Prospects for Sustainable Development in the Pacific: A Review of Corporate Social Responsibility in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Recent UN reports and the emerging post-2015 agenda emphasise a key role for the private sector in fulfilling development goals. However, there has been little consideration of what this means in practice and how positive, sustainable change can be effected through this model. While there is a wealth of literature exploring the nature of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its benefits to companies, there is limited discussion about how such practices might support longer-term sustainable and inclusive development. In particular, there has been minimal work on this to date in the Pacific. In a region where multinational business is critical to the economy, there is a need to carefully assess the implications of CSR. This article reviews evidence on the contribution of CSR to community development and uses examples from the tourism sector in Fiji to consider its potential to bring about sustainable development in the Pacific. It suggests that in order to fulfil post-2015 goals, partnerships and collaboration will be required at local, national and international levels.

Key words: community, Corporate Social Responsibility, tourism, Pacific, development.
INTRODUCTION

Current development efforts of states, international donors and NGOs are now recognised to be insufficient to meet the needs of the poorest countries with UN statistics showing a drop in development aid in real terms. Progress has been made towards achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), however the UN emphasises that meeting these now rests upon the fulfilment of a ‘global partnership for development’, which anticipates a key role for the private sector (UN, 2012). This is reflected in the developing post-2015 agenda, identified as “an historic opportunity for the international business community to contribute to the attainment of worldwide sustainability and development objectives.” (UN Global Compact, 2013, p.3). The development contributions of the private sector are most visibly manifested through CSR and its growing profile is also evidenced by public demand for greater responsibility from business and expectations for ethical practice, particularly following the global financial crisis of 2008. The ability of business to fill the development gap may seem like a panacea for the wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) of poverty and poor governance; authors such as Porter and Kramer would certainly advocate that CSR presents a win-win scenario where business and communities work together to create ‘shared value’ (2011). However, there has been little consideration of what this means in practice for the development of the countries and localities concerned and how positive, sustainable change can be effected through this model.

Research analysing the value of CSR in tourism from a development perspective is limited, particularly in the Pacific. As the world’s largest industry and a growth sector in the Pacific (Harrison & Prasad, 2013), the following discussion focuses on tourism as a case study. The article reviews examples of CSR practices in the tourism sector as a basis for examining the potential for private sector initiatives to contribute to community development. It begins by exploring the relationship between the private sector and development and how CSR can best be understood in this context. It goes on to identify how current research on CSR with respect to development and tourism can advance our understanding of the role of the private sector in community development. Using specific examples from the hotel sector in Fiji of how the private sector can enhance community wellbeing in practice, it then concludes by assessing the capacity for the private sector to respond to long-term development needs in the Pacific, as envisaged by the MDGs and post-2015 agenda.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT

There has been an increasing level of debate around the role of the private sector in development and whether business has the capability to address community development needs. Business in general resists engagement with social priorities and a poverty agenda (Fox, 2004; Frynas, 2008): after all, the purpose of business is to create profit and be responsive to shareholders rather than to fulfil a development role. These apparently mutually exclusive functions coincide through CSR. This creates agendas simultaneously inhabited by both profit and poverty, raising interesting questions around the purpose of business, how communities can best be supported, whether or not this nexus can generate a force for good, and whether CSR strategies effectively disrupt or in fact perpetuate the status quo.
Current debates focus on the disjuncture between the perceived need for private sector participation in development agendas and the structural limitations to the ability of business to prioritise community wellbeing. A number of authors call for attention to development imperatives within CSR (for example Boyle & Boguslaw, 2007; Sagebien & Whellams, 2010), whilst other voices contend that business is incapable of responding to the demands of development (for example, Frynas, 2005; Utting, 2007). In tourism, there is a growing body of literature exploring the nature of CSR and its benefits to companies (e.g. Inoue & Lee, 2011; Kang, Lee & Huh., 2010; Lynn, 2009), and although there are indications of how communities may share benefits (e.g. Ashley & Haysom, 2006; Kalisch 2002), there remains little discussion about how such practices might support longer-term sustainable, inclusive development, as envisaged by the UN and the MDGs.

A glance at CSR theories reveals why faith in CSR to deliver development is misplaced. Boyle and Boguslaw point out that the theories largely ignore poverty: ‘poor people or impoverished communities are not typically named as stakeholders in analyses of corporate decisions, contributing to the invisibility of the poor’ (2007, p.108). Prieto-Carrón et al. pinpoint the lack of conceptualisation of development terminology within CSR, noting the absence of definitions for either poverty or development in current literature (Prieto-Carrón, Lund-Thomsen, Chan, Muro, & Bhushan, 2006, p.980). Certainly, of the 37 definitions listed by Dahlsrud (2008), there is no mention of poverty and only one reference to sustainable development. In fact, analysis of CSR activities often reveals a conservative agenda, reliant on satisfying the business case for CSR (Banks, Kuir-Ayius, Kombako, & Sagir., 2013, p.4; Hamann, 2006, p.179). Whilst core business practice remains unchanged, (Hamann, 2006, p. 189), CSR can be interpreted as a way of perpetuating the business agenda, maintaining the status quo and prioritising shareholder interests (Banerjee, 2008). Frynas describes this as a focus on micro-level change, which ignores macro-level governance issues (2005, p.596); this along with other structural issues in low-income countries continue to limit the capacity of CSR (Prieto-Carrón et al., 2006, p.983). Furthermore, conservative, and seemingly innocuous, activities run the risk of counteracting, marginalising or obscuring alternative initiatives (Bendell, 2005). Sagebien and Whellams argue for the necessity to locate debates in the broader context of the neoliberal approach to development of which CSR is a part, and which has gained traction in recent decades. Within the prevailing capitalist framework, they see CSR as ‘a narrow, voluntary, and discretionary activity incapable of delivering sustained comprehensive and equitable development’ (2010, p.506). Frynas similarly concludes that there are ‘fundamental problems about the capacity of private firms to deliver development’ (2005, p.597).

These arguments signal an underlying incompatibility between business and development agendas; nonetheless, there are important touch points where partnerships can be forged. Sagebien and Whellams focus on the leverage that can be gained through interactions between business and other players within the system (2010, p.506). The necessity for a coordinated approach is echoed by other contributors to the literature: Boyle and Boguslaw outline a four-step approach for businesses, focusing on creating opportunities, sustainable, long-term solutions, collaboration with public and non-profit sectors and advocacy for anti-poverty policies (2007, p106). Prieto-Carrón et al. also highlight the ‘potential for companies to do good work by entering into new partnerships with NGOs’ (2006, p.981). This solution, in a variety of forms, is a recurring theme
and will be returned to later.

An agenda for future research is also signposted. The need is for greater evidence-based assessment of the impacts of CSR (Sagebien & Whellams, 2010, p.507), the accountability of activities to beneficiaries (Bendell, 2005, p.364) the actual and potential contribution they can make to development (Frynas, 2005, p.582) and the specific impact on poverty reduction, including both intended and unintended outcomes (Prieto-Carrón et al., 2006, p.981). If CSR is to be employed as a development tool, what we can term Corporate Community Development (CCD) (Banks et al., 2013), then there is a clear need to examine the impact of such initiatives. Addressing the gap in our understanding of the impacts and limitations of CSR in development could allow more appropriate implementation and management of initiatives, potentially leading to enhanced outcomes. More importantly, it could provide an indication of the suitability, or otherwise, of the private sector as a vehicle for community development as the post-2015 agenda is rolled out.

CORPORATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Before considering the impact of specific examples, a clearer delineation of the type of activities under consideration is helpful. CSR may be the most common way for the tourism sector to engage in development activities, but when we look at specific CSR initiatives there are a number of areas unrelated to community development, for example reduction of carbon emissions or provision of healthy food choices: it is clear that CSR initiatives are not synonymous with community development activities. The concept of Corporate Community Development (CCD) can be used here to interrogate the development-related activities of the private sector. CCD identifies where the firm is acting as ‘an agent of intentional development’ (Banks et al., 2013, p.4), and places greater emphasis on community engagement, focusing on those activities that affect development outcomes. To distinguish this from CSR, CCD initiatives do not always have the element of voluntariness that is often seen as central to CSR, for example activities implemented as part of a negotiated lease agreement; at the same time they exclude those elements of CSR which are not connected to community development, for example energy or resource saving initiatives. Viewing corporate activities through a CCD lens can enable a better understanding of the capacity of the private sector to deliver on development objectives. With this in mind, the next section examines the literature on CSR in tourism for evidence of engagement with community development.

CSR IN TOURISM: SEEKING THE ‘SOCIAL’ IN CSR

Coles, Fenclova & Dinan (2013) use Lindgreen and Swaen’s five key themes in CSR (2010), to classify existing work in the field, revealing minimal attention to the role of CSR in development or company engagement with destination communities. This section uses the five key themes as a starting point to identify attention to the potential significance of actions for the community and the levels of consideration of community engagement across all five domains.

Firstly, with regard to implementation, evidence of ‘selective sustainability’ (p.131) is identified where a focus on environmental initiatives predominates. This skewed focus is also echoed by
others (see for example Ashley & Roe, 2002; Dodds & Joppe, 2009) and can be viewed as consistent with global concerns with climate change. A number of accreditation schemes have environmental actions as their foundation, for example Agenda 21 and Green Globe, while social and economic domains are relatively neglected. Kalisch (2002) points out that where social and economic issues are addressed by businesses, they tend to have a primary focus on charity. There is little mention of human rights or distribution of benefits for example (p.25), consistent with the conservative agenda referred to above. Add to this the observation that the majority of CSR initiatives in tourism are tokenistic and consist mainly of philanthropic donations (Ashley & Haysom, 2006, p.268), and the resulting picture is one where there is a high risk of activities occurring which are not necessarily responsive to community needs. Returning to Coles’ review, they also find that this selective focus applies to the reach of initiatives: where responsibility might be expected to extend to the destination and supply chains as well as the firm itself, a lack of capacity and infrastructure impede this for many companies, leading to a limited focus on simpler gains (p.130). Font et al. report that many hotel policies in place are in fact satisfying compliance with legal requirements with a strong focus overall on legal and economic concerns of stakeholders (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, McCombes & Häusler, 2012, p.1552). This inevitably entails greater focus on the firm and less on the destination communities.

In terms of the business case, Coles et al. (2013) demonstrate that studies on the impact of CSR on company performance show mixed results. Despite this, literature on the benefits of CSR in the tourism sector still revolves almost entirely around the advantages to business. This is consistent with Margolis and Walsh’s findings that empirical CSR research in general demonstrates evidence of the financial impact of CSR on companies, but ‘little is known about any other consequences of corporate social initiatives’ (2003, p.289). Blowfield terms these consequences the ‘instrumental benefits of ethical, environmental and social criteria for the company’ (Blowfield, 2007, p 687). In the tourism sector, such instrumental benefits are documented by Ashley and Haysom, who list nine benefits to companies including creating legitimacy to operate, enhancing staff morale and customer satisfaction, risk mitigation, access to financing options and industry awards, cost saving and avoidance of external regulation (pp. 269-272). Kalisch (2002) also notes that tourism firms have an added incentive to protect the local environment and culture: these constitute part of the tourism ‘product’ marketed to guests (2002, p.20). There is little focus on external impacts such as the social and economic value to destination communities.

A wide range of indices and metrics for measurement are in use, making comparison difficult, along with a lack of reported data overall. Environmental initiatives feature more prominently in measurement indices than social initiatives, as they lend themselves more readily to statistical data analysis (Font et al., 2012). There are an increasing number of accreditation systems and reporting systems in place, such as the Global Reporting Initiative, but in practice implementation is often weak (Dodds & Joppe, 2005). Furthermore, although these may incentivise measurement, Coles et al. point out that selection and communication of initiatives remain at the firm’s discretion (p.134). Such agreements and codes are voluntary and non-enforceable which will continue to limit what these can achieve in terms of development outcomes.
Communications would be anticipated to be a high priority, given the concern of tourism with image, but little analytical discussion is in evidence (Coles et al., p.134). Where reference is made to communications, it is within the context of public relations rather than community engagement. In their study of the CSR practices of global hotel chains, Font et al. discovered that in the absence of external audits, hotels frequently engage in both greenwashing and greenhushing (2012, p.1552) and it is clear that we know little about CSR’s implementation, impact or quality (Esrock & Leighty, 1998; de Grosbois, 2012; Holcomb, Upchurch & Okumus 2007). Mowforth and Munt draw attention to the award of logos (such as Green Globe) for commitment to the scheme, rather than for compliance (p.203) and suggest that in many instances CSR ‘serves as good publicity but makes little effective difference’ (2009, p.223).

The final category, stakeholder engagement holds the greatest promise for identifying the potential for community benefit. The main focus of current literature is on social relations between businesses and stakeholders but Coles et al. contend that this is lacking a nuanced view. There is little recognition, for example, of differences related to the geographical locations of tourism headquarters compared to host destinations and how this might impact on stakeholder relations. Furthermore, ‘stakeholders’ includes both internal and external parties and discussions to date tend to simplify perspectives, with little room for stakeholder voices (p.134). Examples of several discrete studies focusing on engagement with destination stakeholders are used to illustrate the ‘protracted process of negotiation and appraisal for all parties’ (p.134), but there is little discussion of the impact of such activities. This remains a clear gap.

The importance of community engagement is, however, recognised by tourism organisations such as Green Hotelier and NGOs such as Tourism Concern (Kalisch, 2002). Hotel CSR reports are also starting to evidence consultation and partnership with community organisations. This indicates a rising awareness of the need to engage community stakeholders in the process, however, the extent and scope of engagement is unclear. The next section therefore devotes attention to the practice of CSR, using examples from tourism in the Pacific, to examine how direct efforts can support community development.

CSR IN PACIFIC TOURISM

Although the foundations for research on the relevance of CSR in the South have been established (see for example, Blowfield & Frynas, 2005; Dobers & Halme, 2009; Fox, 2004; Jamali, 2007; Lund-Thomsen, 2004; UNRISD, 2002) there is still relatively little research on CSR in the Pacific and its ability to support community development. Nevertheless, research on Pacific governance, tourism and entrepreneurism suggests that factors likely to impact on CSR in the region could include instability of government and lack of resources (Mahadevan, 2009), the colonial legacy (Rao, 2002), a collectivist culture (Saffu, 2003), kinship obligations (Berno & Douglas, 1998), the notion of reciprocity (Berno, 1999), indigenous business models (Gibson, 2013) and the land tenure system (Waqaisavou, 2001). Drawing on examples of case studies of CSR in Pacific tourism (namely Bradly, 2010; Harrison & Prasad, 2013; Harrison & Campus, 2004; Scheyvens & Russell 2012; Scheyvens & Hughes 2015), this section provides examples of key CSR activities that have the potential to lead to positive community development outcomes with a particular focus on how these are influenced by the Pacific context.
Examples are drawn from Fiji, which is the main tourist destination in the South Pacific, and in particular from large, foreign-owned resorts which dominate the sector. It is acknowledged that small, backpacker and indigenous-owned accommodation also makes significant contributions to the local economy and community wellbeing (Gibson, 2014, p.163; Harrison & Prasad, 2013, p.755), however, the enquiry here focuses on the ability of the tourism sector to respond to development priorities at scale. The following examples illustrate initiatives across the continuum of CCD, including carrying out core business responsibilities in an ethical way, for example adhering to employment codes, in addition to ethical initiatives that supplement the day-to-day practices of the company, for example charitable donations or support for education projects (see Table One).

Table One: The contribution of CCD to community development in Pacific tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCD domain</th>
<th>Potential community development outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Household income; promotion opportunities; capacity building; health, sickness and pension benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td>Development of local agriculture, crafts and other businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/Capacity building</td>
<td>Thriving local businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing cultural capital</td>
<td>Respect for culture and traditions; provision of an additional source of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
<td>Direct funding for community needs such as health and education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>Time contribution to developing community and environmental projects</td>
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EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Fair working conditions and a stable work environment with opportunities for training and promotion all constitute ethical employment practices. Although these often fulfil legal requirements, depending on the specific legal and political environment these requirements may be weak or not enforced, particularly in low-income countries where employment rights are poorly resourced and supported. The result is that the provision of fair work practices is a key element to corporate social responsibility in the Pacific. In comparing the practices of small and large providers in Fiji, Scheyvens and Russell (2012) found that larger resorts were more likely to have the capacity to implement positive employment practices, highlighting the responsibility of foreign-owned resorts to undertake the provision of fair working conditions. This can include initiatives such as ‘cross-training’ for staff to upskill in different departments.
of the resort (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012, p.427). Where there is capacity to do more than meet minimum requirements, foreign-owned resorts can add value in a number of ways: health and safety practices, health care provision, pension plans and commitment to equal opportunity and diversity in recruitment can all exceed legal requirements and contribute to employee wellbeing (Kalisch, 2002; Scheyvens, 2011).

PROCUREMENT

Scheyvens (2011) identified procurement as ‘one of the most effective means of bringing more benefits from tourism to the poor’ (p.121), yet the statistics show that there is still much progress to be made establishing backward linkages. It is reported that spending on food in Fiji approximates 20 per cent of total tourist expenditure (at around FJ$150m) but represents the highest leakage: the Ministry of Tourism Fiji estimates up to 80 per cent of food is imported and both the Ministry and the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) have highlighted the need to increase linkages in order to benefit the local economy (Berno, 2011, p.87). Supporting mechanisms include buying directly from markets, selling surplus and forming local cooperatives (p.98). Berno (2011) cites successful examples of local agricultural cooperatives supplying resorts with fresh produce and the promotion of the use of local ingredients on hotel menus (p.99). This has further been reinforced through international culinary competition, Fiji Salon Culinaire, an initiative which continues to drive the promotion of local culture and food, with the 2012 competition focusing specifically on the use of traditional and local produce. (Fiji Times, 2012). Executive Chefs such as Robert Oliver and Lance Seeto have also achieved fame for their efforts to incorporate Fijian dishes into international hotel menus, create linkages with local farms, and connect agriculture with regional tourism (e.g. Oliver, Berno & Ram, 2010).

Local procurement also covers the use of local materials: construction materials, furniture and other items can be purchased locally, benefitting local economies (Scheyvens, 2011, p.121). In addition to local produce and materials, responsible procurement can entail use of local labour, including maintenance, gardening and laundry services, sourcing locally crafted souvenirs and food, and other contracts with local businesses, for example tour guides (Ashley, De Brine, Lehr & Wilde, 2007; Kalisch, 2002; Meyer 2006; Scheyvens 2011). At one Coral Coast resort in Fiji for example, ‘in-house landscaping staff provide some of the resort’s flowers for decorative purposes, and tailors employed full time by the resort produce all staff uniforms as well as bedding, towels, and furniture covers for guest rooms’ (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012, p.428). Bradley’s study of community investment initiatives in Fiji revealed that ‘In most cases, villages in close proximity to the firm were being voluntarily supported as firms typically relied on these villages as a source of labour, fresh food, traditional skills, and cultural entertainment’ (2010, p.4), making a significant economic contribution to neighbouring villages.
MENTORING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Hotels can provide mentoring to local businesses to allow them to build capacity and enhance chances of sustainability. Foreign-owned hotels in particular can share business knowledge, technical expertise, management systems investment advice, access to credit, marketing, customer relations and training (Meyer, 2006, Scheyvens, 2011). Scheyvens and Russell conclude that ‘one of the best ways to strengthen local enterprise is to encourage partnerships between communities and larger tourism investors’ (2012, p.432). Examples of this include support with pricing and vehicle leasing for the local mataqali (clan) to set up a taxi firm outside a large resort (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012, p.428) and financial and technical support to establish backpacker tourist lodges in the Yasawa islands (Harrison, 2004; Levett & McNally, 2003, p.75). Mentoring advice to local suppliers can assist local companies to meet resort procurement requirements (Ashley et al., 2007, p.10): this improves the supply chain and simultaneously builds capacity in local businesses. These types of skills transfer have the potential to lead to long-term and sustainable benefits for the local economy and wider community. Gibson suggests that mentoring for indigenous entrepreneurs by hotels and tourism organisations can lead to improved business management, tourism and marketing and is one way to mitigate some of the key challenges these small businesses face (2012, p.119). As indigenous-owned firms often provide assistance to local villages through the custom of kerekere, or reciprocity (Bradly, 2010, p.6; Gibson, 2014, p.169), benefits can be further multiplied.

VALUING CULTURAL CAPITAL

Large corporations in the Pacific are frequently perceived as exploiting Pacific Island resources for the profit of overseas investors without significant benefits accruing to the communities where they are located (Plange, 1996). Ethical practices can ensure that the tourist business supports cultural capital rather than undermines it. Consultation with communities during the development phase helps to protect cultural assets, as does culturally sensitive marketing and promotion (Kalisch, 2002); providing tourists with appropriate cultural information builds respect for local communities, culture and heritage. Tourists can be informed of social, economic, cultural and environmental issues and be encouraged to spend money on local ventures, restaurants and tours (Meyer, 2006). Further, hotels can support schemes to contribute to local cultural programmes, and protect cultural heritage, including the hosting of cultural programmes, which can promote respect for culture and traditions (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012, p.424). A number of hotels host cultural programmes for guests including Meke (dance) performances. They also maintain close connections with local villages, running village tours for guests (for which the village receives a fee) and encouraging corporate groups to get involved in community projects.²

PHILANTHROPY

This is often the most common and most publicised form of CSR and describes direct donations to local communities and organisations. Financial donations are either on behalf of the hotel or its staff and guests and may entail support for educational initiatives, scholarships, local NGOs, sponsored charities, religious institutions, sports teams, health care programmes, disaster
response and environmental causes, among others. (Meyer, 2006; Scheyvens, 2011). Donation of unwanted hotel items, for example furniture, toiletries and linen and guest donations of clothes, books, medicine are also common (Meyer, 2006). Coastal tourism businesses in the Pacific are especially vulnerable to the impact of hazards such as cyclones, typhoons, flooding and tsunami, causing an estimated US$2.8 billion of disaster damage to the region in the 1990s (Mahon, Becken & Rennie, 2013, p.15). Support from hotel companies at a global level can play a critical role in supporting recovery, with most of the major hotel chains donating money, goods and services to assist relief efforts. At one Fijian resort, this included providing food for evacuation centres for several weeks after the 2009 flooding (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2015). Harrison and Prasad’s examples of the CSR practices of four major Fijian resorts demonstrate a clear focus on health and education, which includes donations with potential for long-term impact such as an ambulance, generator and laptops for the regional hospital and health centre (2013, p.753). In general, however, donations are ad hoc and most frequently short-term, although some hotels may adopt a particular charity or NGO that can then be counted on for ongoing support. Some hotels go further, such as Turtle Island in Fiji, which closed the resort periodically in order to run eye, dental, general health and dermatology clinics for Fijians, funded by the hotel and staffed by international volunteers (Harrison, 2004, p. 11).

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is promoted by a number of hotel chains that report the number of ‘volunteer-days’ or ‘volunteer-hours’ contributed per year. This can cover the time of both employees and guests, and time can be spent contributing to building or refurbishing a local school or working for a chosen charity for example. Corporate event volunteering is also becoming more common, Scheyvens citing examples from Fiji where corporate groups assisted in building and equipping a village kindergarten (2011, p.129). The Shangri-La resort solicits assistance from guests to contribute to the community during their stay, for example by helping to build a fish house or planting a mangrove.

Together, these examples highlight that the tourism industry has the potential to play a key role in improving community wellbeing, and in some cases can contribute to longer-term sustainable community development. It also indicates that activities can more often be ad hoc, short term and reliant on the commitment of individuals within hotels. This suggests that there is perhaps a missed opportunity to employ the momentum of CSR to greater effect. The question remains, however, of the suitability of CSR as a tool for long-term, sustainable development.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS DEVELOPMENT AGENT: IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES.

The following section explores the implications of these activities for private sector development in the region, including reference to the lack of evidence of impact, absence of community perspectives and effects of the cultural context, and then considers the potential for enhancing outcomes.

The most commonly used definitions of CSR prioritise social concerns and sustainable economic
development (Commission of the European Communities and World Business Council for Sustainable Development, cited in Dahlsrud, 2008, p.7), yet this appears to be at odds with the prevailing approach evidenced in the sector which prioritises the benefits to companies over communities. Blowfield (2007) points out that while companies frequently refer to their contribution to the MDGs, and there is evidence of this occurring in individual instances, ‘the impact of business on the MDG targets is unknown’ (Blowfield, 2007, p.689). This is essentially because we lack information about the broad impact of these activities. In the CSR in tourism literature, there is a tendency to make the assumption that CSR activities automatically add value to the community (e.g. Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2009; Nicolau, 2008). This does not allow for analysis of how the benefits accrue to communities, who benefits, attention to the broader impacts on communities beyond the immediate benefits of individual initiatives or how effects might intersect.

Such an analysis would further necessitate acknowledgement of the heterogeneous nature of communities and consideration of the role that groups within communities play in shaping initiatives and outcomes: the portrayal of communities as passive recipients of development assistance or philanthropic CSR negates the role of community agency in this process. Examination of community roles in tourism development processes and the cultural context in which they occur reveals an interplay of power dynamics which can positively influence outcomes (e.g. Bendell, 2005; Din, 1996; Reed, 1997; Sofield, 2003); such power relationships also impact on the practice of CSR (Garvey & Newell, 2005). Whilst there is little research available documenting community standpoints, a small number of studies in the oil industry (Akpan, 2008; Idemudia, 2009) and mining (Kapelus, 2002) in Sub-Saharan Africa provide insights into beneficiary perspectives of CSR. These establish ‘counter-narratives’ (Kapelus, 2002, p.285) to the corporation perspective, and demonstrate that there are clear differences in how initiatives are perceived from a corporate or community perspective.

In the Pacific, community agency can be relatively strong due to land-tenure rights and the resulting lease agreements drawn up with hotel owners. The proportion of land under communal ownership in the Pacific is high, with 87% under communal ownership in Fiji (iTaukei Lands Trust Board, 2013). The impact of these arrangements on businesses and communities is an area of contention, where historically this has been assumed to limit business opportunities and impede development (e.g. Helen Hughes, 2004). Conversely, Scheyvens and Russell have argued that communal land tenure is not incompatible with community development and in fact offers the potential for empowerment and improving livelihoods (2012, p.20). As lease-stipulated activities are not voluntary on the part of the company, they cannot be said to constitute CSR, but they do represent examples of CCD: many negotiated activities have the potential to contribute to community development, for example use of lease money by village development committees, preferential employment and educational scholarships. Moreover, Bradly has illustrated that in practice accommodation providers on leased land in Fiji were those who exceeded lease obligations in terms of providing for local communities (2010, p.4).

Pacific expectations of business behaviour may not correlate with the western business and tourism models of international hotel chains. Differences in cultural and operational norms between
foreign-owned companies and local communities lead to the potential for a mismatch between corporate and community expectations (see Akpan, 2008 for example) and interpretation of the impacts (Hamann, 2006, p.191). Berno’s (1999) study of Cook Islanders’ conceptualisations of tourism reveals that for Pacific Islanders, tourism is most often constituted by visiting or hosting family and friends. The protocols for this are guided by the cultural concepts of aroa and reciprocity, concepts which do not fit neatly with western models of tourism based on ‘individualistic profit, accumulation and investment motivation’ (p.659). Others suggest that there is a fundamental clash between western business practice and ‘traditional’ cultures (e.g. Saffu, 2003); in the Pacific this can centre on kinship obligations and land tenure practices (Banks, 2006). Gibson’s research demonstrates that the success of indigenous-owned tourism enterprises in Fiji was determined not primarily in economic terms, but by their ability ‘to balance traditional and business obligations, and maintain status within local society’ (2012, p.121). Further research is needed to determine the scope of the influence of CSR in the Pacific.

Looking forwards, Idemudia details an emerging South-Centred CSR agenda which reflects local priorities and is informed by local communities’ values, whilst also taking due consideration of the specific country and cultural context (2011, p.5). This suggests that a community-oriented view of the ethical practices of tourism providers would offer important insights into whether CCD is an appropriate tool for development in the region. Investigating community perspectives of CSR and CCD in tourism is an area for future research.

What is the future then for CSR in development? Current evidence shows that, despite wide acceptance of the inherent difficulties in linking business with poverty alleviation strategies, there is still recognition of the potential for business to contribute as a ‘critical component of development’ (Sagebien & Whellams, 2008 p.485). This is accompanied by awareness of the risks run by marginalising an important player (Fox, 2004, p.29). Faced with the intractable issues of business accountability and the overriding motivation of profit, the need for long-term strategies within the private sector in coordination with government and NGOs is proposed (Ashley et al., 2007; Boyle & Boguslaw, 2007; Kasim, 2006; Meyer, 2006). Collaboration across sectors and partnerships between relevant institutions and organisations is seen as one way to mitigate limitations and enhance the potential of CSR policies to address community development. This may also create an avenue for increased community participation through intermediary organisations. A key role for the state in providing a strong regulatory framework which would enable greater collaboration is advocated by a number of authors, including Hamann (2006) and Ashley and Roe (2002). Others note that the system itself must require ethical practice (e.g. Doane, 2005; Fox, 2004; Korten, 1996). Schilcher goes further to outline an additional role for the international system in supporting changes which would allow developing country governments greater agency to act in support of their citizens (2007):

Such ideological change would need to be accompanied by a change in the international system so that developing countries are granted greater decision-making power in institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and IMF. Flexibility and genuine policy-ownership allowing for individual responses to poverty are key. One-size-fits-all approaches – such as the promotion of tourism per se – are entirely unsuitable for the multi-dimensional problem of poverty (p.183).
CONCLUSION

This article has reviewed the literature on CSR and development and CSR in tourism for evidence of the potential of private sector-led development in Pacific tourism. Examples from tourism in Fiji demonstrate that CSR is able to make a significant difference to communities via the ethical practices and philanthropic activities of tourism providers. However, they have also shown that expectations of what the private sector can achieve should be tempered by the nature of business and of the system within which it operates, neither of which prioritise development goals. Where significant gains are achieved, these are noted to be ad hoc (Harrison & Prasad, 2013, p.752) or piecemeal (WTTC, 2002, p.7). This does not provide a good grounding for a case for CCD as an avenue to fulfil ‘worldwide sustainability and development objectives’, or evidence of the ability of business to enable a ‘shift to a new paradigm in development thinking’ (UN Global Compact, 2013, p.3). Ashley et al. also remind us that ‘tourism companies are not development agencies’ (2007, p.6) and we should not expect them to act as such.

In order to support achievement of the post-2015 agenda then, enabling tactics will be required at multiple levels: in an environment where MNCs often hold greater power than national governments, and small island states have limited influence in the international arena, this is more than a national or regional challenge. As Telfer and Sharpley note, ‘part of the development dilemma within the framework of sustainability is how the industry can operate so that the destination developmental needs are taken into account and how the power that multinationals hold can be used to that end’ (2007, p.58). For future practice of CSR in countries of the Pacific, partnerships and collaboration - with governments, national and international NGOs and regional and international institutions - hold the potential to support the development outcomes of CCD; in this context, development activities are likely to have greater potential to lead to better community engagement and improved community outcomes. Whether the private sector can ultimately take responsibility for this challenge, as currently envisaged by the Global Compact, or whether it will only function in this way in response to external incentives and regulation can be further debated, but it is evident that business will continue to play a role in future development agendas. Whilst business is not the answer, therefore, it may be able to constitute an important contributor to more sustainable development outcomes.

ENDNOTES


2 See for example http://fiji.intercontinental.com/communitycare.

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