



**PRINCIPLE 07**

# Community Development



**The United Nations defines Community Development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community development efforts by tourism businesses can contribute to enhanced community well-being, equality, diversity, and overall quality of life.**

Almost all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) directly or indirectly carry some community development elements.

Nevertheless, from the SDGs, SDG 1 – No Poverty, SDG 2 –Zero Hunger, SDG 6 – Clean Water Sanitation, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities have core community development related targets and indicators.

# Contents

<u>Importance and impact to business in the short and long term</u>	<b>01</b>
<u>The Benefits of Community Development for Tourism Businesses</u>	<b>02</b>
<u>Benefits for the local community</u>	<b>02</b>
<u>What can we do as an SME?</u>	<b>03</b>
<u>Benefits for the local community</u>	<b>04</b>
<u>How can we influence others?</u>	<b>04</b>
<u>Global and Local Example/ Best Practises</u>	<b>05 - 06</b>
<u>Organizations and institutions that can help you on your journey</u>	<b>07</b>
<u>References</u>	<b>08</b>

# Importance and impact to business in the short and long term

To run tourism activities smoothly in the short and long run, it is imperative to develop and maintain a harmonious relationship between your tourism business and local communities. One of the very practical entry points to build such a relationship is undertaking community development activities. These activities will also generate potential new opportunities as well reduce risks to tourism activities in the short and long run.

A contentious area for tourism businesses is using locally available natural resources such as land, water, forests, and fishery resources for tourism activities. Natural resources need to be shared between tourism businesses and local communities in a way that does not undermine local villagers' capacity to fulfill their requirements in the short and long run. In that light, developing common plans for resources usage, building infrastructure and other facilities, and introducing efficient technologies for sustainable use of natural resources will contribute to safeguard your business interests.

Your tourism businesses need to operate in a culturally appropriate manner, respecting rights of local people, local traditions, and cultural values. To that effect, association with local communities through community development is useful.

Opinion of local communities towards your business activities is vital in conducting your business activities smoothly.



# The Benefits of Community Development for Tourism Businesses

There are multiple benefits to your business from supporting local community development and contributing to the wellbeing of local communities as part of your operations. These benefits include:

- Creating a point of difference from your tourism competitors
- Local cuisine, attractions, cultural identities and values, and locally developed products and services can immensely add value to your tourism offering.
- Strong marketing and publicity opportunities
- Facilitating outdoor tourist activities such as hiking, biking, swimming, fishing, farming, and sightseeing.
- Reduced costs and risks due to local supply chains
- An appealing selling point for potential international visitors as they are keen to support local communities as part of their travel choices.
- Demonstrating your broader values and principles beyond just profit.
- Opportunity to showcase your contributions to national and international development priorities including the SDGs.
- Generating staff enthusiasm and higher performance.

## Benefits for the local community

- Improving living standards of local people through a range of direct and indirect activities linked to tourism.
- Obtaining employment opportunities for local communities
- Development of local infrastructure such as roads, power supply, water supply, and telecommunication infrastructure.
- Selling locally produced goods and services to tourism businesses
- Obtaining assistance for protecting locally available natural resources such as land, water, forests, and fishery resources
- Preserving places of historical significance and local cultural identities and promoting them among visitors
- Opportunity to venture into new livelihood opportunities linked to tourism
- Opportunity to showcase local products among national and international visitors

# What can we do as an SME?

- Identify potential mutually beneficial community development opportunities, at first, it is suggested to undertake a Community Planning Exercise with the active participation of local communities.
- Recruit staff members from the local area for both skilled and unskilled positions at your business while maintaining recruitment standards required.
- Introduce and maintain a minimum quota for hiring of staff members from local areas.
- Source goods and services from local areas without compromising quality standards
- Introduce a Farmer Outgrower Program targeting local farmers to procure fruits, vegetables, and spices from local areas without compromising food quality and health & safety aspects.
- Allocate a Community Service Day for staff members where employees are given a day off to participate in an activity of their choice to help local communities.
- Undertake a Community Support Program to sponsor students from low-income families with their education.
- Provide opportunities to showcase locally available products/ local businesses to visiting tourists.
- Dedicate a special page on the website of the tourism property to showcase special products and services that are locally available among the tourists across the globe.
- Facilitate programs for tourists who wish to conduct educational programs, training programs or capacity building programs for local students and youth.
- Facilitate productive cultural exchange programs and events in a manner that is beneficial to both tourists and host communities. When the satisfaction is high among both parties, the tourism business stands to gain through guest's positive reviews and increased community engagement. Overall, this will lead to minimizing any negative feedback towards tourism even in rural, extremely conservative societies.
- Develop a culturally sensitive, locally appropriate code of conduct for staff and guests covering community engagement and interaction aspects.
- Develop communication materials about locally developed special products and place them in hotel rooms.
- Set up a Community Support fund which can be contributed to by visitors, staff and the tourism owner and partners. Promote this at reception and/or in-room.



## Benefits for the local community

- Industry, as a collective can be the pioneers in Community Development activities in Sri Lanka
- Establish an online portal to showcase community development activities carried out by tourism businesses in Sri Lanka
- Forging partnerships among tourism businesses can help to deliver much greater positive impacts on the lives of local communities.
- Integrate tourism activities into local and national level plans and programs so that decisions on the sustainable use of natural resources can be done collectively while taking into account the carrying capacity of ecosystems.
- Be a member of tourism alliances/ associations so that Industry as a collective can contribute to community development.
- When working together, tourism businesses can generate strong voices in addressing challenges in community development.
- Tourism businesses can collectively address common environmental concerns such as wastewater treatment, and solid waste management in an efficient manner, generating cost-saving to all the companies involved.
- Develop Community Development Plans for identified tourism zones and collectively contribute to implementation of the same
- Forge partnerships with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) for Community Development Projects.
- Tourism businesses can bring in co-financing required for donor projects geared towards community development in respective areas.

## How can we influence others

Tourism businesses can influence other local, national, and international stakeholders through a multitude of measures including the following.

- Document best practices/ case studies on community development for dissemination and replication by others
- Use social media to showcase best practices and promote them among peers and general public
- Develop a newsletter on tourism sector efforts in community development and share it among wider stakeholders.
- Report on community development activities undertaken by your business to local and national government authorities and tourism related international organizations
- Organize information sessions to share best practices with peers and authorities



# Global and Local Example/ Best Practices

There are a range of local and international examples where tourism companies not only have internalized community development approaches for their business activities but also have undertaken various external community development projects for the benefit of host communities.

## These examples include:

Hiring local people for staff positions, sourcing local products and services, supporting local livelihoods and offering alternative livelihood opportunities, providing access to local and international markets to sell locally developed products, conducting capacity building programs on various technical areas, implementing awareness raising programs including school educational programs, empowering women, children, and people with disabilities, providing financial support to underprivileged students, renovating/ constructing buildings for various community purposes including religious and school buildings, contributing to restore and preserve local environmental and cultural attractions, undertaking water supply schemes for the benefit of local communities, making donations for community purposes, volunteering for community development activities, and developing local infrastructure including solid waste management facilities.

### Scandic – Integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into their core business

Scandic, which is one of the well-established and largest Scandinavian hotel firms, has incorporated CSR practices into its business model. They have carried out various projects to improve host communities' quality of life as well as working conditions for its employees. Some of these programmes include Omantake which is an attempt to take care of the environment and the societies around its properties, and Scandic in Society which aims to contribute to the well-being of the communities where it operates.

### Hotel Villa Magna-Park (Hyatt) – The Pause programme

When the hotel was closed for 14-month for redecoration in 2007, instead of laying off most of the 173-strong staff, the hotel retained all the employees and got them engaged in human capital enhancing activities such as English and computer classes as well local community support activities, leading to positive results for the company.

### Marriott – Spirit to Serve Programme

Under this Programme, Marriott offers support to local communities, employees, and other stakeholders. The Spirit to Serve our Communities component involves employees given a day off to participate in an activity of their choice to help improve their communities. Marriott wants their local communities to see its hotels as positive influences on the lives of local people.

### Best Western For a Better World

Under this Programme, Best Western assists families and children in need by providing them with the essential resources. Through donations, they have set up The Better World Fund which is governed by an advisory committee and the Best Western® Hotels & Resorts Board of Directors



## Bridges ... from school to work initiative at Marriot

This initiative, which was launched in 1990, helps young people with disabilities to find meaningful job opportunities after their school education. Over the years, it has supported over 20,000 young adults with disabilities find jobs with 5,200 employers across 12 cities.

## Jetwing Kaduruketha – Organic Paddy Farming Programme

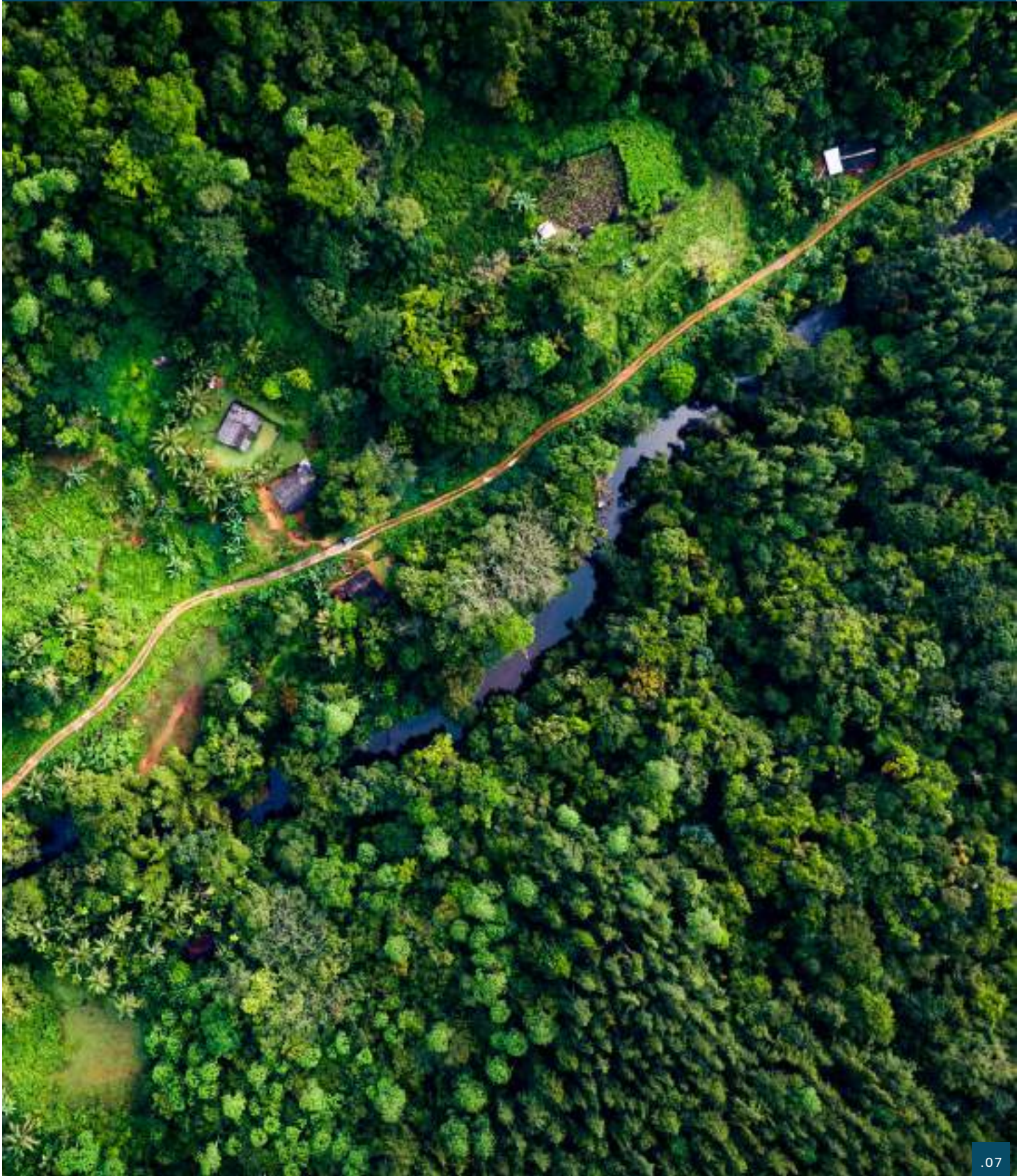
To support local farming communities, Jetwing Kaduruketha has allocated the 50 acres of paddy land surrounding the property for sustainable paddy farming. The hotel provides local farming families with seed money (per acre, per season) for cultivation. The harvest is shared equally between the farmers and the hotel, while excess stocks of rice are sold to other hotels under Jetwing. The farmers are not required to repay the money given to them, so that it gives a steady source of income to the farming community in the locality.



# Organizations and institutions that can help you on your journey

## UNDP's Global Environmental Facility Small Grant Programme

The Programme offers grants up to the value of \$50,000 directly to local communities including indigenous people, community-based organizations and other non-governmental groups for projects in Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management, International Waters and Chemicals.



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Sustainability  
Principles

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Alliance and our projects**

please visit : <https://www.srilankatourismalliance.com>  
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