

5 The use of tourism as a social intervention: A host community-centred perspective

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When reading this chapter, you will engage with these key concepts:

- A paradigm shift in tourism theory
- Sustainable development through tourism vs. sustained development of tourism
- The intricate relationship between tourism and sustainable development
- Critical approach to market and tourist-centred perspectives
- Tourism policy as a strategy for improving social, cultural, environmental, and economic conditions in host communities and their biocultural territories.
- Tourism-based interventions and policy in host communities
- The role of host communities
- Placing host communities and their biocultural territories at the centre of the tourism system.

The use of tourism as an intervention for social change

For a long time, tourism has been considered an opportunity for national and local social and economic betterment (Fayos-Solà & Cooper, 2019). In 2000, the inclusion of tourism into the international development agenda, led to multiple studies and theories about how tourism could contribute to local economic growth and sustainable development and enhanced the discussion about the possibility the tourism trade has, to become sustainable, without reaching consensus (Fayos-Solà et al., 2014; Sharpley, 2000; Sharpley, 2020). However, according to the UN-Millennium Goals and their most recent version, the UN-Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, these approaches only partially respond to the concept of sustainable development, which refers to people and social groups, rather than to an economic activity. In this sense, sustainable development of a social group may be achieved through tourism,