

ANNALES
UNIVERSITATIS MARIAE CURIE - SKŁODOWSKA
LUBLIN – POLONIA

VOL. LXXVIII

SECTIO B

2023

ANDREA GIAMPICCOLI

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2963-2031>

Durban University of Technology

Department of Hospitality and Tourism (Ritson
Campus)

P.O. Box 1334, Durban, 4000, South Africa

andrea.giampiccoli@gmail.com

SEYEDEH KHADIJEH REZATAB AZGOMI

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3685-787X>

University of Tabriz

Faculty of Planning and Environmental Sciences

Department of Geography and Urban Planning

29 Bahman Blvd. Tabriz, Iran

kh_rezatab@tabrizu.ac.ir

Preconditions for Community-Based Tourism Development in Kandovan, Iran

Warunki dla rozwoju turystyki opartej na lokalnej społeczności w Kandovan (Iran)

Abstract: This article investigates local communities' attitudes towards cooperation to promote community-based tourism and local heritage preservation in Kandovan, northwest of Iran. Drawing on data gathered by means of qualitative interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation, the article evaluates locals' willingness to cooperate among themselves as well as with external stakeholders. The findings reveal a positive inclination to collaborate among locals and diverse intentions in cooperating with other stakeholders. The article advocates for a collaborative, inclusive approach that fosters mutual understanding in community-based tourism and heritage preservation to accomplish developmental objectives and promote local welfare. It adopts a novel approach in that, rather than examining the results of an ongoing or completed community-based tourism project, it focuses on issues relating to such tourism where it has not yet been established.

Keywords: community-based tourism; local heritage; cooperation; collaboration; northwest Iran; Kandovan

Abstrakt: Artykuł bada postawy lokalnej społeczności wobec współpracy w celu promowania turystyki opartej na społeczności oraz zachowania lokalnego dziedzictwa w Kandovan, w północno-zachodnim Iranie. Korzystając z danych zebranych za pomocą wywiadów jakościowych, ankiet i obserwacji uczestniczących, przygotowano ocenę gotowości mieszkańców do współpracy zarówno między sobą, jak i z zewnętrznymi podmiotami. Wyniki wskazują na pozytywne skłonności do współpracy wśród mieszkańców oraz zróżnicowane intencje dotyczące współpracy z innymi podmiotami. Artykuł opowiada się za opartym na współpracy, otwartym podejściem, które sprzyja wzajemnemu zrozumieniu w zakresie turystyki opartej na społecznościach i zachowaniu dziedzictwa w celu osiągnięcia celów rozwojowych i promowania dobrobytu lokalnego. Przyjmuje

on nowatorskie podejście, ponieważ zamiast analizować wyniki trwającego lub przestarzałego projektu turystyki opartej na społeczności, skupia się na kwestiach związanych z taką turystyką, która jeszcze nie została wprowadzona.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka oparta na lokalnej społeczności; lokalne dziedzictwo; współpraca; północno-zachodni Iran; Kandovan

INTRODUCTION

Although it emerged more intensely in the 1990s, community-based tourism is no longer an alternative concept. In Jamaica, the term “community tourism” was used in 1978 to encourage community involvement in tourism by making use of local resources (Giampiccoli et al. 2015). The literature on community-based tourism has grown over the past three decades (e.g. Capenerhurst 1994; Okazaki 2008; Álvarez-García et al. 2018; He et al. 2021; Naranjo Llopert 2022). Community-based tourism can occur in both developed and developing countries; however, it is associated with disadvantaged members of society whose characteristics vary between such countries (Zielinski et al. 2021). Research on community-based tourism has been conducted in countries such as Japan (e.g. Hiwasaki 2006), as well in other Asian countries like Sri Lanka (Sriyani 2022), Laos (Park et al. 2018), Cambodia (e.g. Müller et al. 2020a, 2020b) or Thailand (Sitikarn 2021) and South American countries like Peru (e.g. Mitchell, Reid 2001) or Ecuador (Ruiz Ballesteros 2011). It should also not be regarded as an exclusively rural phenomenon as it can be found in urban contexts (Mtapuri, Giampiccoli 2020).

Community-based tourism can fail when it is not properly planned and managed (George et al. 2007), negatively impacting community development (Ngo, Creutz 2022). To enhance its chances of success, it needs to be properly implemented (Saayman, Giampiccoli 2016). Many community-based tourism initiatives have failed due to unfavorable local circumstances. Not all locations are suitable for tourism development; and each site needs to be evaluated for its capacity to host tourism enterprises (Zielinski et al. 2021). The preconditions to enhance its chances of success (see Jugmohan, Steyn 2015) include cooperation and solidarity amongst community members. Gidebo (2023) asserts that community involvement in tourism development is contingent upon initial attitudes toward tourism. Specific social factors and human attitudes and characteristics are thus an important theme in the literature on community-based tourism (Cáceres-Feria et al. 2021; Zeren et al. 2022; Iorio, Corsale 2014; Matarrita-Cascante et al. 2010; Khartishvili et al. 2020). Community-based tourism, by involving local community members and circulating tourism revenues within the village, has

the potential to generate income and jobs for residents. Involving community stakeholders helps ensure tourism benefits local people rather than outside investors (e.g. Amir et al. 2017; Dodds et al. 2018).

This article adopts a novel approach by investigating cooperation in a context that currently lacks community-based tourism development. In other words, it examines whether the local context is conducive to community-based tourism by investigating community members' attitudes towards cooperation among themselves and with external entities using Kandovan in Iran as a case study. It builds on previous work on the potential for tourism development in Kandovan (see Rezapouraghdam et al. 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW: COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AS A PHENOMENON

Community-based tourism emerged as an alternative to mass tourism (Dangi, Petrick 2021) focusing on disadvantaged people (Sumarmi et al. 2020; Sosa et al. 2021). It is linked to alternative development and community development issues such as community empowerment, capacity building, self-reliance, equity, social justice, self-determination, redistribution, and local control of tourism, etc. (Khartishvili et al. 2020; Sriyani 2022; Dłużewska, Giampiccoli 2021; Giampiccoli 2015; Jamal, Dredge 2014; Chin, Noorashid 2022). A fundamental tenet of community-based tourism is that the community fully controls, owns and manages it, thereby avoiding domination by external actors or the local elite (Navas-Camargo, Zwerg-Villegas 2014). However, the development of this form of tourism also requires support from the government authorities (Sun et al. 2020; Fiorello, Bo 2012). Cooperation among members is a further characteristic as community-based tourism promotes community development steeped in community members' collaborative work (Sosa et al. 2021).

Community-based tourism requires favorable conditions to enhance its chances of success. Local conditions must be evaluated and adjusted to suit its development, especially in the initial stages, to decrease the likelihood of failure (Zielinski et al. 2020). Not every location is suitable (Zielinski et al. 2020). Cooperation is a fundamental requirement. For example, the most successful community-based tourism initiatives launched by specialists and stakeholders in Armenia and Georgia are marked by strong cooperation between community leaders and the government authorities (Khartishvili et al. 2020). The following four types of cooperation are possible in community-based tourism:

- **Cooperation for community-based tourism development** relates to development cooperation (often international) to support community-based tourism

as a tool for poverty alleviation, assisting struggling economies and promoting nature conservation (see Gascón 2013).

- **Cooperation between community-based tourism and external entities** (often referred to as partnerships) occurs when a community-based tourism entity (and/or its members) joins forces with an external partner such as private tourism company or a non-governmental organization (NGO) (see Graci 2012; Dłużewska, Giampiccoli 2021).

- **Cooperation between community-based tourism and the community.** To ensure its success, a community-based tourism entity and its members should promote cooperation with the wider community (see Chin, Noorashid 2022).

- **Cooperation among members of the community-based tourism initiative.** The recent literature recognizes that Internal cooperation, cohesion and solidarity in the community are the first steps in successful success develop community-based tourism develop community-based tourism (Zeren et al. 2022). Examining this cooperation focuses the study on relationships and decision-making processes within the community stakeholder group itself, which is important for a community-based approach.

This article focuses on the last type of cooperation. A community-based tourism initiative that lacks cooperation among its members is likely to be at risk of failure. This suggests the need for a feasibility study prior to launching such an initiative (Denman 2001). Different preconditions that are favorable to community-based tourism formation are necessary (Dłużewska, Giampiccoli 2021). Jugmohan and Steyn (2015), thus, recommend an evaluation of local conditions accompanied by a management model for community-based tourism. Jugmohan and Steyn (2015) assert that any community-based tourism initiative should be required to identify and assess preconditions in order to increase the project's likelihood of success. However, the model they propose does not include cooperation among community members as well as their cooperation with external entities. External actors should provide a facilitating platform to enable community members to take independent action and control developments in their locality (Giampiccoli, Kalis 2012a).

Specific social capital related to cooperation is fundamental in community-based tourism (Jaafar et al. 2020). This includes relationships of trust, norms and solidarity (see Díaz Rocca, Zielinski 2022). Community cooperation is recognized as one of the factors that enhances community-based tourism's success (Karacaoğlu, Birdir 2017; Zeren et al. 2022). Successful community-based tourism usually occurs in well-organized, close-knit and self-determined communities (Karacaoğlu, Birdir 2017). Such cooperation is strengthened when benefits accrue to community members from the community-based tourism project (Sitikarn 2021).

However, the reality is often different from theory and more complicated as communities are difficult to define and are not homogenous. Furthermore, they confront different internal problems. The heterogeneity of a community can impose limitations on community-based tourism as a tool for community development (Navas-Camargo, Zwerg-Villegas 2014). It is, therefore, important to assess community members' attitudes – especially potential members of a community-based tourism initiative – and their willingness to cooperate. The presence of a cooperative framework in a community can offer a naturally occurring structural foundation from which community-based tourism initiatives can be started (Giampiccoli, Kalis 2012a).

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AND LOCAL HERITAGE

Cultural and natural heritage are important tourist attractions in many developing countries (Khartishvili et al. 2020). However, conventional tourism poses problems in relation to natural and cultural heritage, especially when it is externally controlled, as resources are diverted from local communities (Jugmohan, Steyn 2015). Cooperation amongst stakeholders including – and arguably first and foremost – the local community is fundamental. A successful relationship between tourism and heritage calls for the involvement of all stakeholders and, as the custodian of its heritage, the community must be involved and recognized (Aas et al. 2005; Su, Wall 2014; Akbar et al. 2020). The local community, which often consists of the poorer sections of society, must benefit. As noted by Koo-hafkan and Altieri (2011), in many Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) sites the eco-cultural patrimony is associated with poor people. The rural poor's identity, self-esteem, and sense of connection to the global community can all benefit from public recognition of their knowledge and talents. However, local community members are often neglected in local tourism and heritage management (Su, Wall 2014; see also Akbar et al. 2020).

Management says the specific community or custodian group made up of representatives from the local community, conservation board, and government authority is usually responsible for heritage (Ahmed 2007). Community-based tourism is also reliant on local resources such as local attractions which are based on local heritage. This implies that the community should control, own and manage tourism resources and facilities. At the same time, community-based tourism initiatives that promote cultural heritage can be marked by a complex relationship between commodification of culture and being a source of income and employment (see Ristiawan, Tiberghien 2021). Community-based tourism supports local people's way of life including their heritage. Local people can

benefit by offering local heritage as tourism experiences and through resource conservation (Arintoko et al. 2020; Gidebo 2023). Recognition of local knowledge and skills related to heritage can enhance the identity, self-esteem, and sense of belonging of the rural poor. Amongst other things, community-based tourism's economic contributions are linked to local expertise, know-how, and capacity to preserve local cultural legacies (Akbar et al. 2020). Protection of local heritage is another issue associated with community-based tourism (Giampiccoli, Kalis 2012a; Mohamad, Hamzah 2013, Simons, de Groot 2015).

This study aims to make a unique contribution by focusing specifically on collaboration as a key factor. Collaboration between stakeholders is pivotal for ensuring community buy-in and an equitable distribution of benefits. The focus on this understudied yet pivotal factor sets this work apart from similar previous investigations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study context: Kandovan village

According to the announcement of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran (2023), the village of Kandovan in East Azerbaijan province was registered in the list of the best global tourism villages. Kandovan village confronts socio-economic challenges such as poverty, low levels of education and inequality despite the various development programs implemented in rural areas by the government (see Rezapouraghdam et al 2020). However, the village could play an important role in realizing the potential of tourism development in the northwest region of the East Azerbaijan Province in Iran. As shown in Fig. 1, it is located 62 km from the city of Tabriz.

Kandovan's ancient identity is rooted in life and residence inside conical and pyramid-shaped rocks. Only three historical regions in the world share these characteristics, with the other two being Cappadocia in Turkey and Dakota in the United States of America. However, Kandovan is the only one that is inhabited by people. Its uniqueness lies in the caves in the volcanic landscape which were sculpted by natural elements into cone-shaped structures known as *karans* (cliff dwellings) (Nahi, Singery 2015) that are home to the local people (see Mohammadzadeh, Rezaei 2019). Due to these characteristics, Kandovan village was registered as a key national monument in Iran in 1997 and is awaiting UNESCO registration (Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism 2023; Interview with the manager of the cultural heritage base of Kandovan village). People have been living in *karans* since the Ilkhanid period (1256–1353). However, conflict exists between conserving the *karans* and the need to improve

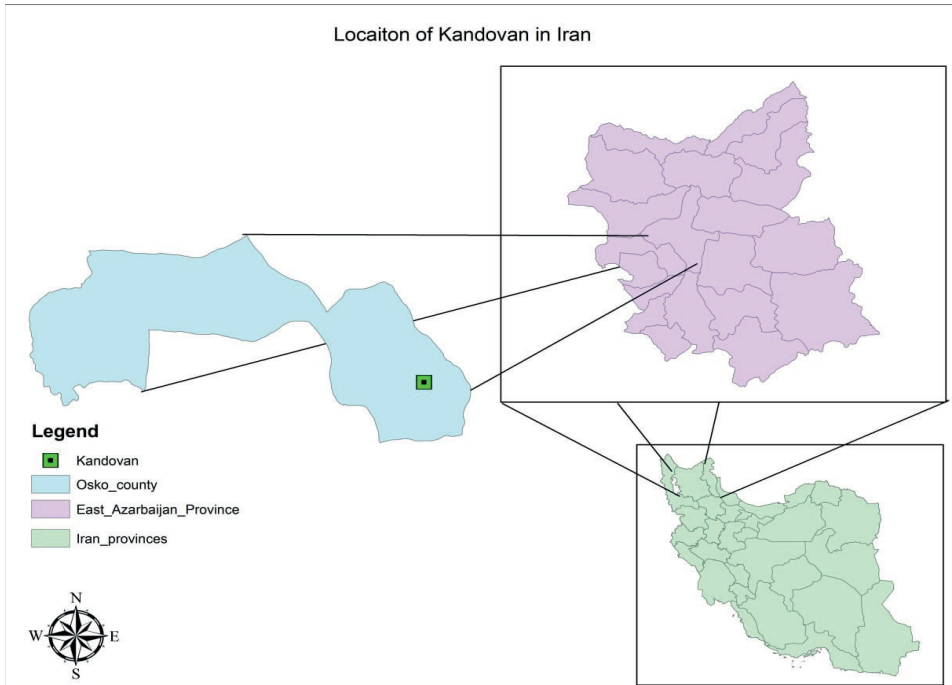


Fig. 1. Location of Kandovan village in Iran

Source: Authors' own study.

living conditions (Amini Birami et al. 2015). Photos 1, 2 show a view of Kandovan village.

Agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry have traditionally been the main occupations of the people of Kandovan. However, of late new occupations have been introduced such as shop keeping, buffet management, restaurants, peddlers, and tourist guides. Carpet weaving is another important local tradition (Kandovan Rural Guide Plan 2005; Interview with head villager 2023). The research was conducted in Kandovan and involved an examination of secondary data as well as fieldwork with an ethnographic-oriented research approach based on various visits (in 2023) to Kandovan where interviews (based on needs, issues and problems in general) / questionnaires (9 questions in the general section and 11 specialized questions) were employed to gather primary data, with extensive observation (including photography) also undertaken. One of the researchers, a female Iranian academic, lives close to Kandovan and is thus familiar with local realities. She is also fluent in the local language. This facilitated the researcher's immersion in local life, enabling her to gain local trust, and fostering fluid communication with community members. The interviews and observations complemented each other. Due to most of the villagers' low levels of literacy,



Photo 1. The view of Kandovan village from the south
Source: (Second author 2023).



Photo 2. Image from inside the *karans* (cliff dwellings) in Kandovan
Source: (Tabriz photos, Tabriz tourism, 2023).

the questionnaire was administered at the same time as the interviews in order to complement each other. Telephonic interviews were conducted to gather additional data from managers and local village leaders. In other words, an Iranian researcher collected field data that included semi-structured interviews and the distribution of questionnaires to participants. Each interview and questionnaire session lasted about 20 minutes on average. Participants were initially asked to articulate Kandovan-specific wants, difficulties, and problems, followed by the completion of formal questionnaires. After that, responses were thoroughly collected and transcribed to allow for in-depth examination. Data management entailed gathering and coding information using Excel software. The extracted codes were checked. As a result, codes with intercoder reliability lower than 0.85 were excluded from the analysis. In addition, many talks with provincial and village officials, as well as consultants involved in the Kandovan development plan, were held to address the initial coordination and critical concerns for conducting the current research. These interactions were critical in obtaining governmental clearance to conduct field studies. Furthermore, secondary data sources were included into the research framework, including an analysis of village development plans and Kandovan population statistics obtained from relevant organizations. The following data provide an overview of Kandovan's population (with a resident defined as a person living in the village on a permanent basis):

- total number of residents: 448,
- number of resident adult men: 89,
- number of resident adult women: 92,
- number of elderly people (65+): 42,
- number of young people (18–29): 82 (Statistics Center of Iran 2016) and
- number of village managers: 7.

Tab. 1. The profile of the respondents and the data collection instruments

Respondents	Number of people	Graduating students	Questionnaire
Community members (30–64 years old)	100 (50 women, 50 men)	100	100
Elderly (65+)	10 (5 women, 5 men)	10	10
Total: Village managers	7	7	7
Village council members	3	3	3
Heritage Department Villagers	2	2	2
(Village head and a village expert)	2	2	2

Source: Authors' own study.

By employing a combination of extensive observation, interviews, questionnaires, field immersion, and monitoring, the researchers aimed to gather rich and diverse data that would contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

FINDINGS: TOURISM, COOPERATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AND LOCAL HERITAGE IN KANDOVAN

Tourism in Kandovan

A significant number of restaurants have been constructed in Kandovan since the 1990s and various tourism activities have been proposed (personal observation), increasing the number of visitors. While places such as cafes exist for local people to socialize, there is limited infrastructure in the village (Field-work observation 2023). According to the Director-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of East Azerbaijan, Hamzezadeh Ahmad (2023), about 262,000 domestic and foreign tourists visited Kandovan in 2013 in the first six months of the solar year (spring and summer). Many visitors undertake one-day or weekend trips (Manager of Laleh Boutique Hotel, Interview 2023). Compared to the surrounding villages, some of which are twice as large in terms of population, tourism development in Kandovan has been impressive (Jodaii 2023). For example, there are currently more than 30 ecotourism accommodation units, with village's tourism product focusing on nature (Head villager, Interview 2023).

In general, tourism in Kandovan includes overnight stays. Nature tourism, the lifestyle and the village's unique architecture are the main attractions. There is also a wide range of informal activities (houses for rent, eco-lodges, clean-ups and maintenance, volunteer work, picking wild produce, etc.). The informal and seasonal nature of many tourism services makes it difficult to quantify the precise impact on the local economy, but their impact is undeniable, with jobs created in almost all sectors. All tourism initiatives are family-owned and run, and contractual labor is a secondary source. Tourism creates almost all direct permanent jobs and several other part-time or seasonal jobs. Kandovan's women play an important role, especially in the field of handicrafts and providing services. Kandovan village is marked by low levels of education (especially among the elderly). also points to variegated employment conditions (most people are self-employed in various small/traditional activities) and an almost complete lack of knowledge of community-based tourism and issues related to heritage (although villagers are aware of tourism). The exception are the managers that generally have higher levels of education and superior working conditions.

However, they also lack knowledge of community-based tourism, with around half also exhibiting a lack of knowledge of heritage issues.

The data revealed that, while all the respondents were aware of tourism, they lacked knowledge of community-based tourism. The fact that they all knew about tourism is not surprising given the current Kandovan context. The village economy is mainly tourism-oriented, with some agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry (Village supervisor, Interview 2023). While village life was previously dominated by livestock and agricultural activities, tourism and related services are now the most prominent activities, with most community members deriving their livelihoods from this sector (Village supervisor, Interview 2023).

Cooperation in community-based tourism and heritage conservation in Kandovan

Based on observations and interviews, the following results were categorized and drawn. The most important needs of Kandovan village are in the economic sector focusing on the development of tourism activities, in the tourist services sector, where especially during peak seasons there is a strong need for parking, and in the infrastructure sector. The majority of residents emphasized the lack of essential infrastructure such as roads, electricity/gas facilities, and public services (education, etc.). Of course, infrastructure upgrading is deemed important. In the cultural sphere, local people stressed the importance of preventing Kandovan customs from becoming diluted as modernization spreads. Tourism was thought to be financially supportive.

For the managers there is a strong need to harmonize the structures in order to remove the conflict between the interests of the host community and the government, and eventually, for the village to be registered with UNESCO. But what was most clear in all of these examples was the need for more contact between the host communities and the government, as well as finding a mediator for any form of de-confrontation, and addressing the empowerment and preservation of Kandovan village's local-global history.

The results on cooperation in relation to community-based tourism and heritage conservation in Kandovan show that (except for 2% of adult men that answered "don't know"), all the respondents in all the groups agreed that people should cooperate in community-based tourism and heritage conservation. This was true of both local people and managers. Ownership is one of the characteristics of community-based tourism. While the elderly and adult female respondents indicated a lack of knowledge on this issue, the managers cited ownership and the benefits of this type of tourism such as jobs as reasons why people should be involved in community-based tourism. The adult male respondents were of the view that ownership, decision-making and management, in that order of priority,

explain the importance of villagers' involvement in community-based tourism. The research provides insights into the importance of cooperation and ownership in the context of tourism development. The elderly and adult women did not answer this question due to a lack of knowledge.

The adult male respondents identified ownership, jobs and management as the most important areas in which people should cooperate in community-based tourism (with more than half indicating ownership). Economic and other benefits were not considered relevant, suggesting that adult men are more interested in control of community-based tourism than in its benefits. The results for the managers differ, as while they felt that the main three areas in which people should cooperate are ownership, management and jobs, they also felt that cooperation is important to reap the benefits of community-based tourism. It should also be noted that the managers were the only group that was able to indicate the tourism subsectors where people should cooperate, with hosting (accommodation) tourists and art and crafts at the top of the list.

Managers seem to be more inclined towards the benefits from community-based tourism, with adult men opting for control. This could be attributed to the fact that many of the managers are employed by the government (and arguably thus aim to deliver benefits to the local people) and do not live in Kandovan. This reduces their sense of belonging and exposes them to different realities. Furthermore, they will not be impacted by community-based tourism development in the village. The adult men live in Kandovan and therefore seek to control community-based tourism in their village. Interestingly, while the members of the village council are among the most influential individuals in Kandovan and have a significant impact on management of the village as they select the village head, their views do not seem to be in line with those of the adult men.

The type of work undertaken by managers appears to have influenced their responses on potential partnerships in community-based tourism development. While all the groups agreed that the community should not work alone but form partnerships, the type of partner differed by group. Managers were the only group that considered the government as a potential partner (as noted above, many managers are employed by the government). After government, they favored the private sector, international NGOs, local NGOs and the university in that order. In contrast, all the groups of local people identified the private sector and local NGOs as the most desirable partners, followed by the university and international NGOs in that order, with the government not considered. These findings highlight the importance of examining the perspectives and priorities of different stakeholders in tourism development. These results show the possible inclusion of various actors, such as the government, the private sector, NGOs,

and the university, in fostering community-based tourism initiatives. The difference between the managers and the other three groups could be associated with the work that managers perform; 71.43% of the managers work in government, hence their inclination to propose government as a partner in community-based tourism. However, the other groups (except for about 12% of managers and 10% of adult men) agreed that the partnership should not include shared ownership of the community-based tourism venture/project, but should take the form of external assistance.

These findings fit well with the main characteristics of community-based tourism where, whatever type of community-based tourism services or facilities is adopted, the ventures should remain fully owned, managed and controlled by community members (or groups of independent micro and small ventures under the same community-based tourism management organization); external partners should provide facilitative and other supporting services such as marketing and not be partners in the community-based tourism ventures themselves (Mtapuri, Giampiccoli 2013). In relation to heritage conservation, the managers indicated a lack of knowledge, and the other three groups indicated that they would rely on the university to decide on this matter. The same responses were forthcoming in relation to cooperation for heritage conservation. The elderly and adult women and men seem to have a strong preference for the university. This could be due to the low levels of education among these groups that cause them to respect and trust the university as a custodian and disseminator of knowledge. Lastly, none of the respondents proposed her/his own definition of community-based tourism, again pointing to the lack of knowledge on this subject.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings from the different groups of respondents, a basic model (with various steps) is proposed for community-based tourism development in Kandovan. The model presented in Fig. 2 below defines clear roles for cooperation in community-based tourism and conservation of the local heritage. The central role of cooperation in the development of a community-based tourism project will strengthen the growth of local tourism and heritage conservation and address its seasonal nature. Local tourism offerings and attractions should be based on local rather than external resources so as to ensure community control and minimize leakages. The model is based on six main steps:

Step 1: Education. All the respondents had no knowledge of community-based tourism, heritage conservation and the possible link between the two. A comprehensive educational (training/skills development) plan should be put

in place with the assistance of the university. Universities have a wide array of expertise and their local presence can play a positive role in assisting community-based tourism project development (see Giampiccoli et al. 2014; Govender, Giampiccoli 2018, 2019).

Step 2: Government assistance. While local people lack interest in working with the government, some government assistance and facilitation will likely be needed in the initial stages of community-based tourism development in Kandovan village. Tourism managers could act as an important link between the community and government, helping to facilitate tourism development and heritage conservation efforts. However, there is currently no cooperation between these groups. Rural development programs in Iran and Kandovan village have been highly centralized and top-down historically, undermining trust in the government among local people. Issues hindering cooperation for Kandovan's development include the dominance of government elites, a lack of legal protections for community interests, low awareness among villagers, inappropriate programs, politicization of cooperation, and a lack of coordination between institutions. As a result, local residents view the government and cultural heritage protection as obstacles to development, not enablers of it. Iran's economy is dependent on oil and the government neglects tourism. Lack of dedicated tourism and heritage funds means restoration projects are incomplete. Some managers also lack proper scientific and technical expertise for tourism and heritage roles. Overall cooperation and inclusive, community-based approaches are needed.

Step 3: Facilities preparation and organization. Once the government facilitation plan is in place, practical action on the ground should commence. Initial assistance should be directed to preparing and organizing the various tourist facilities, products, and attractions. This would include legalization/registration of the company/cooperative (such as the umbrella organization that unites the various entities and actors involved in community-based tourism) and any other requirements to ensure that all tourist-related facilities meet minimum standards – if not, the government should provide assistance to enable them to do so. Locals should agree on how to share jobs, roles and benefits so as to avoid conflict. If community cooperation is to be effective in the long term, it requires a set of design principles (boundary rules, rules on use, and villagers' participation in formulating and modify the rules).

Step 4: Partnerships. Partnerships have the potential to enhance community-based tourism's chances of success. Once the facilities and attractions are prepared and of an acceptable standard, partnerships should be explored with external entities (however, this would exclude shared ownership of the community-based tourism entities). While it is not always required that the government be a partner, it can

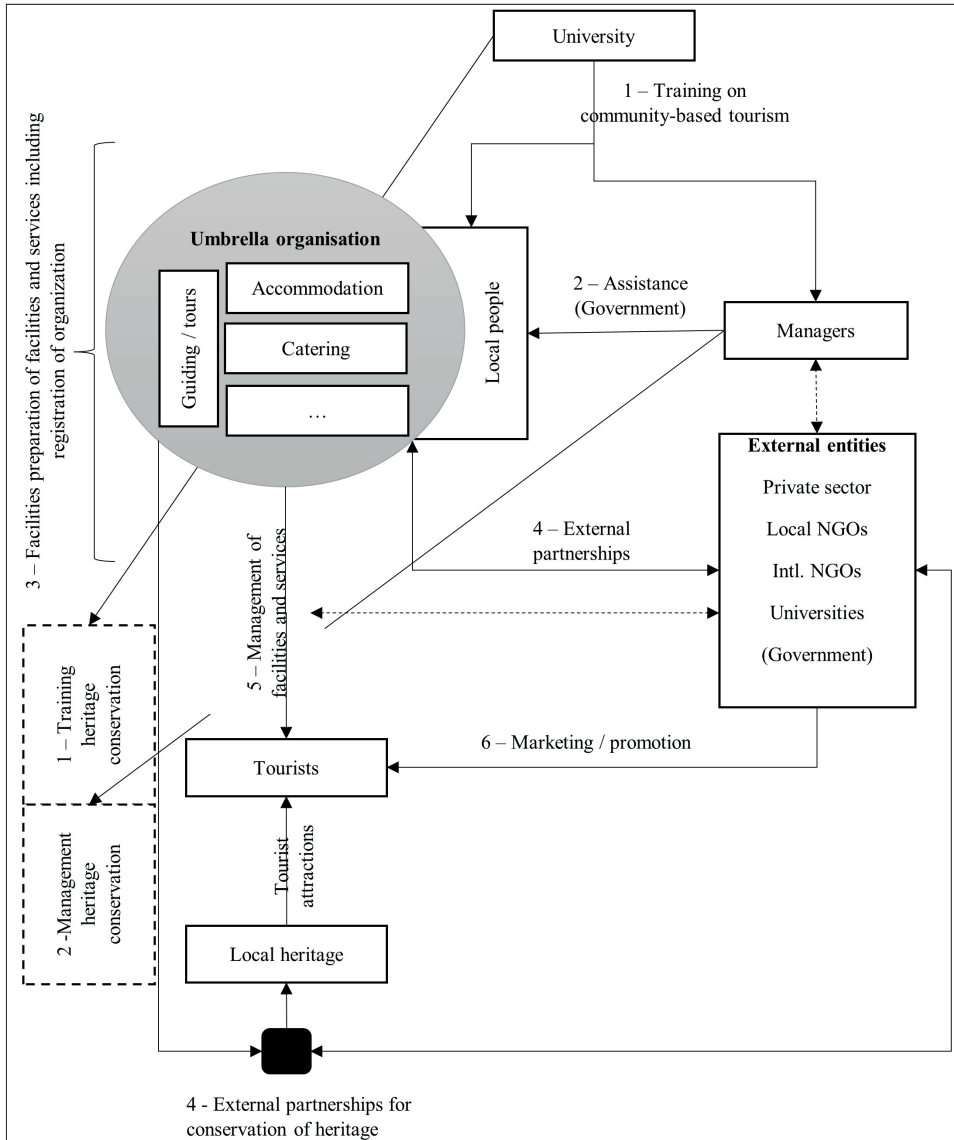


Fig. 2. Basic model for community-based tourism development and heritage conservation in Kandovan
 Source: Authors' own study.

assist and facilitate partnerships with the private sector, NGOs or the university. A number of partnerships are possible, each with its own characteristics. For example, a partnership with the private sector would relate to marketing and market access, while one with the university could be based on training and assisting with regular monitoring and evaluation of the community-based tourism development

and heritage conservation. The specific roles and benefits of each partner should be clearly stated in order to avoid future problems and maximize the benefits of the partnership (Mtapuri, Giampiccoli 2016).

Step 5: Management. At this stage, tourists will start to arrive, and management of community-based tourism and heritage conservation will play a fundamental role. Local people within the framework of the established partnership will manage community-based tourism and heritage conservation in Kandovan. At this stage jobs and other benefits will start to accrue based on the number of tourist arrivals.

Step 6: Marketing/promotion. This step involves promoting Kandovan village and its community-based tourism facilities nationally and internationally. This can be done independently by the local community-based tourism entity or in partnership with other entities such as the private sector and NGOs. Partnerships can be especially relevant for international promotion of Kandovan and its community-based tourism entity.

To enhance the chances of success within the proposed model framework, the following issues are regarded as fundamental:

- education and training should not comprise of a single-day course but structural long-term programs to comprehensively improve knowledge in all aspects of community-based tourism and heritage conservation,
- working cooperatively, including agreement on the specific roles and responsibilities of each actor (person or entity). Respect and trust need to be maintained amongst community members. Government assistance is important and should occur through a bottom-up approach where local voices are heard and actions are based on them,
- equitable distribution of the benefits of community-based tourism and heritage protection among residents.

It is also important to involve as many community members as possible so that the whole community grows together, avoiding possible jealousy and disruptions. The results of the case study also suggest that special attention should be paid to 1) potential cooperation of residents and managers as stakeholders and 2) the role that residents and managers play in shaping and bridging relationships. Local residents' positive attitude towards cooperation should facilitate the development of community-based tourism and associated heritage conservation. While other factors such as the level of financial investment (which is not considered here, but is certainly important) can influence community-based tourism development, a positive attitude towards cooperation is a good starting point as it reinforces the sense of belonging and pride in the local heritage. Thus, the case study of Kandovan depicts the positive attitude towards collaboration

in the development of community-based tourism, along with the need for external intervention.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on a case study of Kandovan village in northwest Iran, this article investigated local people's attitude towards cooperation in tourism, specifically in community-based tourism and heritage conservation. Rather than focusing on an on-going or completed project as is usually the case, it adopted the novel approach of examining this issue in a community where community-based tourism is not yet officially and formally present. This is important as various preconditions should be considered before establishing such projects (see Jugmohan, Steyn 2015). The article proposed that local people's attitude towards cooperation should be one such precondition. Planners should gain insight into operational, structural and cultural constraints to community participation (Tosun 2000) and the complex web of shifting power relations as well as the ways different stakeholders envisage community-based tourism.

The study found that Kandovan residents had a very positive attitude to cooperation in community-based tourism and heritage conservation and that they desire to maintain control of the community-based tourism entity. While local people did not conceive of the government as a potential partner, local managers (many of whom work for the government) favored such a partnership. The case study found that, in general, there was a lack of knowledge of community-based tourism and heritage conservation. A basic community-based tourism development model which includes links to heritage conservation was proposed. There is clearly a need for education and training to accompany community-based tourism and heritage conservation in Kandovan. The government should take advantage of the community's positive attitude towards cooperation by being the primary driver of tourism and heritage preservation in the village.

REFERENCES

Literature

- Aas C., Ladkin A., Fletcher J. 2005. Stakeholder collaboration and heritage management. *Annals of Tourism Research* 32(1), 28–48. <https://doi:10.1016/j.annals.2004.04.005>
- Ahmed I. 2007. The heritage of Shankharibazar: Peoples participation in the conservation process to promote cultural tourism. *BRAC University Journal* 4(2), 7–16. <https://dspace.bracu.ac.bd>
- Akbar I., Yang Z., Mazbayev O., Seken A., Udahogora M. 2020. Local residents' participation in tourism at a world heritage site and limitations: Aksu-Jabagly State Nature Reserve,

- Western Tian-Shan, Kazakhstan. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* 28(1), 35–51. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.28103-450>
- Álvarez-García J., Durán-Sánchez A., del Río-Rama M. 2018. Scientific coverage in community-based tourism: Sustainable tourism and strategy for social development. *Sustainability* 10(4), 1158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su10041158>
- Amini Birami F., Razani M., Asghari Kaljahi E., Emami S.M.A., Baghbanan A. 2015. Characterization of pyroclastic stones in the cut rock historical architecture of Kandovan Village. *Journal of Research on Archaeometry* 1(1), 1–16. <http://jra-tabriziau.ir/article-1-27-en.html>
- Amir, S., Osman, M.M., Bachok, S., Ibrahim, M., Zen, I. 2017. Community-based tourism in Melaka UNESCO world heritage area: A success in food and beverage sector? *Planning Malaysia* 15.
- Arintoko A., Ahmad A.A., Gunawan D.S. Supadi S. 2020. Community-based tourism village development strategies: A case of Borobudur Tourism Village Area, Indonesia. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* 29(2), 398–413. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.29202-477>
- Cáceres-Feria R., Hernández-Ramírez M., Ruiz-Ballesteros E. 2021. Depopulation, community-based tourism, and community resilience in southwest Spain. *Journal of Rural Studies* 88, 108–116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.10.008>
- Capenerhurst J. 1994. Community tourism. In: L. Haywood (Ed.), *Community Leisure and Recreation* (pp. 144–171). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. <https://www.cabdirect.org/cabdirect/abstract/19941810842>
- Chin W.L., Noorashid N. 2022. Communication, leadership, and community-based tourism empowerment in Brunei Darussalam. *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies* 15(2), 273–294. <https://doi.org/10.14764/10.ASEAS-0075>
- Dangi T.B., Petrick, J.F. 2021. Augmenting the role of tourism governance in addressing destination justice, ethics, and equity for sustainable community-based tourism. *Tourism and Hospitality* 2, 15–42. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp2010002>
- Denman R. 2001. *Guidelines for community-based ecotourism development*. http://www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/WWF_2001_Community_Based_Ecotourism_Develop.pdf
- Díaz Rocca L.H., Zielinski S. 2022. Community-based tourism, social capital, and governance of post-conflict rural tourism destinations: The case of Minca, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 43, 100985, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100985>
- Dłużewska A., Giampiccoli A. 2021. Enhancing island tourism's local benefits: A proposed community-based tourism-oriented general model. *Sustainable Development* 29, 272–283. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2141>
- Dodds R., Ali A., Galaski K. 2018. Mobilizing knowledge: Determining key elements for success and pitfalls in developing community-based tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism* 21(13), 1547–1568. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2016.1150257>
- Fiorello A., Bo D. 2012. Community-based ecotourism to meet the new tourist's expectations: An exploratory study. *Journal of Hospitality, Marketing & Management* 21(7), 758–778 <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2012.624293>
- Gascón J. 2013. The limitations of community-based tourism as an instrument of development cooperation: The value of the social vocation of the territory concept. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 21(5), 716–731. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2012.721786>
- George B.P., Nedelea A., Antony M. 2007. The business of community based tourism: A multi-stakeholder approach. *Journal of Tourism Research* 3, 1–19. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228314710>
- Giampiccoli A., Kalis J. 2012a. Community-based tourism and local culture: the case of the ama Mpondo. *PASOS – Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural* 10(1), 173–188. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2012.10.017>

- Giampiccoli A., Kalis J. 2012b. Tourism, food, and culture: Community-based tourism, local food, and community development in Mpondoland. *Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment* 34(2), 101–123. <https://doi/10.1111/j.2153-9561.2012.01071.x>
- Giampiccoli A., Saayman M., Jugmohan S. 2014. Developing community-based tourism in South Africa: Addressing the missing link. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance* 20(3/2), 1139–1161. <https://doi.org/10.4314/AJPHERD.V20I3-2>
- Giampiccoli A., Jugmohan S., Mtapuri O. 2015. Characteristics and policies of community-based tourism in the case of Jamaica. *Caucasus Journal of Social Sciences*. <https://hdl.handle.net/10321/2287>
- Gidebo H.B. 2023. Linking livelihood and biodiversity conservation in protected areas: Community based tourism development perspective from developing country. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 23(3), 361–375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584221102699>
- Govender I., Giampiccoli A. 2018. Imperatives for Monitoring and Evaluation of Community-Based Tourism: A Higher Education Institutions Perspective. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* 7(2), article 34, 1–16. https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_34_vol_7_2_2018.pdf
- Govender I., Giampiccoli A. 2019. University community engagement in community-based tourism: Exploring possibilities from some international experiences. *Journal of Social Research & Policy* 10(2), 1–17.
- Graci S.R. 2012. Putting community based tourism into practice. The case of the Cree Village Ecodge in Moose Factory, Ontario. *TÉOROS*, Special Issue, 65–70. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1036565ar>
- He J., Huang Z., Mishra A.R., Alrasheedi M. 2021. Developing a new framework for conceptualizing the emerging sustainable community-based tourism using an extended interval-valued Pythagorean fuzzy Swara-Multimoor. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 171(2021), article 120955, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120955>
- Hiwasaki L. 2006. Community-based tourism: A pathway to sustainability for Japan's protected areas. *Society and Natural Resources* 19(8), 675–692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920600801090>
- Iorio M., Corsale A. 2014. Community-based tourism and networking: Viscri, Romania. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 22(2), 234–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.802327>
- Jaafar M., Md Noor S., Mohamad D., Jalali A., Hashim J.B. 2020. Motivational factors impacting rural community participation in community-based tourism enterprise in Lenggong Valley, Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 25(7), 799–812. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2020.1769696>
- Jamal, T., Dredge D. 2014. Tourism and Community Development Issues. In R. Sharpley, D. Telfer, *Tourism and Development* (pp. 178–204). Channel View.
- Jugmohan S., Spencer J.P., Steyn J.N. 2016. Local natural and cultural heritage assets and community based tourism: Challenges and opportunities. *African Journal for Physical Activity and Health Sciences (AJPHES)* 22(1–2), 306–317.
- Jugmohan S., Steyn J.N. 2015. A pre-condition evaluation and management model for community-based tourism. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance* 21(3.2), 1065–1081. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC175489>
- Kandovan Rural Guide Plan 2005 (Housing Foundation of Islamic Revolution – East Azerbaijan province).
- Karacaoğlu S., Birdir K. 2017. Success Factors of community based tourism perceived by local peoples: The case of % 100 Misia Project. *International Rural Tourism and Development Journal* 1(2), 53–61.
- Khartishvili L., Mitrofanenko T., Muhar A., Penker M. 2020. Issues with applying the concept of community-based tourism in the Caucasus. *Mountain Research and Development* 40(1), R11. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-19-00071.1>

- Koohafkan P., Altieri M.A. 2011. *Globally important agricultural heritage systems a legacy for the future*. Rome: FAO. <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/04986a89-de94-5330-b99a-3545669dc580>
- Matarrita-Cascante D., Brennan M.A., Luloff A.E. 2010. Community agency and sustainable tourism development: The case of La Fortuna, Costa Rica. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 18(6), 735–756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669581003653526>
- Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism. <https://www.mcth.ir/English>
- Mitchell R.E., Reid D.G. 2001. Community integration: Island tourism in Peru. *Annals of Tourism Research* 28(1), 113–139. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(00\)00013-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00013-X)
- Mohamad N.H., Hamzah A. 2013. Tourism cooperative for scaling up community-based tourism. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes* 5(4), 315–328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-03-2013-0017>
- Mohammadzade R., Rezaei N. 2019. Analysis of residential “karaan” in historical village of “Kandovan” with livelihood approach. *Honar-Ha-Ye-Ziba: Memory Va ShahrSazi* 23(4), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.22059/jfaup.2019.266036.672122>
- Mtapuri O., Giampiccoli A. 2013. Interrogating the role of the state and nonstate actors in community-based tourism ventures: toward a model for spreading the benefits to the wider community. *South African Geographical Journal* 95(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03736245.2013.805078>
- Mtapuri O., Giampiccoli A. 2016. Towards a comprehensive model of community-based tourism development. *South African Geographical Journal* 98(1), 154–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03736245.2014.977813>
- Mtapuri O., Giampiccoli A. 2020. Beyond rural contexts: Community-based tourism for a better life in the city. *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR)* 8(2), 419–439. <https://doi.org/10.30519/ahtr.690184>
- Müller S., Huck L., Markova J. 2020a. Sustainable community-based tourism in Cambodia and tourists’ willingness to pay. *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies* 13(1), 81–101. <https://doi.org/10.14764/10.ASEAS-0030>
- Müller S., Markova J., Ponnareddy S. 2020b. Community-based ecotourism development and destination governance in Cambodia: A comparative analysis. In C. Dolezal, A. Trupp, H.T. Bui (Eds.), *Tourism and Development in Southeast Asia*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429264191>
- Nahi N., Singery M. 2015. Describing native architectural features of Kandovan, a sustainable village with rock architecture. In: *Renewable Energy in the Service of Mankind* (vol. 1, pp. 687–700). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17777-9_62
- Naranjo Llupart M.R. 2022. Theoretical model for the analysis of community-based tourism: Contribution to sustainable development. *Sustainability* 14(17), 10635. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141710635>
- Navas-Camargo F., Zwerg-Villegas A.M. 2014. Community based tourism: Is this progress? *Revista Ciencias Estratégicas* 22(32), 249–259.
- Ngo T.H., Creutz S. 2022. Assessing the sustainability of community-based tourism: a case study in rural areas of Hoi An, Vietnam. *Cogent Social Sciences* 8(1), 2116812. <https://doi.org/10.1080/202311886.2022.2116812>
- Okazaki E. 2008. A community-based tourism model: its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16(5), 511–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159594>
- Park E., Phandanouvong T., Kim S. 2018. Evaluating participation in community-based tourism: A local perspective in Laos. *Current Issues in Tourism* 21(2), 128–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2017.1323851>

- Rezpouraghdam H., Alipour H., Akhshik A. 2020. A futuristic approach to sustainable tourism development: Lessons from Kandovan Village. In: *Strategies for Promoting Sustainable Hospitality and Tourism Services* (pp. 140–157). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-4330-6.ch009>
- Ristiawan R., Tiberghien G. 2021. A Critical Assessment of Community-Based Tourism Practices in Nglanggeran Ecotourism Village, Indonesia. *Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Development Studies* 9(1), 26–37. <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jitode.2021.009.01.04>
- Ruiz Ballesteros E. 2011. Socio-ecological resilience and community-based tourism. An approach from Agua Blanca, Ecuador. *Tourism Management* 32(3), 655–666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.05.021>
- Saayman M., Giampiccoli A. 2016. Community-based and pro-poor tourism: Initial assessment of their relation to community development. *European Journal of Tourism Research* 12, 145–190. <https://ejtr.vumk.eu/index.php/about/article/view/218>
- Simons I., de Groot E. 2015. Power and empowerment in community based tourism: Opening Pandora's box? *Tourism Review* 70(1), 72–84. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-06-2014-0035>
- Sitikarn B. 2021. Sustainable community based tourism: impact, challenges and opportunities (the case of Huai Nam Guen Village, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand). *E3S Web of Conferences* 284, 10006, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202128410006>
- Sosa M., Aulet S., Mundet L. 2021. Community-based tourism through food: A proposal of sustainable tourism indicators for isolated and rural destinations in Mexico. *Sustainability* 13(6693), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126693>
- Sriyani G.T.W. 2022. Impact of Community-Based Tourism Projects' Empowerment on the Adoption of Sustainability Practices by Community Tourism Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. *Wayamba Journal of Management* 13(1), 114–141. <https://doi.org/10.4038/wjm.v13i1.7555>
- Statistics Center of Iran. (2016). Results of population census of Iran. Teheran.
- Su M.M., Wall G. 2014. Community participation in tourism at a world heritage site: Mutianyu Great Wall, Beijing, China. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 16, 146–156. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1909>
- Sun B., Ao C., Wang J., Mao B., Xu L. 2020. Listen to the voices from tourists: evaluation of wetland ecotourism satisfaction using an online reviews mining approach. *Wetlands* 40, 1379–1393. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wetres.2017.04.001>
- Sumarni Kurniawati E., Aliman M. 2020. Community based tourism to establish blue economy and improve public welfare for fishing tourism development in Klatak Beach, Tulungagung, Indonesia. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* 31(3), 979–986. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.31307-530>
- Tabriz photos, Tabriz tourism. 2023. <https://www.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=kandovan&rs=filter>
- Tosun C. 2000. Limits to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries. *Tourism Management* 21(6), 613–633. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(00\)00009-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00009-1)
- Zeren G., Lu J., Kerven C., Rang G. 2022. Exploring the role of nested institutions in community-based tourism development: Two case studies from China's Tibetan pastoral region. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2022.2154355>
- Zielinski S., Jeong Y., Milanés C.B. 2021. Factors that influence community-based tourism in developing and developed countries. *Tourism Geographies* 23(5–6), 1040–1072, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1786156>
- Zielinski S., Kim S.-I., Botero C., Yanes A. 2020. Factors that facilitate and inhibit community-based tourism initiatives in developing countries. *Current Issues in Tourism* 23(6), 723–739. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1543254>

Interviews

- Javani G. The head villager base of Kandovan village. Face-to-face interview, Kandovan village (02/02/2023a).
- Javani G. The head villager base of Kandovan village. Face-to-face interview, Kandovan village (02/02/2023b).
- Jodaii A. The manager of the cultural heritage base of Kandovan village. Face-to-face interview, Kandovan village (01/02/2023a).
- Jodaii A. The manager of the cultural heritage base of Kandovan village. Face-to-face interview, Kandovan village (01/02/2023b).
- Sadri M. The head villager base of Kandovan village. Face-to-face interview, Kandovan village (01/02/2023a).
- Sadri M. The head villager base of Kandovan village. Face-to-face interview, Kandovan village (01/02/2023b).