoral boundaries (Butzin and Widmaier, 2010). Butzin and Widmaier (2010) suggest a number of elements that can form parts of the knowledge biography. For the purpose of the research on which this chapter is based, the following three key elements have been included:

1) Knowledge phases

Knowledge phases allow the researchers to follow the entire life-span of an innovation, from its first conception to its dissemination. Mulgan, Ali, Halkett and Sanders (2007, cited in Tanimoto 2012, p.269) define social innovation as a problem-solving process ‘which tackle(s) social problems with a view to their resolution’. This view is closely related to Engeström’s (1999) model that argues innovation takes place in a seven-phase process of problem-solving, through which the participants collaboratively transform existing knowledge into new knowledge to deal with an identified problem more effectively. These seven-phases were adapted for the social entrepreneurship context to include five main knowledge phases:

- (1) Questioning and criticizing current intervention(s) to a social issue
- (2) Developing new intervention(s)
- (3) Implementing intervention(s)
- (4) Evaluating intervention(s)
- (5) Consolidating intervention(s) (e.g., sharing knowledge and/or scaling up).

It is important to note that knowledge phases rarely progress in a linear manner, nor does the process of innovation necessarily end once a new intervention is consolidated (Paavola et al. 2004). Rather, various phases might occur concurrently (e.g., phase 2 and phase 3 - when the intervention is continued to be developed during initial implementation) or there may be

loops between these phases (e.g., between phase 4 and 1, before proceeding to phase 5), until a desirable intervention is achieved. This is particularly true when dealing with social issues, as uncertainties and unexpected outcomes often emerge when the intervention interacts within the complex social context. Moreover, Engeström (1999) emphasized that the knowledge phases are an heuristic tool for expansive learning only, and that innovation should be viewed as an iterative, flexible, dynamic process constituting various attempts to understand the problem and refine possible solutions.

2) Actors and their contexts

Actors and their contexts are major factors in the shaping of knowledge dynamics. As discussed above, innovation in social entrepreneurship is largely dependent upon the contribution of diverse types of knowledge from an array of actors across various sectors. In tourism for instance, along with the knowledge contributed by tourism experts and tourism social entrepreneurs, various levels of government, donors, NGOs and local communities are also considered important knowledge sources. In addition to the identification of actors and their contextual settings in five different knowledge phases, this case study also identifies cross-sectoral engagement along with the geographical spread of the actors' social interactions.

3) Knowledge interactions

Knowledge interaction refers to the movement, coalescence and structuring of different knowledge types into transformative understandings. While we acknowledge the existence of a wide variety of knowledge (e.g. explicit, tacit, embrained, embodied, etc.), for the purpose of this chapter, two main knowledge types are explored: *explicit* (i.e., knowledge that is highly structured and can be expressed in clear forms of language such as words and numbers) and *tacit* (i.e., knowledge that is hard to articulate in formal terms and embedded in individuals' personal intangible qualities such as their beliefs, experience and values) (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Tacit and explicit knowledge are not static; they are dynamic and can be repeatedly transformed through diverse interactions between actors and/or groups of actors (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Key events in knowledge interactions can be captured by putting together diverse actors' 'story-telling' of the innovation process (Jokela, Niinikoski, & Muhos, 2015).

The knowledge biography approach enables the dynamism of knowledge flows in the innovation process to be grasped and communicated without being restricted to geographical territories or sectoral boundaries. More importantly, by combining the key elements of knowledge dynamics, the knowledge biography approach allows actors in tourism social entrepreneurship to better appreciate the diversity of participants and contextual settings, the complexity of the relationships that take place between actors and the dynamics of knowledge interactions. This in turn, allows actors to take active steps to explicitly include knowledge dynamics into their thinking. This has practical significance given that social entrepreneurship communities of practices often work at the coalface, having little time to

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reflect on the use, or movement, or interpretative acts that occur within their environment. Nevertheless, these dynamics can have profound effects both on individual social enterprises and, by way of transfer, on the ecology of social change within broader communities.

Data collection

Both secondary and primary data have been utilized in this case study. The knowledge biography approach uses a data collection process which starts with a narrative interview with ‘the major responsible person of the innovation process’ (Butzin and Widmaier 2010, p.11). In this case, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the social entrepreneur developing CBT in Mai Hich. The first interview generated background information for the case and the second interview was designed to obtain specific information regarding 1) the timeline of each knowledge phase, 2) the actors involved and 3) the key knowledge interaction events that occurred during the emergence and implementation of this social innovation. Interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and translated into English as Vietnamese is the lead author’s first language. Using participant observation techniques, the lead author also observed and noted the characteristics of knowledge exchange at two informal meetings between the social entrepreneur, local tourism businesses, and government officials.

Following these two interviews, secondary data (the business plan, project concept notes, press releases, news articles, etc.) were collected to identify the actors involved in CBT in Mai Hich. This data was readily available as the Mai Hich CBT is a pioneer of tourism social entrepreneurship, consequently its development was not only covered extensively by the media but was also very accessible via Internet searches. Finally, three television documentaries on Mai Hich (in Vietnamese with English subtitles) were analysed as they contained semi-structured interviews of diverse actors talking about the development of CBT in Mai Hich.

The aforementioned data was triangulated and analyzed. Analysis involved identifying the major actors, their location and their contribution to the development process, in order to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted case study that revealed a real and detailed story of CBT in Mai Hich (i.e., an innovation process).

2.2.5 Mai Hich Community-based Tourism Knowledge Biography

2.2.5.1 Contextual Setting

Mai Hich is a small village located in the Northwest mountainous area of Mai Chau district, Hoa Binh province, Vietnam. Mai Chau is classified as a remote rural district where the vast majority of people rely solely on low and irregular income from agriculture activities. In 2012, the Mai Chau People's Committee claimed that 32.6% of households still lived in poverty and 24.1% of these households suffered undernourishment between crop harvests (Nguyen, Luu and Mac, 2014). Mai Hich is home to the White Thai minority ethnic group

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and, like many other villages in the region, its scenic landscapes and unique indigenous cultures provide opportunities where tourism can be developed as a means for poverty reduction. Over the past decade however, tourism activities have mainly been occurring in Lac village near the central area of Mai Chau, leaving other villages largely untouched (Nguyen, 2013). Thus until 2011, tourism was still a foreign concept to many locals in Mai Hich, despite the village's close proximity (14 kilometers distance) to the district center.

2.2.5.2 The Innovation Process

Phase 1: Questioning and Criticizing Current Intervention

In 2011, CBT was developed in Mai Hich as part of an integrated community development program focusing on poverty reduction, social equity and sustainable livelihoods. Funded from 2011-2013 by MISEREOR and Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) INGOs, the project was implemented by the Centre for Community Health and Development (COHED) which is a Vietnamese NGO specializing in working with vulnerable communities and individuals (COHED 2013). Influenced by the recent international and national Green Growth strategy, the project's main aim was to help local people improve their standard of living by utilizing available resources in the area for income generation, while preventing negative impacts to the local environment. To achieve this, COHED sought to build eco-homestays, which are compatible with the village's traditional housing structure and provide training to increase local citizens' capacity to operate the homestays in a sustainable manner. During the implementation of these ideas however, the project got caught up in traditional pattern of NGO-led CBT development. For instance, locals went to traditional sit-down workshops in which theoretical information was provided (e.g., definitions of tourism, tourists and 'green' development). However, this information was not deemed very relevant to the daily operations of tourism businesses (i.e., from the information it was not clear how homestays should be designed and operated). Consequently, the local people were skeptical, and it was very hard to convince anyone in the village to invest in the first homestay, even with technical and partial financial support from the NGO (VTV2 2013).

In 2012, a breakthrough occurred when COHED called for volunteer support from tourism experts. Responding to this call, Mr. Binh Minh Duong, a recently retired director of a tour company, became involved and quickly took the lead in the Mai Hich CBT project. Mr. Duong's extensive experience in tourism and hospitality helped him to recognize a general supply-demand gap where tour companies have relentlessly searched for quality, responsible CBT opportunities, yet most CBT projects could not provide products and services that satisfied tourists' needs (Nguyen 2013). Moreover Mr. Duong identified the following issues with the current CBT development in Mai Chau:

- CBT in Lac village was mostly self-organized by local people trying to capitalize on opportunities to improve their income. Without guidance from experts or proper

management from local authorities, the services on offer were of low quality, over-commercialized and unsustainable.

- In Mai Hich, CBT was developed by an NGO lacking in tourism expertise and with no understanding of market needs. Thus, the development of an attractive, well-targeted tourism product was poorly executed. Additionally, the NGO's minimal promotion and advertising campaigns were sporadic and there was little to no effort made to continuously and consistently maintain high quality services to ensure customer satisfaction.
- There was an inflated focus on providing homestay in CBT. This led to a lack of other value-added services and activities that have the capacity to improve tourists' experiences and distribute tourism benefits more widely to the whole community.

(Duong Minh Binh 2015)

Phase 2: Developing New Interventions

As a result of Mr. Duong's understanding of tourism and his appreciation for the needs of various actors, he was able to develop an optimum solution that had the potential to create a win-win situation for all involved. He proposed an 'alternative' CBT model with the following key criteria: (1) Ensure hygiene and sanitation, especially in bathroom and toilet areas; (2) Sleeping and dining areas should be separated and tourists should have privacy space at the homestay; (3) Overall designs of CBT (e.g., homestay structure, souvenirs, value-added activities) should reflect local cultures and utilize local materials; (4) CBT activities should be well-integrated into local people's lives (e.g., weaving, vegetable planting, traditional dance performing) (Duong Minh Binh 2015).

Phase 3: Implementing Interventions

During the implementation phase of this CBT model, practical training using a hands-on coaching-style was applied to develop tourism expertise within the local community. Moreover, Mr. Duong's connection with the industry led to the voluntary engagement of many other tourism and hospitality experts. For instance, a chef from a 5-star hotel was introduced to the community to provide training in the professional preparation and presentation of food and beverage. Local hosts learned how to create and present visually attractive meals with a mix of local specialties and popular dishes that could cater to diverse tastes of visitors (Nguyen 2013).

Importantly, to facilitate a sense of autonomy and engagement throughout the community, local people were encouraged to become major investors in the CBT project. To assist resource poor local entrepreneurs, COHED provided minor in-kind support (i.e., mattresses, bedding and curtains) and encouraged the use of free, local environmentally-friendly materials such as bamboo to upgrade existing stilt houses. Commenting on her family's involvement with CBT, Minh Tho who is a local farmer turned tourism entrepreneur stated: 'VND80 million (nearly US\$4,000) was a fortune for us, but I finally decided to invest

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knowing that poverty cannot be eliminated without taking some chances' (Nguyen 2013, p.1). In December 2012, Minh Tho homestay was opened, followed by two other homestays in 2013.

At the onset, Mai Hich CBT adopted a strategy of continuously taking into consideration tour companies' and tourists' ideas on the products and services they would like to experience. Consequently, the provision of value-added activities such as trekking and stream crafting (amongst others) have since been included to meet market needs, resulting in a steady increase in tourists into the area, and continued positive promotion from both domestic and international tour operators.

Phase 4: Evaluating Intervention

In 2013, an initial evaluation revealed that Mai Hich CBT created 79 new jobs for the community, with 23 positions in the three homestays (i.e., front desk, housekeeping, F&B, laundry) and 56 positions in other tourism services (i.e., traditional dance & music performance, trekking guides, rafting and bicycle rental services) (Duong 2015). At this point, local government became involved and a tourism management board was established to ensure that existing and further CBT development in the village are in compliance with the goals of preserving local cultures and protecting the environment (VTV2 2013).

Phase 5: Consolidating Intervention

By 2014, the COHED CBT project ended with the opening of the fourth homestay. However, the CBT model has continued to expand beyond the local context. Although the initial project was developed for Mai Hich community, under direction of the Centre for Social Initiative Promotion (CSIP), Mr. Duong understood the CBT model from a social entrepreneurship perspective and its potential to be scaled up to deliver much greater socio-economic impacts. With advice regarding legal frameworks and scaling up approaches from CSIP, the social enterprise known as CBT Travel and Consulting was established and has continued to work closely with other local governments, local entrepreneurs, international NGOs, social entrepreneurs and tourism experts all over Vietnam to adapt and refine the initial model to suit other areas (Duong Minh Binh 2015). By 2015, CBT Travel and Consulting established another 12 CBTs in 7 provinces, using tourism to continue creating positive changes to impoverished and vulnerable communities across Vietnam. CBT Travel and Consulting's long-term commitment to and within the community is clearly stated in the organization's business plan: 'Not only do we design and implement these projects, but we also provide long-term support to warrant their viability and profitability' (Duong 2015)

2.2.6 Discussion

2.2.6.1 Multi-Sectoral Actors and Multi-scalar Reach of Innovation Process

This case study has shown that there was involvement and knowledge contribution from a diverse range of actors across private, public and third sectors at the micro- (local), meso- (national) and macro- (international) levels throughout the CBT innovation process (Table 2.2.1).

Table 2.2.1:
Mai Hich CBT actors

| Sector | Actor |
|----------------|---|
| Third sector | COHED (local) Other local NGOs (local) Donors (MISEREOR & Bread for the World) (international) Other INGOs/ Donors (international) |
| Public sector | Mai Hich local government (local) Other local governments (national) Vietnamese government (national) National leaders (international) |
| Private sector | Tourism experts (national) Tour companies/operators (national/international) Domestic/International tourists (national/international) |

This case study has shown that knowledge dynamics are strongly connected to individuals and to the specific organizations that commit to learning, developing knowledge and stimulating knowledge exchange. Furthermore, how these individuals and organizations transfer knowledge and create synergies beyond individual social enterprises is a crucial factor in moving single initiatives towards a social movement. By tracing the various sources of ideas and influences during the innovation process, the knowledge biography approach reveals a multi-sectoral, multi-scalar reach for the CBT social innovation. For instance, COHED's goals and practices in developing Mai Hich CBT are influenced by (1) the donors' agendas and values, and (2) the government's green-growth strategy. Arguably, the project donors, through the provision of funding, have significant influence on the innovation's goals, which in turn need to be aligned with their own agendas and values. In this case, CBT was used as part of a larger, MISEREOR and Bread for the World funded project for poverty alleviation in an ethnic minority community whose focus was on supporting 'the weakest members of society' (MISEREOR 2015, p.1). This influence is reflected in the case study,

which showed the continuous involvement of MISEREOR and Bread for the World in the first four phases of the CBT social innovation, before their role was replaced by other donors/INGOs in the consolidation/scaling up phase (phase 5).

Additionally, the CBT social innovation process is also influenced by meta-strategy and developmental frameworks from the public sector, which were first developed at the international level before assuming down-ward influences at national, regional and local levels. The Green Growth strategy in the case study is a typical example. Green Growth strategy has its origin from the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development where, in 2005, 52 national leaders from Asia and the Pacific region reached an agreement to pursue a path of 'green growth' (United Nations 2015). Recently, the multi-level reach of the Green Growth strategy has extended to the Vietnamese government and in turn shaped the agendas and practices of Mai Hich government and local NGOs, including COHED. Consequently, the Vietnamese government and national leaders contributed throughout all phases of innovation process in the knowledge biography.

Multi-scalar reach of the CBT social innovation is also found in the private sector. The demands and expectations of consumers occupy a central role in service industries such as hospitality and tourism. Indeed, market adaptability via the continuous identification and integration of (at the very least), tourists' wants, needs and expectations into products and services has enormous bearing on the competitiveness of the CBT. In the case of the Mai Hich CBT project, not only domestic and international tourists, but also tour operators and tourism experts were encouraged to (and did) directly contribute to the 'open innovation' or 'co-creation' of the CBT social innovation development.

2.2.6.2 The Targeted Population for Social Change

The population targeted for social change in the Mai Hich CBT project comprised the local tourism entrepreneurs and the local community. This population contributed valuable local situated knowledge (which eventually shapes the goals and designs of tourism interventions) and included information relating to: 1) the diverse causes of local issues (e.g., local poverty), 2) the local resources available, and 3) current livelihoods and needs. Moreover, one of the key criteria when developing CBT is to ensure its activities are well-integrated into, and complement the targeted population's current livelihoods. Yet despite being the key actors around which the whole innovation initiative is built, the role of the targeted population is often overlooked during phase 2 - the development of interventions. In the case of Mai Hich CBT, instead of viewing the community simply as 'beneficiaries' or a 'social problem' that needs to be resolved, the tourism social entrepreneur (i.e., Mr. Duong) understood their strengths and needs: "All the people I have worked with helped me to realize one thing; they have more than enough enthusiasm and plenty of diligence, but they only fail due to a lack of expertise. And this expertise can be trained" (*pers. comm.*, 2015). This knowledge led to the design of vocational hands-on training with tourism experts that replaced ineffective formal tourism workshops during the implementation phase.

2.2.6.3 Local NGO as the ‘Gatekeeper’

Studies of social entrepreneurship have found that there can be ‘gatekeepers’ or key knowledge brokers who make key decisions in determining how new knowledge is introduced, explored and utilized (Bloom and Dees, 2008; Lee, 2014). In the case of Mai Hich CBT, the ‘gatekeeper’ was the local NGO, COHED, who initiated and was responsible for CBT development in the area. Yet the competence of COHED in developing a viable CBT quickly reached its limit and without COHED’s recognition of its limited knowledge of the sector, the innovation could not have taken place. COHED’s decision to call for assistance from tourism experts, and its allocation of Mr. Duong to take over the innovation process opened up a new flow of knowledge transfer that led to successful social innovation. Arguably however, ‘gatekeepers’ do not always hold entire control over in the innovation process, as other actors can still influence them. For instance, COHED’s decision to change the status-quo is likely to be due partly to (1) the downward pressure created by donors’ evaluation of COHED’s projects, and (2) the upward pressure created by the targeted population’s negative feedback towards their traditional top-down NGO-led CBT (workshop) approach.

2.2.6.4 Tourism Social Entrepreneur as a ‘Boundary Spanner’

Social entrepreneurship involves the use of market-based strategies (e.g., improving targeted population’s market efficiency) to deal with social issues in specific contexts, making local knowledge and market knowledge the key source for social innovation. Local knowledge in the case of the Mai Hich CBT is held by four key actors; local NGO(s), local government(s), local tourism entrepreneur(s), and the wider local community. However, this knowledge is often tacit and hard to communicate or transfer between actors (e.g., due to a local community’s way of life). Similarly, while the tourism social entrepreneur (i.e., Mr. Duong), other tourism experts, tour operators and tourists can contribute market knowledge, a substantial part of this knowledge is also not easily articulated as it either ‘resides in the heads of managers and entrepreneurs’ (embodied knowledge) or is embedded in individuals’ experience with the industry (e.g. encultured knowledge). More importantly, beyond the propositional (know-what) and procedural (know-how) knowledge, a successful innovation process also involves a deep understanding of the needs and values of diverse actors and which influence their practices and expected results of the intervention (know-who knowledge) (Wang and Chugh 2014). In the case of Mai Hich CBT, Mr. Duong was able to continuously identify and integrate the diverse knowledge of other actors with his own, leading to the creation of a new CBT approach that takes into consideration both local and market insights. Within the knowledge dynamics literature, Mr. Duong is classified as a ‘boundary spanning knowledge expert’, who is equipped with ‘the cognitive and reflexive capacities to appreciate different truths and harness different types of knowledge’ and thereby able to act as a conduit for knowledge transfer between diverse actors across organization/sector (Dredge 2014, p.24).

2.2.6.5 The Emerging of a Social Entrepreneurship Network

Among the five knowledge phases, the consolidation phase attracts the highest diversity of actors and knowledge interactions. This is understandable as the CBT scale and boundaries of social innovation have evolved from the local to the national setting, and thus its community of practices has significantly expanded. While the focus of the first four knowledge phases in tourism and social entrepreneurship is on integrating explicit and tacit knowledge of diverse actors to design tourism social innovation, the consolidation phase focuses on externalizing the ‘tacit’ knowledge of the social innovation (e.g., via the communication of key CBT criteria or the development of the CBT Travel and Consulting business plan) to attract external synergies and increase positive social impacts. In this context, the emergence of social entrepreneurship networks plays an important role in the sharing and dissemination of new knowledge to external actors. Central to this network is the intermediary organizations (e.g., CSIP) that work to raise awareness of social entrepreneurship and provide social entrepreneurship expertise (e.g., legal advice, network opportunities) to social entrepreneurs in scaling up social innovations (Nguyen, Luu, Pham and Tran, 2012). The network also includes the increasing number of social entrepreneurs who work as ‘boundary spanners’ to distribute the generated knowledge to various actors across sectors and provide their own expertise in refining and/or adapting the initial social innovation to a new context. In the case of Mai Hich CBT, the concept of social entrepreneurship is still not well-recognized in Vietnam (Nguyen et al. 2012) and without the intervention of CSIP, this tourism social innovation would have stayed within Mai Hich village and its impacts would have remained limited. Instead, knowledge propagated rapidly in the consolidation phase, which led to the spread of a CBT model to seven provinces within two years. In this phase, by committing to provide the communities with long-term support, CBT Travel and Consulting also ensured all involved communities were given sufficient time and support to internalise the explicit knowledge of CBT model into community tacit knowledge through learning-by-doing.

2.2.7 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore the knowledge dynamics in the tourism and social entrepreneurship nexus via a case study of Mai Hich CBT, Vietnam. By applying the knowledge biography approach to the case, the research has revealed a complex picture of the knowledge dynamics across sectoral and geographical boundaries during a tourism social innovation process. Beyond the specific discussion pertaining to the case, three broader observations are highlighted that may be useful in assisting practitioners and policymakers in facilitating the knowledge dynamics in social entrepreneurship and tourism nexus:

- 1) Knowledge dynamics in the tourism social innovation process is highly complex, with the involvement of multi-sectoral actors at multi-levels (from local to international). Knowledge exchange during the process is fluid and flexible, including both upward (e.g., local knowledge) and downward (e.g., government meta-strategy and donors’ values) movement. In addition, tacit and explicit types of knowledge possessed by diverse actors are frequently interacted and transformed through different phases of

social innovation. It is important for actors involved to consciously reflect on the various influences, assumptions and propositions being used by themselves and others in the process of developing and implementing tourism social innovation.

- 2) Beyond 'know-what' and 'know-how' knowledge, it is also important for actors to acquire 'know-who' knowledge (e.g., diverse actors' values, needs and agendas). Policies should facilitate meaningful participation of diverse actors in the social innovation process to allow for further exchange of specialized knowledge, especially local knowledge that resides within the targeted population for change.
- 3) Even though individuals are carriers of knowledge, the case of Mai Hich CBT has demonstrated that knowledge dynamics that lead to successful tourism social innovation is not always attributed to communication between actors. Rather, new flow of knowledge transfer can be triggered by a shift in power relations (e.g., from the 'gatekeeper' local NGO to the external tourism social entrepreneur) or by procuring active support of social entrepreneurship intermediary organizations. Policymakers hence should support the establishment of intermediaries specializing in fostering social entrepreneurship in tourism, as well as promoting the frequent exchange of knowledge across public, private and third sectors in the process of developing social innovation.

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