

Developing Sustainable Tourism through Ecomuseology: A Case  
Study in the Rupununi Region of Guyana.

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## **Abstract.**

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Sustainability is a concept that continues to evolve and perplex in tourism, one of the world's largest industries. Effective new theories and practices are constantly explored to incorporate the three pillars of sustainability (economic, socio-cultural and environmental) into tourism frameworks. Although marginally successful, sustainable tourism development remains a much criticised concept due to its lack of consistent implementation and conceptual and practical difficulties. In comparison, due to their focus on participation processes, integration of resources and response to specific needs and contexts, ecomuseological principles can be very useful for the development of community-based sustainable tourism products. These principles can be recognized within the philosophy and practices that tend to characterise individual ecomuseums and can be viewed as the key values of the ecomuseum ideal.

This research project examines the potential of using the principles of ecomuseology to support sustainable tourism development. In particular, the research adopted a mixed-methods approach which analysed the potential of using these principles for supporting sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi, an isolated and heritage-rich region in central Guyana. The data collection process involved a mixture of literature reviews, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with a variety of local, national and international stakeholders. The primary goal in data collection was to construct a profile of the Rupununi tourism structure to identify and evaluate areas in which ecomuseological principles would be best suited to provide support.

The findings from this research suggest that the principles of ecomuseology possess considerable potential to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi and potentially other destinations internationally. Indeed, results demonstrated that several of these principles were already being implemented by stakeholders in the region, although the term 'ecomuseum' is not being used anywhere by stakeholders. However, many principles are decidedly underused while the Rupununi is currently experiencing a significant shift in its relationship with the 'outside' world where societal changes are already affecting local economic development, heritage resources and host communities.

Ultimately, this dissertation argues that ecomuseology presents a flexible framework that can be used to address these changes and dually support heritage management and

economic development in the region. However, adopting the ecomuseum name is not recommended as a way forward for Rupununi stakeholders to improve sustainability. Instead, incorporating particular ecomuseological principles including a holistic approach to interpretation and information sharing, placing equal attention on cultural and natural resources and monitoring the changes to the region over time can support the three pillars of sustainability in the region. Lastly, this research demonstrated that these principles can be applicable to sustainable tourism development in many developing world contexts. However, the researcher argues that the theoretical framework for ecomuseums needs to be re-considered before it can be fully adopted in the lesser developed countries. This dissertation concludes by addressing this and other areas in need of further research while outlining the future of Rupununi tourism.

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## **Chapter 1.**

# 1 Introduction.

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## 1.1 Research Inspiration and Significance

This study examines tourism development in the Rupununi region of Guyana and emerged from the researcher's previous experience and passion with tourism in the area. Working as a tourism manager for a local organisation at the study site, the researcher engaged with all of the stakeholder groups mentioned in this study and came to develop an in-depth understanding on how tourism worked in the region. Yet at the same time, there was the recognition that this incredibly impressive area with all of its biodiversity and indigenous communities and their cultural heritage were particularly fragile amongst their rapidly changing landscapes. The idea that unregulated development could spin out of control and threaten the values of local communities, their culture and one of the most biologically important areas in the world was the primary impetus for this study. The researcher recognised that, like all locations, the Rupununi and its circumstances are unique and a specific management plan will be required in order to ensure sustainable tourism was feasible.

Although a multitude of studies have been conducted on sustainable tourism development, the general consensus is that it is a concept which requires a site specific framework and actions for each destination. After reading an initial report by Corsane (2009) on his research into tourism development and ecomuseums in the Rupununi, it became clear that the principles of ecomuseology had potential to serve as this framework. Then as the researcher delved into examining how ecomuseology compared with sustainable tourism development, it become abundantly evident that this was an area of research which was lacking more substantial studies. The two sectors, which both share very similar goals in protecting the world's heritage resources, have rarely been compared and evaluated together, especially within developing world contexts. As communities all over the developing and developed world continue to expand their tourism infrastructure, this research presents some key findings on how the principles of ecomuseology can be used to ensure this expansion is sustainable.

## 1.2 Research Question, Aims and Objectives

As mentioned above, this research examines tourism development in the Rupununi. The central question that has guided this examination is: **How could ecomuseology principles be used to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi region of Guyana?** To answer this research question, the researcher explored its three key subject areas. First, it was necessary to develop a thorough understanding of sustainable tourism and ecomuseology (Chapters Two and Three), the two core ideologies that are comparatively evaluated and analysed within the research. The remaining primary subject area is the study site, the Rupununi region of Guyana. An introduction to the Rupununi is presented in the next section while more information on the region and its tourism framework can be found in Chapters Five and Six.

The five primary aims and objectives for this research are as follows.

**Aim 1:** To explore the philosophy of ecomuseology.

### *Objectives*

**1.1** To study the historical background and definitions of ecomuseums

**1.2** To review the underlying theory and principles of the ecomuseological framework

**1.2.1** To analyse the relationship between ecomuseology and heritage management and community participation

**1.3** To study the conceptual and practical limitations of the ecomuseum ideal

**Aim 2:** To explore the theory of sustainable tourism.

### *Objectives*

**2.1** To study the historical background and definitions of sustainable tourism

**2.1.1** To formulate a working definition of sustainable tourism

**2.2** To explore the relationship between tourism and the three pillars of sustainability

**2.2.1** To analyse the values of sustainable tourism and how this translates into heritage management and economic development

**2.3** To identify and evaluate the different stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism development

**2.4** To study the limitations of sustainable tourism theory and practice

**Aim 3:** To identify and evaluate the heritage resources and stakeholders within the Rupununi tourism framework.

*Objectives*

**3.1** To review the history and current state of tourism development in the region

**3.1.1** To review the overall annual visitor numbers and tourist profile

**3.2** To identify heritage resources in the Rupununi and those used specifically for tourism development

**3.2.1** To explore the values of heritage resources to stakeholders

**3.3** To identify and analyse the role of the different Rupununi tourism stakeholders

**3.3.1** To identify and analyse all community-based, public and privately owned business within the industry in the region

**3.3.2** To identify and analyse the responsibilities and actions of Rupununi stakeholders towards sustainable tourism development

**Aim 4:** To critically explore any issues or challenges within the Rupununi tourism framework.

*Objectives*

**4.1** To identify and analyse the key challenges or issues associated with tourism development in the region

**4.1.1** To explore the views and values of stakeholders in relation to these issues

**4.2** To analyse the literature and stakeholder viewpoints on the processes currently in place for developing sustainable tourism and its impact on the region

**4.3** To review and analyse previous and current heritage management frameworks within the context of tourism

**4.3.1** To identify whether the cultural and natural heritage resources of the region are under threat

**Aim 5:** To critically analyse the potential for ecomuseum philosophy and practices to support the sustainable development of Rupununi tourism.

### *Objectives*

**5.1** To identify and analyse the areas within the Rupununi tourism framework where ecomuseological practices may already exist

**5.1.1** To compare and analyse Rupununi tourism operations with examples of global ecomuseum practices

**5.2** To identify and analyse the areas within the Rupununi tourism framework where ecomuseological principles are underused

**5.2.1** To identify and analyse comparative developments of ecomuseum practice that can be applied in the sustainable development of Rupununi tourism

**5.3** To analyse the potential of utilising ecomuseological principles to support sustainable tourism development.

**5.3.1** To explore and analyse the relationships between stakeholder actions, heritage resource management strategies and the principles of ecomuseology

**5.4** To evaluate the future of tourism in the Rupununi

**5.4.1** To analyse how ecomuseological principles align with the goals of stakeholders in the future development of tourism in the region

**5.4.2** To analyse how ecomuseological principles can support key facets of the tourism industry including marketing, heritage management and economic development



### 5.4.3 To analyse the potential of creating a Rupununi Ecomuseum

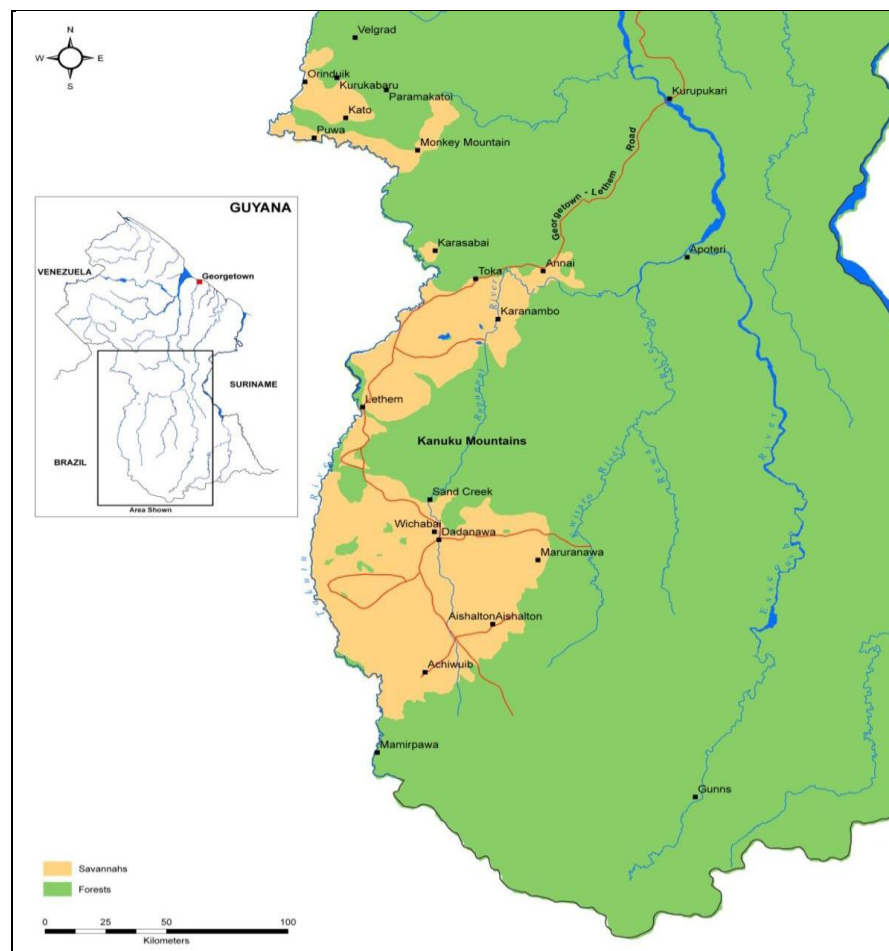
As stated above, there are three core subject areas represented in the research question. Aims 1 and 2 explore two of these subject areas: sustainable tourism and ecomuseology. The chosen site for this study is the third subject area and is explored in Aims 3 and 4. Lastly, Aim 5 investigates and analyses the relationship between these three subject areas in direct conjunction with the research question. The historical background, residents and economic situation found in the Rupununi are briefly introduced in the following section (1.3) before the region's heritage resources are reviewed in Section 1.4. In the final sections of this chapter, the overall chapter outline for this thesis (Section 1.5) and the publications that have contributed to the research (Section 1.6) are presented.

### 1.3 An Introduction to the Rupununi

To help position the research within the designated context, it is necessary to briefly outline the historical background, residents and state of economic development in the Rupununi, Guyana; the location where this research is focused. Although similar in landmass (214,000 square kilometres) to the United Kingdom, development in Guyana has been minimal and 80% of the country remains covered in tropical rainforests (Smock, 2008: vii). Moreover, this small developing country on the north-eastern coast of South America supports a population of approximately 800,000 inhabitants, resulting in a very low population density (3.5 per km) (Mulder *et al.*, 2009: 880; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 6). Within that relatively small population, 90% live on only 5% of the total land area, the developed coastlands (Smock, 2008: vii). Due to this lack of development, the interior of the country remains largely in a "pristine natural state" and is home to Amerindian communities, small villages and mining and forestry camps which are scattered around the region (*ibid.*).

Guyana's geographic position makes it home to a variety of natural ecosystems. It has a humid tropical climate, widespread seasonal rainfall and is located on the Guiana Shield, one of the oldest still-exposed rocks on earth (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 19; Wihak, 2009: 19). The south-western section of the country, which was the study area for this research, forms part of the Amazon Basin and retains high levels of biodiversity (Mulder *et al.*, 2009: 880). The area represents part of the northern savannas of South America and a transition forest-savanna biome (Read *et al.*, 2010: 217).

The Rupununi (32,800 square kilometres) is an immense tract of land in central and south-western Guyana, composed of naturally-occurring savannah wetlands, riverine systems and tropical rainforests (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 47). Its boundaries are defined by a mixture of natural landscape features. The region is bordered in the north by the Pakaraima and Iwokrama mountains, in the east and south by the Essequibo River and rainforests while the Brazilian state of Roraima delineates the western front (figure 1.1). The Rupununi itself is not an administrative district, but instead comprises two government sanctioned zones (Regions 8 & 9) (figure 1.2, p. 21). The region and savannas in particular, is named after the Rupununi River which flows through its centre and into the Essequibo River just south of the Iwokrama mountains. The savanna area of the Rupununi is divided by an archipelago of rainforest-covered mountains, the Kanukus (Edwards & Gibson, 1979: 161).



**Figure 1.1: Rupununi Map**

(CI, 2010: 12)

The seasonal flooding of the savannas, combined with a poor infrastructure and an extensive strip of rainforest separating the region from the coast, has made the area

largely inaccessible until recent times. However, the improvement of the only road from Guyana to Brazil has allowed for increased public and private vehicle transport. Nonetheless, the area lacks electricity, sewage systems and maintains only basic telecommunications (Wihak, 2009: 21). Solar-powered units and generators are present in various pockets around the Rupununi and are sometimes used to supply energy to satellite-based internet hook-ups.

### ***1.3.1 Historical Background***

According to archaeological evidence including petroglyphs, stone tools and ceramic remains, people have been visiting the Rupununi for more than 7,000 years (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 5; MRU, 1996: 7; Plew, 2004: 8). Further estimates state that these first Paleo-Indian hunters may have visited 10,000 to 12,000 years ago (Plew, 2004: 8; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 165). Descendants of these original visitors eventually started to become more stationed and gradually withdrew from their nomadic lifestyle to pursue agricultural production. Still living in the area today, indigenous Amerindians became competently efficient at surviving by harvesting local fish, wildlife and forest resources, weaving baskets and constructing dugout canoes (Smock, 2008: 3; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 5).

The first Europeans arrived on the coasts of Guyana with Christopher Columbus in the late fifteenth century. After this time, several non-Spanish countries began exploring the Guianas in their conquest to claim a portion of the continent (Ali, 2006: 33). Then in 1595, Guyana and the Rupununi in particular, would become extremely well known as Sir Walter Raleigh returned to England claiming that the area was in fact the site of El Dorado, the famous lost city of gold constantly searched for by explorers during this period (Edwards & Gibson, 1979: 169-170; Wihak, 2009: 19; Chan, 2012: 21; Gimlette, 2012: 56-57; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 5). Quite naturally, this launched a series of investigative trips by international explorers and scientists into the Rupununi region, including several in the nineteenth century by the Schomburgk brothers, Charles Waterton, Charles Barrington-Brown and Everard Im Thurn (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168). These early visitors to the Rupununi relied heavily on Amerindians for guidance and survival skills through the different landscapes; a reliance that is still in operation today (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168).

After this initial period of interest, European exploration of the area was infrequent, apart from a Dutch trading post (1700s) and Christian missionaries (1800s) (Wihak, 2009: 19). Eventually in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans would set up some permanent residences in the area with their livelihoods based around cattle ranches and balata bleeding (CI, 2003: 12; Wihak, 2009: 19). Much of the labour force for these enterprises was drawn from the indigenous communities (CI, 2003: 12). These enterprises, coupled with the introduction of cash economies and schools by the colonisers, also influenced indigenous communities to become bigger and permanent (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 165). Further explorers, naturalists and writers visited the area during the following century (1890-1990) and included Evelyn Waugh (1932), David Attenborough (1956) and Gerald Durrell (1954) (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 5, 195). The area remained largely inaccessible until the mid-1990s when a road was built through the centre of the Rupununi in an effort to connect the coastal areas of Guyana with Brazil (Wihak, 2009: 20). This increased traffic, combined with Guyana's new national policy allowing foreign investment helped to gradually open the area to increased development (Mistry *et al.*, 2004: 117).

### **1.3.2 Residents**

Unlike the coastal areas of Guyana which predominantly comprises East Indian (50%) or African (36%) communities, Rupununi residents are primarily indigenous Amerindians (Smock, 2008: 19). As the fourth largest ethnic group in Guyana, Amerindians represent 9% of the total population for the country (Bynoe, 2006: 5). The region has a population of 16,000 persons, made up of three main indigenous groups; the Makushi (81%) in the north and the Arawak-speaking Wapishana (12.6%) and Wai Wai in the south (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 169-170). The north Rupununi alone has a population of over 8,000 people (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168).

There are approximately 60 politically defined communities in the Rupununi, most of which tend to be placed close to the edge of forest areas (Smock, 2008: 230). The communities range in population from around 60 to 1,200, with the Guyana/Brazil border town of Lethem (2,500) serving as the largest population centre (Smock, 2008: 264). Experiencing an annual 2% growth rate, the population of the Rupununi is one of the fastest growing regions in Guyana due to expansion of Lethem and of mining (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168). The communities of Apoteri, Annai and Kwatata (figure 1.2) serve as administrative hubs in their respective areas and have seen several

“farming satellites” grow into new villages in the surrounding territories (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168). Land in the Rupununi is predominantly owned by the State and Amerindian communities (CI, 2010: 13). The community lands are held collectively by its residents under the *Amerindian Act* (2006), which “...grants them irrevocable tenure and appoints them as sole managers of their land” (*ibid.*).

The largest of the three Amerindian groups in the Rupununi are the Makushi (8,000), who live in the north of the region (figure 1.2) in various villages but primarily in two of the largest, Annai and Surama (Fox & Ali, 2006: 42; Shackley, 1998: 209). Makushi are principally situated on the savannas with their farmlands located in the forests (MRU, 1996: 5; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 165). The Kanuku Mountains form a natural boundary in the middle of the Rupununi that signals the end of Makushi territory and the beginning of the Wapishana (Mistry *et al.*, 2004: 118-119; MRU, 1996: 5). While the Wapishana have a population of around 6,000-7,000 people, the Wai Wai only number around 200 and occupy two small communities located in the extreme south of the country (Fox & Ali, 2006: 42; Edwards & Gibson, 1979: 162; Smock, 2008: 230).

Amerindian livelihoods are a mixture of traditional practices (e.g. hunting, fishing) and cash-earning activities (e.g. tourism, mining, agriculture). However, they remain mostly subsistence-oriented, using their natural surroundings in holistic fashion (Read *et al.*, 2010: 214; Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 3). In most Amerindian communities, only around 1-10% will have full-time salaried jobs (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 3). They are self-sufficient in terms of food production and rely heavily on agriculture, fishing and hunting without the benefits of running water, electricity, medical care or modern forms of communication (Smock, 2008: 230; Read *et al.*, 2010: 214; MRU, 1996: 49; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168; Sinclair, 2003: 142). The core crops are cassava, sweet potato, sugar cane, plantains, cashews and papaya and most of the production is for household use (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168). Amerindian communities are considered among the “...poorest and most neglected stratum of Guyanese society” (Forte, 1995 from Sinclair 2003: 142; see also Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 163). This poverty is characterised by high unemployment and low income, high transportation costs, poor social infrastructure and lack of capacity and access to markets (Bynoe, 2006: 6). Bynoe (2006: 6), a Guyanese researcher, states, “Diversification best describes the livelihood strategies of Amerindian households in the Rupununi...it has been a survival plan for the Amerindians for centuries”.



**Figure 1.2: Rupununi Map**

© ICCHS (based on an original by the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development)

### 1.3.3 Economic Development

Economic development in the Rupununi has traditionally differed from that of Guyana's national strategy, which revolves around agriculture (sugar, rice) and mining (bauxite, gold) (Smock, 2008: 17). Watkins *et al.* (2010: 199) describe development in the area as one of "boom and bust" which has involved ranching, balata and the wildlife trade (see also Mulder *et al.*, 2009: 881-882). These three main industries were the first development experiences for local Amerindian communities and are exemplified by their rapid growth and collapse (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 199). Furthermore, Watkins *et al.* (2010: 201) attribute these collapses to a combination of market loss due to the presence of cheaper alternatives and resource depletion.

Cattle ranches were started in the savanna in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century by European settlers to the region (CI, 2003: 12). Ranching then remained the main economic activity in the Rupununi until the 1980s (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 199). Extracting balata from trees, a form of natural latex, was also a key industry in the twentieth century until its demise in the 1970s (Mulder *et al.*, 2009: 881-882). After that time, trapping wildlife, birds (e.g. parrots, macaws and toucans) especially, became a main economic activity before sources were depleted and it was banned in several communities in the mid-90s (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 204).

After the collapse of these three main industries, local communities have faced significant economic hardships, primarily caused by the lack of opportunities for employment (Shackley, 1998: 209; CI, 2010: 13). As a result, this influenced the migration of several community members, including youths, to the Brazilian border or coastal areas of Guyana searching for work (*ibid.*; see also Dilly, 2003: 62; Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 4). The national government, however, continues to see the region as one that is prime for economic expansion and forecasts the development of new roads, improved communications and increased business activity (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 199). Increased business development would likely bring a much needed diversified local economy where Amerindian communities would have additional avenues for employment.

Watkins *et al.* (2010: 204) assert that the key features of development in the Rupununi today are the construction of the Georgetown to Lethem road; continued investigation for petroleum; increased mining activity; potential projects involving large-scale agriculture; and, tourism. The Georgetown-Lethem road provides market opportunities for communities as access to the region is improved (Dilly, 2003: 69). Although the road is currently in a fairly-primitive state and primarily requires the use of 4x4 vehicles or local 'mini-buses', there are plans to expand and pave the road which would open the area up to "unregulated exploitation" (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 204). Mining, both legal and illegal, has been popular in the Rupununi despite its negative impact on the environment. This is primarily due to the fact that few other jobs are available and it provides a hasty source of income for workers (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 4; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 24). As gold prices continue to rise (400% increase in the past decade), the mining sector also continues to grow and is the most important revenue activity in Guyana (Colchester & La Rose, 2010: 9). Large-scale agriculture and petroleum exploration has been largely speculative, but several companies have expressed interest

in their potential. Currently, extractive economic activities have not yet had a negative environmental impact on the area (Mistry *et al.*, 2004: 127). However, as improvements to the road continue to be made and there is an increased interest in large-scale agriculture, petroleum and mining in the region, crucial decisions will need to be made that will shape the future development of the area.

This section has briefly reviewed some fundamental information regarding the previous and current socio-cultural environment in the Rupununi. Understanding these aspects of the study area is integral for any comparison or evaluation within the region's tourism infrastructure. The next section (1.4) now reviews the heritage resources found in the Rupununi.

#### **1.4 Heritage Resources**

The Rupununi possesses a unique mixture of natural and cultural heritage resources. Authors and marketing efforts alike have described the area as one of the last great and 'untouched' areas of the world, a "biological treasure trove" (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 1; see also Smock, 2008: 229; Chan, 2012: 23; Gimlette, 2012: 59). The distinctive combination of an indigenous cultural heritage and 'unspoiled' natural environment with high species richness presents an area of profound importance in today's globalised society. One interviewee described the region as "...it's as if you have entered a totally different world" (Interview P3, 2012). This section identifies the natural (Sub-section 1.4.1) and cultural heritage resources (Sub-section 1.4.2) of the Rupununi. It also investigates the distinct connection local communities have with the natural environment and how this has shaped their lifestyles, traditions and belief systems (Sub-section 1.4.3).

##### ***1.4.1 Natural Heritage***

In a recent promotional article, a travel writer described the Rupununi by stating, "Out on the savannas, nature rules" (Gimlette, 2012: 58). This statement is validated in the low population density and abundance of natural heritage in the region. The Rupununi's natural resources consist of a wide range of ecosystems including grassland savannas, lakes, ponds, rivers, mountains, wetlands and tropical rainforests which were formed due to various geomorphological and topographical factors (CI, 2010: 38; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 23; Shackley, 1998: 208). Furthermore, the area is characterised



by the ecosystems and biodiversity of the Guiana Shield (Read *et al.*, 2010: 217). However, its proximity and connections to the Amazon River basin also means that a higher number of species and habitats are present during the seasonal flooding where the two regions fuse together (Smock, 2008: 230; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 1). Within this number of diverse ecosystems, the Rupununi has become one of the most biologically diverse locations on Earth (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 47). Watkins *et al.* (2010: 1) argue that the area is as significant as other well-known destinations like the Pantanal, Okavango, Manu Reserve and the Everglades (Table 1.1). Despite this similar amount of natural resources, the Rupununi remains comparatively unknown.

**Table 1.1: Rupununi Biodiversity**

Adapted from Watkins *et al.* (2010: 47)

<b>Fauna Group</b>	<b>Pantanal, Brazil</b>	<b>Okavango, Botswana</b>	<b>Manu, Peru</b>	<b>Everglades, Florida</b>	<b>Rupununi</b>
<b>Birds</b>	390	444	>850	349	643
<b>Fish</b>	263	71	>210	432	>410
<b>Mammals</b>	130	122	200	76	>191
<b>Reptiles</b>	40	64	68	60	>103
<b>Amphibians</b>	96	33	140	38	>67
<b>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	160,000	28,000	18,811	>8,000	32,800

The Rupununi is home to an extensive network of animals and plants, several of which are still lacking titles due to the necessity for more research (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 35). At the very least, the area is home to more than 1,400 species of vertebrates, 643 bird species, 2,800 species of plants, 120 species of reptiles and amphibians, 400 species of fish and innumerable species of invertebrates (Smock, 2008: 230; CI, 2010: 38; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 35, 42). However, there remains “substantial gaps in our knowledge” about the area’s biodiversity and it is believed that further research could reveal 5% more birds, 10% more mammals and 30% more reptile and amphibian species (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 35; Smock, 2008: 230). Amongst this biodiversity exists the giants of the Rupununi, a selection of mega fauna that are considered the area’s “flagship species” (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 145). These species include the giant river otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), giant river turtle (*Podocnemis expansa*), black caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*), harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) and arapaima fish (*Arapaima gigas*) (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 1). One interviewee (Interview V1, 2012)

commented on the abundance of large animals stating, “One coinage is that Africa has the large five, but the Rupununi has the large ten or twelve”.



**Figure 1.3. View from Turtle Mountain, Iwokrama Reserve**

This wealth of biodiversity has encouraged the development of one protected area (Iwokrama reserve) and the proposal of another (Kanuku Mountains). Together, the Kanuku Mountains, larger than many Caribbean islands, represents the highest biodiversity levels in Guyana and are considered “one of the last remaining pristine Amazonian habitats” (Smock, 2008: 260; see also Baksh, 2006: 165-167). Indeed, the area supports more than 50% of Guyana’s avifauna and at least 70% of its mammal species (Smock, 2008: 260). The mountain range covers an area of 5000 square kilometers and includes habitats such as gallery, lowland and evergreen forests (Baksh, 2006: 165).

#### ***1.4.2 Cultural Heritage***

The cultural heritage resources of the region are defined by a mixture of both tangible (e.g. crafts) and intangible (e.g. indigenous language) features, most of which are derived from local indigenous communities. Tangible heritage assets include traditional architecture, crafts, petroglyphs and artwork while the intangible resources include indigenous languages, customs, traditional knowledge (farming, hunting, cooking,

ethnobotany) and cultural traditions (music, performances, celebrations) (CI, 2010: 39; Lang *et al.*, 2009: 11, Bowers & Corsane, 2012). The Rupununi also has a rich history which has witnessed the arrival of European explorers, ranches and cowboy-like figures similar to those from the ‘wild-west’ notions of the American southwest, political uprisings (1969) and visits by famous naturalists and film crews (Section 1.3). Rupununi residents have sustained a strong relationship with the environment and have traditionally followed animism, or beliefs based on the existence of spiritual presences in natural objects and phenomena (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 251). In an article featuring some of the stories and beliefs crafted by Amerindians, the travel writer (Gimlette, 2012 58) states, “...it’s a world infested with magic. There are supernatural boulders, giant worms, mischievous spirits, and trees that turn you grey”.



**Figure 1.4: Cassava Preparation**

One of the main attributes of the cultural heritage of the Rupununi is that very little has changed over the past few decades; although there is a current shifting in cultural practices (Sub-section 6.4.2). Indeed, residents still largely live traditional lifestyles that echo their inherited cultural traditions (Sinclair, 2003: 143; CI, 2010: 38). Smock (2008: 231) argues that this is partly due to the isolation of the communities and states:

*“In many places it’s as if you are stepping back in time...little has changed in decades, and in the case of some of the most remote villages it has been*

*much longer than decades since lifestyles have changed. All over the Rupununi the nostalgic talk of the old days still strongly resembles the present.”*

The continuation of these lifestyles validates their importance to community structures. Moreover, questionnaire respondents unanimously (100%) agreed that cultural heritage resources are important for community well-being. As the following section seeks to illustrate, this importance placed on cultural heritage resources by indigenous communities works equally for natural heritage, as the two are inextricably linked.

### ***1.4.3 Relationship between nature and culture***

Pete Oxford (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: xv), a biologist and wildlife photographer, asserts that “...the pace and approach to life in the Rupununi is foreign to the ‘developed’ Western World”. This is primarily due to the fact that unlike most pockets of society today, Amerindian culture shares an inseparable bond with the natural environment. This connection is embedded in the interdependence for supporting local livelihoods and well-being and the traditional understandings passed down amongst generations (Forte, 2006: 136; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 172; Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 251; Baksh, 2006: 165; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 10). Indigenous knowledge about the natural environment has been attained through an abundance of experiences and observations throughout their history in conjunction with their daily dependence on vegetation and game meat for subsistence (Read *et al.*, 2010: 214; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 172). As a result, these natural habitats are exceptionally important to the Amerindian way of life. On the importance of the natural environment to communities, one community member (Interview C4, 2012; similar statements made during Interviews P1, V1, V3, V4, 2012) added:

*“...Because actually this is our supermarket, we get our proteins from it, our medicinal plants to heal us, we use certain types of roots from the forest, you use materials for your house...you name it, it’s there”.*

Rupununi Amerindians and most indigenous communities globally, are holistically integrated in their native forests and savannas and possess an encyclopaedic knowledge on the local flora, fauna and seasonal climate changes (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 168). Their in-depth ecological knowledge is manifested in a variety of formats, including: hunting (prey migration patterns); fishing (bows and arrows); construction of their

homes with clay bricks and palm leaves; handicrafts (backpacks and cassava strainers); and, for the medicinal use of natural resources which remains popular in treating illnesses despite the presence of health centres in most communities (ibid).

This relationship between nature and culture is a dynamic process rooted in a reciprocal interaction that has produced cultural ideologies and practices (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 251). For example, there are several indigenous beliefs and stories, where mythical creatures are directly related to natural resource consumption (Mistry *et al.*, 2004: 118; Read *et al.*, 2010: 214). These links to spiritual worlds shaped how they interacted with the environment (Read *et al.*, 2010: 216). Indeed, some communities avoid certain places or natural features that have negative connotations with “spiritual guardians” (Read *et al.*, 2010: 231). The nature and culture connection has also helped indigenous groups to formulate a sense of place about their landscapes (Read *et al.*, 2010: 216; Corsane & Bowers, 2012:251; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: xv). Meaning and a distinct ‘sense of belonging’ was allocated to the physical spaces communities occupied, due to the natural environment’s dictation on their spiritual and practical cultural practices. With this basic understanding of the Rupununi in mind, attention now shifts to the next section which discusses the outline for this thesis.

## **1.5 Thesis Outline**

This thesis is presented in nine chapters and is divided into three parts. The first part serves as an introduction to the research and comprises Chapters One through Four. Chapters Two and Three give a brief overview of the literature on two of the three subject areas for this research. More specifically, the literature on sustainable tourism is reviewed in Chapter Two while ecomuseum philosophy is discussed in Chapter Three. These chapters provide essential information that has guided the implementation of this research, including its methodological design, the subject of Chapter Four. As the methodology incorporates specific elements from these two subject areas, it is useful to review them before presenting how the research strategy was designed and data was collected. The first four chapters are shorter in content than the last five so that that there was more opportunity to fully develop the discussion and analysis chapters.

The second part of this thesis starts to present the research data by building a profile on the Rupununi tourism framework (Chapters Five and Six). Chapter Five identifies and explores the fundamental elements of Rupununi tourism development including the

tourism structure, products and the stakeholders. Chapter Six then presents areas of significance, or key issues and challenges, within Rupununi tourism that were identified during data collection and analysis. The third part is the key focus of this thesis and directly answers the research question. This is first addressed in Chapter Seven, which discusses and evaluates areas within the Rupununi tourism framework where practices similar to those in ecomuseology are already being employed. Chapter Eight then reviews the areas within Rupununi tourism where an ecomuseum-like philosophy is underused and analyses the impact of its potential implementation on sustainability. Lastly, a summary of the central findings and arguments from this research, as well as recommendations for further research and some final thoughts on the future of Rupununi tourism, are presented in Chapter Nine.

## 1.6 Publications and Conferences

Developing and testing the findings and arguments from this research has been aided by the production of four publications and the researcher's attendance at four conferences. These include:

### Publications

- Bowers, J. (2012) *Can Ecomuseology Be Used to Support Sustainable, Community-based Tourism Development in the Rupununi, Guyana?* 1st International Conference on Ecomuseums, Community Museums and Living Communities, Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings, Lisbon Portugal.
- Bowers, J. (2013 – currently in review) *Tourism, Archaeology, and Ethics: A Case Study in the Rupununi Region of Guyana.* *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology.* Springer Science+Business Media, New York.
- Bowers, J. and Corsane, G. (2012) 'Revitalising Amerindian Intangible Cultural Heritage in Guyana and its Value for Sustainable Tourism', in *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* (eds. M. Stefano, P. Davis and G. Corsane). The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, UK, pp. 201-212.
- Corsane, G. and Bowers, J. (2012) 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study in the Rainforest and Savannahs of Guyana', in *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (eds. I. Convery, G. Corsane and P. Davis). The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, UK, pp. 249-260.

### Conferences

- Inter-Congress on Indigenous Peoples and Museums: Unraveling the Tensions, 2011. World Archaeological Congress (WAC), Indianapolis, USA.

- 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Ecomuseums, Community Museums and Living Communities, 2012. Green Lines Institute, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Visiting Pasts, Developing Futures – International Conference: Tourism and the Shifting Values of Cultural Heritage, 2013 (paper presented by colleague). Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Sharing Cultures: 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Intangible Heritage, 2013. Green Lines Institute, Aveiro, Portugal.

The two book chapters, co-authored with one of my supervisors, were written in the early stages of this research. Both were important in their own right as they assisted the researcher in identifying potential issues, successes and challenges within the Rupununi tourism framework before data collection. The chapter on intangible cultural heritage demonstrated current attempts by stakeholders to safeguard intangible cultural heritage resources while the other chapter outlined the multiple ‘senses of place’ that have been experienced in the Rupununi by various stakeholder groups. Both chapters provided more depth into the Rupununi identity and ways in which communities and other stakeholders view and interact with their destination. The encyclopaedia entry on archaeology and ethics in the Rupununi allowed the researcher to begin identifying how sustainability could be included into heritage management frameworks in the region, specifically with regard to archaeological resources. The most recently prepared publication is the first which starts to include data from the research and it guided the formation of the final arguments presented in Chapters Seven and Eight. Similarly, the conferences also provided indirect input into the development of this thesis. The knowledge exchange, presentation discussions and multiple formal and informal conversations about the research during these events all assisted in shaping the final arguments and content of this thesis.

Attention now shifts to the remaining chapters in the introduction section of this thesis. The following two chapters review the core ideologies of this research: sustainable tourism (Chapter Two) and ecomuseology (Chapter Three). Afterward, Chapter Four examines the methodology used in this research, including the approach and design used to collect and analyse the data.

## **Chapter 2.**



## 2 Sustainable Tourism.

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### 2.1 Introduction

Sustainability is a concept that continues to evolve and perplex those involved in global tourism practice. Industry professionals, academic theorists, policy makers and other stakeholders continuously work to manage the impacts of tourism, one of the world's largest industries (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 183). In 2010 alone, there were 33 million international tourism arrivals who spent an estimated US\$ 919 billion worldwide (UNWTO, 2011). In an industry of this magnitude, the impacts on natural and cultural heritage resources can be profound. In turn, there have been ongoing efforts to develop more sustainable management discourses and approaches. Effective new theories and practices are constantly being explored to incorporate sustainability into tourism frameworks. These efforts have assisted in the reduction of adverse impacts from tourism and prompted a global acceptance of sustainability in the sector. However, sustainable tourism development (STD) is a much criticised concept due to its lack of consistent implementation and “conceptual and practical difficulties” (Tao and Wall, 2009: 90; see also Hall & Lew, 1998; Swarbrooke, 1999; Weaver 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

This chapter aims to critically examine sustainable tourism (ST) theory to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ST ideal. This is necessary to begin the initial investigation into the research question, which will determine how the principles of ecomuseology (Chapter Three) could support STD. To accomplish this, a number of key topics relating to ST will be examined. This includes investigating the historical background (Section 2.2) to reveal the principal reasons behind the concept's creation. The definition and theoretical frameworks (Section 2.3) are also examined while focusing on environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors. Additionally, the key actors, or stakeholders, involved in STD and their specific roles will be reviewed (Section 2.4) as well as some of the limitations in implementing sustainable tourism theory (Section 2.5). As this research deals with tourism that is community-based and involves indigenous cultures in a developing country, these themes are consistently reflected throughout this chapter.

## 2.2 Historical Background

This section reviews the historical development of the ST concept. In particular it discusses the initial rise of sustainable development theory which has since been utilised in several industries worldwide, including tourism. Consideration of these events demonstrates the influencing factors and reasoning behind the concept's creation. Southgate and Sharpley (2002: 232) assert, "The concept of sustainable (tourism) development cannot be fully addressed without an understanding of the forces that gave rise to a widespread environmental consciousness and the subsequent adoption of sustainability as a global development objective". This section also discusses definitions for ST and associated types of tourism concepts.

### 2.2.1 Sustainable Development

The issue of sustainable development has been raised for much of the twentieth century (Swarbrooke, 1999: 3). The central idea behind sustainability was the notion that development could be a threat unless resources were adequately used (Dresner, 2002: 30). Through a combination of industrialisation, population pressures, social and economic changes and globalisation, natural and cultural heritage resources have struggled to cope with the demands of human development (Swarbrooke, 1999: 4). Although the initial focus was on environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources, contemporary sustainable development theory has evolved to include socio-cultural and economic resources as well (Dresner, 2002: 30). Several key initiatives, discussed further below, have sparked the modern day 'sustainability movement', shifting the spotlight towards resource conservation and preservation.

The phrase 'sustainable development' was officially coined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in their 1980 *World Conservation Strategy* (Swarbrooke, 1999: 4). However, its relevance did not achieve widespread recognition until the late 1980's with the 1987 publication of *Our Common Future*, also known as the *Brundtland Report* (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 30). The report, submitted by the World Commission on Environment and Development, focused on the responsible use of the earth's resources through the union of conservation and development (Hall & Lew, 1998: 2-3). It emphasised the importance of environmental resources and their integration into central decision-making involving economic and social development

(Dresner, 2002: 30). Telfer and Sharpley (2008: 30) affirm, “The report brought the concept to the attention of a much wider audience and, since the late 1980s, sustainable development has dominated global development policy”. The *Brundtland Report* juxtaposed the harmful impacts from development with potential positive impacts from a sustainable approach and commenced a world-wide paradigm shift.

Sustainable development has also been the focus of several international events such as the 1992 ‘Earth Summit’ in Rio de Janeiro which launched the sustainable development action plan known as *Agenda 21* and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 30). Furthermore, *Agenda 21* called for specific sustainable actions from businesses at the global, national and local levels to adopt positive environmental practices and ensure the ethical management of products and processes (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 108). These events did much to increase the profile of sustainable development and lead to “innumerable” public, private and voluntary sectors around the world “...embracing its principles and objectives” (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 30). As sustainable development became increasingly more known to the public, companies also sought to make their business sustainable (Swarbrooke, 1999: 6). Indeed, the near universal support for the sustainability concept began in the early 1990s and continues today (Stabler, 1997: 2; Weaver, 2006: 10; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006: 1274).

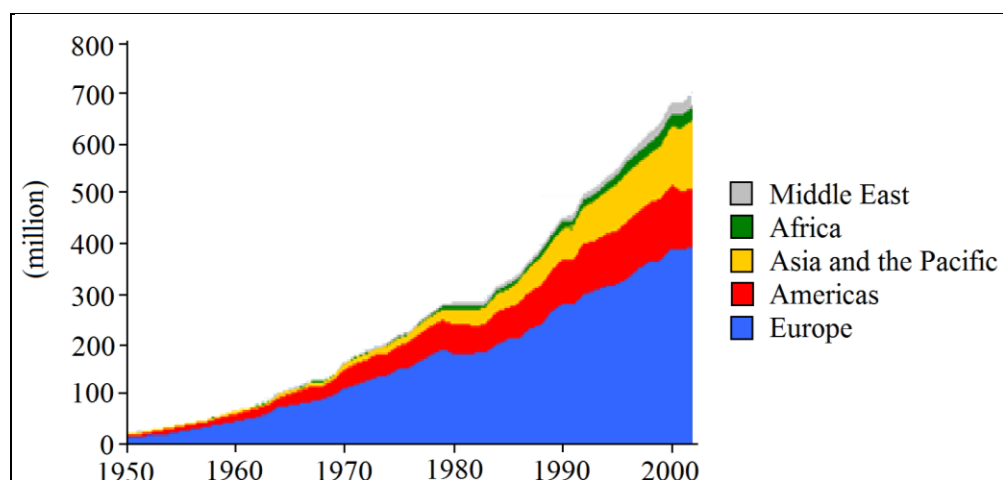
The conservation theme in the sustainable development movement has motivated, and sometimes demanded, a “...growing interest in the ethical standards of businesses” (Swarbrooke, 1999: 6). Ham and Weiler (2002: 36) argue that “...economic growth and environmental conservation are not only compatible, they are necessary partners”. In addition, several businesses have adopted sustainable approaches that have resulted in cost-effective and resource-reducing strategies which increased their profits (Butler, 1998: 27). As one of the world’s largest industries, it was inevitable that tourism would also seek to include a sustainable management approach.

### ***2.2.2 Emergence of Sustainable Tourism***

Prior to the global acceptance of the sustainability concept, there had already been evidence and recognition of the negative impacts (e.g. environmental and socio-cultural degradation) from tourism development (Swarbrooke, 1999). Although tourism was not specifically mentioned in the *Brundtland Report* (Weaver, 2006: 10), several previous

reports and books (Dower, 1968; Young, 1973; De Kadt, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Murphy, 1985; Krippendorf, 1987) had been published that started to raise the profile of sustainability in the sector (Swarbrooke, 1999: 8). These texts highlighted the potential and actual impacts from tourism; thus influencing host destinations, companies and tourists alike.

The impacts in these texts were tourism specific and further stressed the need for sustainability in the sector. The negative environmental (e.g. landscape degradation, pollution) and socio-cultural (e.g. exploitation of financial benefits, cultural dilapidation) impacts mentioned by these early texts were rooted in the unplanned growth of tourism development (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006: 1274; Hall & Lew, 1998; Murphy, 1985; Mowforth & Munt, 2009). The rising acceptance of sustainable development within the industry in the 1980s paired with these previously identified negative impacts inspired “decision-makers” to search for an alternative model for economic development (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006: 1274; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 31). As seen in Figure 2.1, tourism traffic, measured by international arrivals, rose from approximately 20 million in 1950 to more than 700 million in 2005 (UNWTO, 2011; see also Berno & Bricker, 2001: 4). These figures provide evidence that the industry continues to grow significantly and requires appropriate management frameworks. Initially, both the public and private sectors tried to decrease negative impacts from tourism through a series of ‘visitor management techniques’ which were considered to be more short-term and unable to alter the overall nature of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999: 9). These efforts were the beginning of the ST movement.



**Figure 2.1 International Tourist Arrivals, 1950-2005**

(adapted from UNWTO, 2011)

Tourism theorists and practitioners have gradually initiated sustainable frameworks in tourism policies and development (Berno & Bicker, 2001: 3). Sharpley (2009: xi) confirms, “By the early 1990’s, however, the attention paid generally both to the perceived negative impacts of tourism and to alternative approaches to tourism development had become refocused through the specific lens of sustainable tourism development”. This is most evident in the production of a “...plethora of policy documents, planning guidelines, statements of ‘good practice’, corporate social responsibility statements, case studies, [and] codes of conduct for tourists” (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 31). Furthermore, the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations also started to address the issue of tourism and sustainable development during the General Assembly in 1997 (Berno & Bicker, 2001: 3). In short, tourism policy and planning has predominantly been shaped by sustainability themed “principles and objectives” since the inception of the sustainable development movement (ibid).

As the world continues to become more interconnected, there is an increased awareness of how tourism should contribute to nature conservation and socio-cultural preservation. This signals the need for an economic framework that is based on ethical behaviour. Tourists themselves are starting to create a market demand that is not found in mass tourism, but in tourism that is more bespoke and atypical. These alternative forms of tourism are consistently delivered in a shared relationship based on participation between the tourists and the local environments and cultures. This new pattern, linked with society’s emergent concern about the impacts from tourism, has motivated the tourism industry to develop sustainable products that fit accordingly. The next subsection reviews sustainable tourism definitions and also describes various types of tourism ‘products’ that are often used in conjunction with the concept.

### ***2.2.3 Definition and Tourism Typology***

As described above, ST can largely be attributed to sustainable development, which itself is widely considered an ambiguous term. Subsequently, finding a commonly accepted definition for ST proves difficult (Swarbrooke, 1999; Weaver, 2006; Stabler, 1997; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 70; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 32). The United Nations’ definition for sustainable development, featured in the *Brundtland Report* (1987: 43 as referred to in UN, 2011), described it as “...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Taken in context, the same definition could be applied to the field of tourism.

In other words, sustainable tourism is merely the adoption of sustainable development principles to the sector. As such, ST is not independent of sustainable development but is instead integrated within its “activities and processes” (Butler, 1998: 28).

Although the broad definition for sustainable development is applicable to ST, it has become difficult to detail a more precise explanation to the latter due to a variety of implementation challenges to be discussed (Section 2.5) further below. Tepelus and Cordoba (2005: 135) argue that definitions fluctuate based on individual perspectives: “The definitions of the term ‘sustainable tourism development’ varies considerably in rapport with the perspective of the stakeholders issuing them: tourism industry actors, governments, international non-governmental organisations, local communities, environmental activists, and other tourism stakeholders”. Although there is no clear definition for ST, generally inclusive in its conceptual framework is concern for environmental, socio-cultural and economical factors (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Tao and Wall, 2009; Hall & Lew, 1998; Swarbrooke, 1999; Weaver, 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 2009). The researcher, therefore, has produced the following definition which although lacking in precision, embraces the holistic nature of ST:

*Tourism development which is inclusive of environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors and aims to minimise negative impacts while maximising positive impacts for present and future generations.*

Several terms are presently used to describe different forms of tourism that exhibit similar characteristics to ST. Berno and Bricker (2001: 11) contend, “Sustainable tourism is often popularly conceptualised as a more ‘elite’ form of tourism and the term is frequently used interchangeably with others such as alternative tourism, ecotourism, ‘soft’ tourism, ‘green’ tourism and the like”. These terms also have complex definitions similar to that of ST and often create an overtly confusing network amongst them. As a result, it is necessary to distinguish categories and define the relationships that ST shares with other types of tourism.

Rather than a specific type of tourism, ST is a *concept* that can be applied to all forms of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999: 17). For example and specific to this research, the ST concept will be examined on its applicability to three different types of tourism including eco-, community-based and indigenous-tourism. However, there is also the presence of other ‘concept’ tourism categories, including ‘alternative’ and ‘responsible’ tourism. These two tourism concepts share many of the same features as ST and are

often linked together and confused. As with ST, responsible tourism can be applied to any form of tourism. It has similar characteristics based around reducing negative impacts and increasing positive impacts by promoting responsible behaviour from both industry practitioners and tourists (Swarbrooke, 1999: 18-19). However, whilst alternative tourism has a comparable agenda with ST, it cannot be applied to all forms of tourism. Alternative tourism is a term that originated in the early 1980s as a way of describing products that were not aligned within the ideals of mass tourism and instead reflected tourism that was small scale and more personal (Weaver, 2006: 38; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 71-72). Thus, it has since been regarded as an early precursor of sustainability, and was a popular early label for the term (Clarke, 1997: 225). In contrast, ST can be applied to mass tourism as a method for reducing the larger industry's impact. The applicability of ST to all forms of tourism is a vital aspect of its theoretical framework, which is discussed more in the following section. Another important point to specify for this chapter is that ST and STD are often used as interchangeable terms, both signifying the sustainable management of tourism. This applies to both tourism that is being developed and tourism that is already in operation.

### **2.3 Principles and Impacts**

ST is ultimately the “application of the sustainable development idea to the tourism sector” (Weaver, 2006: 10; see also Butler, 1998: 26; Garrod & Fyall, 1998: 200; Tosun, 2001: 290; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 69). Sustainable development theory advocates the preservation of environmental, socio-cultural and economical resources - also known as the three pillars - for future generations. ST echoes this same founding principle and works to safeguard and enhance a destination's environmental, socio-cultural and economical resources. Indeed, contemporary ST theory suggests that all three of these elements are equally valued and interconnected (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 101; Swabrooke, 1999: 14). Combining the functions of these areas contributes to the overall sustainable framework, and in turn each should be viewed as an integral part of a larger mechanism (Hall & Lew, 1998: 4-6). This section aims to demonstrate the resulting theory and key principles from the union of sustainable development and tourism. To do so, the basic and underlying principles of ST will be discussed before reviewing the three individual pillars of sustainability as they relate to tourism.

Tourism is a multifaceted industry and designing a theoretical framework that adequately links tourism and sustainable development requires theorists and

practitioners to “build upon the diversity and complexity of the industry” (Hall & Lew, 1998: 38). As an “integrated system”, the multiple components of the tourism industry are intrinsically linked where occurring changes have a ripple effect throughout the entire system (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 12). This signals the need for a “holistic approach” in implementing sustainable development theory into the industry (ibid). A holistic approach to STD should focus on both intergenerational equity and intragenerational equity, ensuring that both present and future generations’ needs are met (Weaver, 2006: 20). Equity in these instances refers to the ‘wise use’ of resources which is often described as the focus of ST (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 82; Berno & Bricker, 2001: 12). Oriade and Evans (2011: 74) argue, “Central to the philosophy of sustainable tourism is responsible resource use and this informs the basis of most approaches employed in managing visitors or visitors’ use of tourism resources”. However, ‘wise use’ can be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the ideals of various stakeholders (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 82). As a result, stakeholder collaboration is central to successful STD and is discussed in more detail later in this thesis (Section 7.3). Due to the presence of diverse stakeholder groups in a multifarious tourism industry, sustainable frameworks require criteria that can be universally applied and contribute to the aims of sustainable development.

Given that ST is a complex concept which is not easily defined, it is better yet to define a set of principles that describe the overall aims of STD (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 4; Swarbrooke, 1999: 14; Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 100). These principles should consider environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors and include both theoretical and practical contexts. Bramwell *et al.* (1996) have identified a list of key ST principles (Table 2.1) that summarise its philosophical foundations:



**Table 2.1: Sustainable tourism principles**

(Bramwell *et al.*, 1996; also found in Swarbrooke 1999: 14)

- The approach sees policy, planning and management as appropriate, and, indeed essential responses to the problems of natural and human resource misuse in tourism
- The approach is generally not anti-growth, but it emphasizes that there are limitations to growth and that tourism must be managed within these limits
- Long-term rather than short-term thinking is necessary
- The concerns of sustainable tourism management are not just environmental, but are also economic, social, cultural, political and managerial
- The approach emphasizes the importance of satisfying human needs and aspirations, which entails a prominent concern for equity and fairness
- All stakeholders need to be consulted and empowered in tourism decision-making, and they also need to be informed about sustainable development issues
- While sustainable development should be a goal for all policies and actions, putting the ideas of sustainable tourism into practice means recognizing that in reality there are often limits to what will be achieved in the short and medium term
- An understanding of how market economies operate, of the cultures and management procedures of private sector businesses and of public and voluntary sector organizations, and of the values and attitudes of the public is necessary in order to turn good intentions into practical measures
- There are frequently conflicts of interest over the use of resources, which means that in practice trade-offs and compromises may be necessary
- The balancing of costs and benefits in decisions on different courses of action must extend to considering how much different individuals and groups will gain or lose

These principles describe central themes in ST theory such as: utilising long-term strategies; inclusion and equal acceptance of all three sustainability pillars; importance of stakeholder collaboration; community empowerment; and, understanding the policies and market economies of the tourism industry. ST theory operates on the notion that natural and cultural resources are often finite and vulnerable to several threats (Owen *et al.*, 1993: 463). Berno and Bricker (2001: 11) assert, “Sustainable tourism is about sustaining both the industry as a whole (particularly its economic benefits) and the attributes of the product (social, cultural, environmental and economic) on which it is based”. In turn, these elements become valued beyond their tourism implications and apply to the greater public (Owen *et al.*, 1993: 464). Successful management approaches in ST consider these principles holistically and not in isolation. Attention now shifts in the following sub-sections on the three pillars of sustainability and on showcasing how ST theory seeks to enhance environmental conservation, socio-cultural preservation and continued economic stimulation.

### **2.3.1 Environments**

The natural environment elements of ST, as seen in general sustainable development, are often publicly perceived as the central foci of the concept (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 101; Butler, 1999: 14; Nicholas & Thapa, 2010: 843). Although this public concentration tends to be on natural ecosystems, the environment is comprised both of natural and built habitats (Swarbrooke, 1999: 49). Built habitats include all human constructions and reflect the use of natural resources. These resources are often the most visible element of sustainable frameworks because tourism typically occurs in response to aesthetic landscapes, flora and fauna (*ibid.*). Due to their placement and use of these resources, tourism activities have caused damage to both rural and urban landscapes including the pressures on natural resources, pollution, habitat destruction and damage to biological and built systems (Neto, 2003: 216; Swarbrooke, 1999: 51). In doing so, these impacts threaten the existence of the tourism activities which created them (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 83; Neto, 2003: 216; Swarbrooke, 1999: 54). Subsequently, it is important to focus on the interdependence of tourism and the environment and search for methods to make their association more sustainable.

The theoretical structure relating to the environment in ST advocates the responsible use of natural resources and reducing the stress placed on ecosystems and biodiversity

(Nicholas & Thapa, 2010: 843). Swarbrooke (1999: 53) identifies four key ways that tourism development can work to improve environmental sustainability:

- *Provide a motivation for governments to conserve the natural environment and wildlife because of its values as a tourism resource,*
- *Raise tourist awareness of environmental issues and lead them to campaign for environmental protection based on what they have learned while on holiday,*
- *Keep farms viable by providing a vital extra income for agriculturists,*
- *Provide new uses for derelict buildings in towns and cities, through the development of new visitor attractions.*

These positive impacts result from a partnership with specific visitor management techniques which are discussed in Section 2.5. They represent core principles relating to environmental conservation in ST by emphasising good practices, regulating negative impacts, long-term and universal planning, education and “...maintaining a balance between conservation and development” (Swarbrooke, 1999: 54-55).

### **2.3.2 Society and Culture**

Although consistently associated with the environment, sustainable tourism development cannot occur unless society and culture are also considered in management approaches (Swarbrooke, 1999: 78). Indeed, ST frameworks should work to safeguard a destination’s socio-cultural attributes, which include a wide variety of customs, lifestyles, social rights and benefits, employment, heritage, art, traditions, and equity amongst stakeholders. Although equal in importance to the other two pillars of ST, the social aspect receives less attention in ST debates, possibly as a result from the impacts being intangible (Swarbrooke, 1999 from Nicholas & Thapa, 2010: 843). Nicholas & Thapa (2010: 843) argue that social sustainability “...primarily involves impacts on the socio-cultural fabric of the community” and emphasises the “...involvement of local residents in tourism development” (see also Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 104). When disharmony amongst society is created as a result of tourism, the subsequent effects on culture can be long-term and have severe implications for a host community.

Tourism places pressure on social configurations, cultural traditions and values which leads to impacts that tend to be intangible and typically permanent in the host

community (Hashimoto, 2002: 215; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 76; Swarbrooke, 1999: 69; Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 104). The host community is affected by the social and cultural values that can be imposed by tourism structures. For example, host communities may not possess certain ‘modern’ technologies (e.g. air conditioning, flush toilets, electronics), yet in order to “accommodate the lucrative tourism business, the host community often has to accept the tourists’ culture” (Hashimoto, 2002: 220). Another key impact is the emergence of authenticity issues. Often when accommodating both the host community’s and tourist’s interests, the display or interpretation of tourism products becomes a “staged authenticity” and out of character from the original product (Hashimoto, 2002: 221-222; Heitmann, 2011b: 49). Socio-cultural impacts from tourism are inevitable but can be mitigated through balancing the relationship between host communities (local or national) and visitors (Swarbrooke, 1999: 73; Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 104).

Theoretical approaches to social sustainability revolve around social empowerment in communities (Timothy, 2002: 149; Swarbrooke, 1999: 78; Hashimoto, 2002: 218). The social empowerment of host communities creates a structure that provides locals with a platform to speak out and act against socio-cultural impacts and has the potential to enhance education (Timothy, 2002: 149). Community involvement, particularly in indigenous communities, is imperative for sustainability (Timothy, 2002: 152). Timothy (2002: 152) argues that this is because “residents have a greater tendency to do it in a way that is in harmony with cultural traditions, which might assist in building ethnic pride”. Building ethnic pride can be a natural result from the cultural exchange between tourists and empowered host communities who wish to share their local heritage, values and culture (Hashimoto, 2002: 216). Furthermore, Swarbrooke (1999: 69) has recognised the following core principles of social sustainability:

- *equity* – ensuring that all stakeholders in tourism are treated fairly,
- *equal opportunities* – for both the employees involved in the tourism industry and the people who want to be tourists,
- *ethics*- the tourism industry being honest with tourists and ethical in its dealings with its suppliers, and destination governments being ethical towards their host population and tourists,

- *equal partners* – tourists treating those who serve them as equal partners and not as inferiors.

Tourism development that considers these social-themed principles can improve the welfare of the host community (Hashimoto, 2002: 215). Doing so ensures equal opportunities and rights for all stakeholder groups, but as Swarbrooke (1999: 78) contends, this “...requires action by destination governments, tourists, the host community and the tourism industry”, which is discussed later in this thesis (Section 7.3). Social sustainability is crucial to long-term tourism development and requires frameworks which equally value host communities with external stakeholder groups. This in turn can increase additional improvements in societal processes.

### **2.3.3 Economy**

Tourism can be both environmentally and socially sustainable, but if it lacks the financial resources to maintain operations, it will cease to exist (Weaver, 2006: 25). Weaver (ibid) contends that “all sustainable tourism strategies therefore must be formulated within the financial capabilities of the managing body”. Furthermore, according to Nicholas and Thapa (2010: 843), the economic dimension of sustainability stresses that the industry should be “...maximizing benefits whilst minimizing costs”. This notion forms the foundation for economic sustainability in tourism development. It must also be noted that while financial security is important, stakeholders must ensure that revenue resources, typically from export earnings and tax revenues, contribute to the other two pillars of sustainability (Weaver, 2006: 26; Neto, 2003: 215).

Sustainable economic development in the tourism industry can provide a number of social benefits to host communities such as infrastructure improvements, financial security, improved well-being, development of social and cultural capital and employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers, women and migrants from poor areas (Neto, 2003: 215; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 82; Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 105; Timothy, 2002: 152). This improvement in “social overhead capital” can influence investment into a destination, thus stimulating more economic development (Neto, 2003: 215). This is particularly important in developing countries where tourism is now the second largest source of foreign exchange earnings (Neto, 2003: 214; Mihalic, 2002: 93; Berno & Bricker, 2001: 4). As a result, tourism is consistently promoted as a powerful contributor of economic development that can alleviate poverty and empower

communities (Mihalic, 2002: 81). Although tourism development can contribute to local and national economies, various issues arise in the economic management of revenue streams. These issues include mismanagement of funds and leakages and should always be monitored.

Sustainable economic development should also contribute to mitigating environmental impacts. Tourism is an economic activity which often occurs in natural environments, and to ensure its sustainable future, a mutually beneficial relationship should be developed between the two. In several locations, if tourism did not provide income to support conservation, local resources would go unprotected (Tsaur *et al.*, 2006: 643). For example, tourism was a key motivation in recognising the value of nature by supporting the creation of the first national park (Yellowstone) and additional conservation reserves (Hall, 1998: 17). Indeed, Mihalic (2002: 90) argues that the environment is a “financial resource” in which the tourism industry relies on as its source of “economic goods”. As a result, safeguarding natural and built environments is “...becoming an economic activity and, therefore, a part of economic development and a contributor to economic growth” (Mihalic, 2002: 90). Ultimately, environmental conservation should partially be funded from tourism receipts, thus contributing to a unified sustainable development approach that benefits future societies (Fyall & Garrod, 1997: 56).

Economic sustainability in tourism development ensures that there is sufficient financial gain to empower local communities, minimise impacts (environmental and social) and enhance long-term sustainable development (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 105). However, to accomplish this requires an impartial approach that aims to fairly distribute economic benefits to all tourism stakeholders. Oriade and Evans (2011: 82) argue:

*“For tourism to be sustainable in a competitive world market, there is a need to operate in ways that enable local people to have better access to tourism and minimize leakage, and implement strategies that add value to livelihoods through employment and small-business development, strive to encourage projects that contribute to local economy and not just national economy, maintain natural and cultural assets and develop plans to control negative social impacts”.*

For example, a key negative impact from economic development is the ownership of major tourism elements (transportation, accommodation, activities) by foreign companies (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 82). There is a tendency for these companies to

dominate local markets and absorb the majority of financial profits from these tourism activities through ‘repatriated economic leakages’ (ibid). In these instances, workers are often paid low wages, receive few benefits and create social exclusivity. These inequalities can be lessened through a sustainable economic framework that promotes the economic empowerment of local communities and the just allocation of economic benefits.

## 2.4 The Key Actors in Sustainable Tourism

*Sustainable tourism is about stakeholders.*

Swarbrooke, 1999: 41

Tourism is a fundamentally diverse industry with a broad range of stakeholders (Berno & Bricker, 2001:8; Liu, 2003: 466; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 78; Hardy *et al.*, 2002: 488). These stakeholder groups, or industry ‘actors’, often have conflicting values concerning STD (Liu, 2003: 466; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 82). However, it is solely their involvement and actions that enable tourism development to be sustainable (ibid). Each group possesses various “rights and responsibilities” within the tourism industry and in turn, their respective interests should be considered (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 8; Liu, 2003: 466). Hardy *et al.* (2002: 488) argue, “As sustainable tourism is a concept conditioned by social context, in order for it to be met, stakeholders must be identified and their subjective needs met”. Furthermore, stakeholder attitudes towards tourism development should be “...assessed at the planning stages” if development is to be sustainable (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 79-80). Ultimately, their involvement must be equal and unified in both the planning and management of tourism activities (Bramwell & Lane, 2000: 1; Liu, 2003: 466; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 78).

In his “comprehensive” book on ST management, Swarbrooke (1999) has identified six major stakeholder groups: public sector, industry, voluntary sector, host community, media and tourists (see also Weaver, 2006: 74; Berno & Bricker, 2001). It should be noted that within these six groups, there are those individuals who oppose tourism development but remain part of these identified groups. While some of these groups have more significant roles and responsibilities, these six groups encompass the full range of stakeholders involved in tourism, and their collaboration is essential in successfully developing sustainable tourism (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 8). The

following sub-sections briefly discuss these six major stakeholder groups, outlining their roles and responsibilities in STD.

#### **2.4.1 Public Sector**

Public sector stakeholders are comprised of government agencies including local, regional, national and supra- sectors which involve two or more countries, such as the European Union (Mason, 2008: 120-122; Swarbrooke, 1999: 88). Within these governmental sectors are ministries and quasi non-governmental organisations which are public funded agencies that work on behalf of government but are managed semi-autonomously (Swarbrooke, 1999: 88). In several countries worldwide, particularly developing countries, there are national tourism organisations and in some cases where tourism is a key economic activity, tourism ministries (Opperman & Chon, 1997: 18). In most countries, government agencies represent the population's views, are not "...commercial organizations intent on making a profit" and are able to consider tourism development on a more long-term scale than other stakeholder groups (Mason, 2008: 120-121; Swarbrooke, 1999: 87). Whilst government agencies possess the ability to significantly contribute to the industry's sustainable development, they often have little control over its operations (Telfer, 2002: 125; Swarbrooke, 1999: 97).

The role of government agencies in STD exists in many forms. The public sector provides a "regulatory environment" through its provision of economic frameworks, legislation and education; all of which contribute towards STD (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 86; Mason, 2008: 123). Telfer & Sharpley (2008: 86) argue, "Through various government ministries or state-sponsored tourism development corporations, governments establish the framework, policies, plans and regulations to both attract and control tourism development". Government agencies are intended to create legislation which ensures equality and sustainability in tourism development (Swarbrooke, 1999: 88). These frameworks typically start on a national level which provide the foundation but will inevitably need adjusting at the regional and local levels based on place-specific characteristics (Timothy, 2002: 155; Telfer, 2002: 126). This is particularly evident in developing countries where the state "...plays an important role in facilitating tourism" through a "...top-down approach to planning" (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 86). However, it must be noted that there is currently little legislation in place which directly affects tourism (Mason, 2008: 121). Specific areas which do not have tourism legislation are:



tourist behaviour; tourism industry working conditions; wages; and, rights and socio-cultural and environmental impacts from tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999: 88).

Although government agencies can be limited by a lack of financial resources and staff expertise in tourism, the sector can still contribute to sustainable development through some essential management tools (Swarbrooke, 1999: 97). Middleton and Hawkins (1998: 105) argue:

*“In our view, shifting towards more sustainable tourism at destinations does not require more regulatory powers – they are there already. It does require much more intelligent and knowledgeable use of the powers and establishing achievable goals which are realistic in the context of current and potential demand.”*

They (ibid) go on to suggest five main management tools for government agencies to use in sustainable tourism development, which could be utilised more efficiently through consultative processes (see also Oriade & Evans, 2011: 78). These tools include:

- *land use planning regulations(reactive and proactive);*
- *building regulations(reactive and proactive);*
- *provisions of infrastructure, especially access;*
- *investment incentives and fiscal controls and regulations; and,*
- *influence over demand.* (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998: 94).

Swarbrooke (1999: 97) further outlines some key management tactics through the designation of areas for protection, controlling tourist numbers and providing more legislation. These combined actions are necessary to influence other stakeholder groups towards sustainability, particularly the private sector.

#### **2.4.2 Tourism Industry**

Tour operators, travel agents, travel media, transportation carriers, hospitality (e.g. accommodation, food and beverage), entertainment, visitor attractions, tourism information offices and guides all form the tourism industry (Hinch & Butler, 2007: 8-9; Swarbrooke, 1999: 105; Mason, 2008: 126-127). This industry, which is “...dominated by the private sector”, is often considered to be the major role player in the future of STD (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 12). These different organisations and

businesses are often interlinked and operate through “linkages” (Mason, 2008: 127-128). The private sector is distinctly different from the public through its direct response to “market forces” (ibid). Although it consists of these identified organisations, the tourism industry is a complex organism and its involvement in STD remains a source of confusion (Mason 2008: 126). Among this confusion is the consistent allocation of negative impacts from tourism development to the industry, much of which is appropriately deserved (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 117; Swarbrooke, 1999: 105). Mason (2008: 126-127) has identified the following issues that are associated with the tourism industry:

- *being mainly concerned with short-term profit, rather than long term sustainability;*
- *exploiting the environment and local populations rather than conserving them;*
- *being relatively fickle and showing little commitment to particular destinations;*
- *not doing enough to raise tourists’ awareness of issues such as sustainability;*
- *only getting on the sustainability wagon when it is likely to achieve good publicity; and,*
- *being increasingly owned and controlled by large trans-national corporations.*

Berno and Bricker (2001: 8) assert that “...the industry is in effect, destroying the product(s) it seeks to promote”. One response to these issues has been the voluntary adoption of sustainable initiatives by the industry (Swarbrooke, 1999: 106-107; Mason, 2008: 128). These include “...recycling, promoting ‘green’ holidays, providing environmentally sound activities for tourists” (Mason, 2008: 129-130). However, Swarbrooke (1999: 106-107) argues that they only cover environmental factors and are sometimes “cosmetic”. Despite these accusations, impacts in the sector cannot be billed to one stakeholder group as sustainability is collaborative effort amongst all stakeholder groups (Mason, 2008: 126). For the tourism industry, it should be following good codes of practice; thus attempting to maximise benefits and minimise impacts (Eaton, 1997: 117). For example, tour operators “...play a central role in tourism development” (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 168-169). They are able to alter the “...scale and scope...volume and direction” of tourism activity through the provision of cheap holidays to mass markets or alternatively the promotion of alternative small scale holidays (ibid). Weaver (2006: 84) similarly contends the hospitality industry could substantially influence sustainability due to its “large footprint”. Indeed, the industry

has the potential to implement sustainable approaches, but specific action requires foresight and moral leadership.

The tourism industry can adapt sustainable approaches through their own business strategies. For example, Middleton and Hawkins (1998: 107) argue, “Commercial organizations such as airlines and tour operators may have it in their power to ‘make or break’ many holiday destinations simply by their decision to include or exclude them from their schedules and/or brochures”. They (1998: 110) also argue there are five management tools available to the tourism industry which are “...product, price, promotion, place (or distribution), and people”. Price in particular is a strong influence over demand which translates to a product’s sustainability (Mason, 2008: 128). Additionally, the people who promote a product and the promotional methods they use can influence visitor trends (Mason, 2008: 129). As seen in the public sector, the combined use of these tools will be fundamental to any contribution to STD from the industry.

### ***2.4.3 Voluntary Sector***

Swarbrooke (1999: 115) identifies four key groups within the voluntary sector: public pressure groups, professional bodies, industry pressure groups and voluntary trusts. Voluntary organisations vary in their size and operations and can range from “...small, informal groups to large, bureaucratic organizations with large budgets” (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 133-134). While some would argue that voluntary organisations are not able to extensively contribute to STD (Swarbrooke, 1999: 119), others have suggested that they are now an important promoter and contributor to the movement (Sharpley, 2009: xiii). The recognition of the concept of ST has launched several voluntary organisations that work to implement and improve sustainability in the field (Swarbrooke, 1999: 117). These include international bodies such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) to national, regional and local tourism authorities. These groups have supported and influenced travel, hospitality and transport operators to adopt several measures to mitigate their detrimental effects on the environment including energy conservation, waste reduction and reuse, and improving benefits for host communities (Swarbrooke, 1999: 117-118)

Additional central players within the voluntary sector are non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who are “...playing an increasing role in influencing tourism”, predominantly in developing countries (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 134). Telfer (2002: 47) argues:

*Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have increasingly played a role in local and community-based development initiatives and, without the burden of government responsibility, NGOs have been able to engage in extensive participatory fieldwork which can generate innovative solutions to local problems rather than standardized state solutions.*

As a pressure group, NGOs have influence over tourism activities but also tend to be involved in wider-reaching campaigns and projects (Mason, 2008: 131). These include large, international organisations such as Conservation International (CI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and smaller national and locally based organisations (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 134). These organisations have contributed towards STD on international and local levels through a number of initiatives including capacity building in communities; lobbying governments; development relief; financial assistance on community projects; and, raising concern of un-ethical issues such as cultural or environmental impacts (ibid). These different mechanisms of change add ‘fuel to the fire’ of STD and will continue to influence other stakeholder groups through both legal and voluntary measures.

#### **2.4.4 Host community**

Host community involvement is a critical element in STD (Harper, 1997: 149; Schluter, 1999: 189; Liu, 2003: 466). Although this stakeholder group may often have less authority in decision-making, they feel the full force of tourism impacts (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 80). In turn, host communities’ interests should be considered and the local population consulted before all tourism development (ibid). This is to capture local concerns and opinions on the project to improve frameworks and minimise impacts (Goodall & Stabler, 1997: 300; Harper, 1997: 149). Community participation also encourages a sense of tenure over the tourism product, which often translates into more effort in safeguarding natural and cultural heritage (Liu, 2003: 466; Oriade & Evans, 2011: 80). Schluter (1999: 189) argues that tourism development “...should not only focus on the tourist, but also foster the enhancement of the quality of life of the

local population. If residents share profits derived from tourism in a fragile environment, they soon become the best advocates of nature protection”.

Community involvement in tourism issues such as establishing carrying capacities, foreign businesses and socio-cultural and environmental impacts allows them to ensure that they not only contribute to protecting local heritage but also benefit (e.g. financially, socially) from tourism development (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 246-247). Community members should have direct access to or engagement with tourists and be able to develop their own ideas and businesses, thus making them an “...intrinsic part of the tourist system” (ibid). This level of direct participation in the planning and management processes should be conducted from the initial onset of a tourism project through to its end.

Although community empowerment is fundamental to STD, it can be a particularly challenging task in developing countries (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 128-129). Limitations to sustainability through community empowerment include the “...centralization of public administration of tourism development” and the lack of information, training, human and financial resources and often the “...high cost of community participation” (ibid). However, efforts must be made to overcome these barriers or tourism development will ultimately not succeed in the destination. Establishing “channels of communication and information” between host communities and other stakeholder groups allows the collective ‘local’ voice to be heard (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 246-247). Establishing sustainable practices, and change in general, in local communities is a slow process “...which requires a thorough understanding of its social make-up” (Harper, 1997: 149). Sustainable management approaches must be seen as a beneficial activity from within the host community, who willingly become involved in its implementation.

#### **2.4.5 Media**

The majority of the media, although often not considered a major stakeholder group in tourism development, are involved in tourism and destination promotion (Mason, 2008: 132). As a result, they present opportunities for improved sustainability awareness through what they are presenting and how they present it. Media sources exist in a variety of formats from “self-guided media (such as web-sites, field guides, exhibits, brochures and audiovisual programmes)” to television, radio and a variety of printed

texts (e.g. magazines, newspapers) (Ham & Weiler, 2002: 37; Mason 2008: 133). For example, guidebooks are considered the “...oldest form of literature concerned with travel” and heavily influence how a tourist chooses and interacts with a destination (Mason, 2008: 132; Weaver, 2006: 75). In turn, there is potential for information outlets such as guide books to contribute to the STD of a destination (Weaver, 2006: 75).

Ham and Weiler (2002: 37) contend that each of these “...services have the potential to contribute both intellectual and emotional elements” to the tourist experience. Liu (2003: 468) also argues, “The mass media, through modern telecommunication and information technology often play a greater part in shaping the values, opinions, lifestyles and fashions across the world”. As a consequence, and particular to this research, this outlet of power can contribute to the beneficial development of tourists’ ideas and images of indigenous communities and issues in tourism development (Hinch & Butler, 2007: 9). Media outlets have recently started to focus on issues such as tourism sustainability and contribution to both the promotion and critiquing of tourism destinations (Mason, 2008: 133). Indeed, the media input can, and should, continue to evaluate and endorse ST destinations and their associated stakeholder groups.

#### **2.4.6 Tourists**

The last of Swarbrooke’s six stakeholder groups are the tourists, and like the other stakeholder groups, tourists also play a central role in STD (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 92; Mason, 2008: 114). Tourists’ behaviours influences the “...marketing and promotion of tourism products” and its subsequent understanding is fundamental for organisations to be successful (Heitmann, 2011a: 43). Monitoring tourists’ behaviours indicates changes in their attitudes which recently has reflected a move towards being more critical through increased travel experiences (Liu, 2003: 463). In turn, they are searching for alternative experiences that are “...good value for money” (ibid). Liu (2003: 463) contends, “In order to develop tourism sustainably, demand management, in terms of finding enough tourists to fill capacities, is often more critical than resource management since tourist demand usually fluctuates more frequently and abruptly than tourist resources”. In other words, tourists’ demands dictate the operating patterns of other stakeholder groups.

If tourists are motivated by ST operations, then the industry and public sector will shift to accommodate this preference (Liu, 2003: 463). Sharpley (2009: xvi) notes, “One of the fundamental assumptions of underpinning the concept of sustainable tourism development is that there has been an increase in environmental concern on the part of tourists and, hence, growing demand for ‘responsible’ travel experiences”. Although tourists can also shelter much of the blame resulting from tourism impacts (Mason, 2008: 114), it is the dual responsibility of both the aforementioned stakeholders and tourists to promote sustainability and education. This collaborative relationship is the foundation for successful and sustainable tourism development.

## **2.5 Implementation Difficulties**

After having reviewed the theory, principles and key stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism, attention now shifts towards the conceptual and practical limitations of implementing STD theory. STD principles have been examined in their utopian forms; however, the reality of the situation is that sustainable development has proven to be a difficult concept to implement in tourism. Swarbrooke (1999: 41) has argued, quite simply, “Sustainable tourism is perhaps an impossible dream”. This brief statement summarises the great difficulties in implementing sustainable development theory into tourism practice. Similarly, Milne (1998: 47) argues that “...sustainable tourism should not be viewed as an end-state but rather as an ‘ideal’ towards which we can aim” (see also Ko, 2001: 817). While the limitations surrounding this task are discussed more in following sub-sections, consideration will first be given to a variety of management techniques created from ST theory that have assisted with implementation. Southgate and Sharpley (ibid) affirm, “Central to achieving sustainability is the emphasis on control and the managerial tools employed by planners to ensure environmental ‘limits’ are respected” (see also Oriade and Evans, 2011: 83).

Tools and techniques created to achieve sustainable tourism development should be flexible in their design and execution. This is due to the scale and context specific nature of individual destinations and their stakeholder groups (Lew & Hall, 1998: 200). In addition, Oriade and Evans (2011: 69) have suggested the key to implementing ST theory is through “...effective policy, planning and management decisions”. Mowforth and Munt (2009: 110-111) have listed (Table 2.2) several management techniques which fall under these themes and which have been used to reduce negative impacts from tourism. All of these techniques often aim towards developing a “...cursory list of

‘guidelines’ or ‘codes of practice’ which...should be adopted by would-be sustainable tourism organizations” (Fyall & Garrod, 1997: 52). In turn, these codes of practice are frequently used to determine successes and failures in STD.

**Table 2.2: Environmental Management Techniques**

(Adopted from Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 110-111)

Area protection (national parks, wildlife refuges, biosphere reserves, SSSI’s)
Industry regulation (government regulation, professional association regulations, international, voluntary)
Visitor management techniques (zoning, honeypots, visitor dispersion, channeled visitor flows, restricted entry)
Environmental impact assessment (overlays, matrices, mathematical models)
Carrying capacity calculations (physical carrying capacity, ecological c.c., environmental c.c., LAC’s)
Consultation and participation techniques (meetings, public attitude surveys, Delphi technique)
Codes of conduct (for the tourists, industry, hosts, governments, communities)
Sustainability Indicators (resource use, waste, pollution, local production, access)
Foot-printing and carbon budget analysis (holiday foot-printing, carbon emissions trading, personal carbon budgets, carbon offsetting)

These techniques have been adopted in several locations globally and emphasise avoiding over capacity, regulation, ecological limits and sustainable resource use (Southgate & Sharpley, 2002: 241). They are aimed at guiding responsible resource use and respecting local cultures and environments while considering destination specific contexts. Effective management of local physical and cultural environments through sustainable tourism development will most likely consider one or more of these techniques. In particular, carrying capacities, or “...the degree to which an ecosystem, habitat or landscape can accommodate tourism pressures before unacceptable or irreversible decline occurs” have been widely adopted (Southgate & Sharpley, 2002: 244).

As previously argued, these tools and techniques must also be embraced by and used when applicable by all stakeholder groups. Certain groups will have more control over implementing these techniques. For example, the public sector is able to approve legislation that works to protect natural and culturally significant areas while the



tourism industry and host communities can assist with establishing carrying capacities and codes of conduct. It must be noted that while the aforementioned techniques are crucial in implementing ST theory, they are primarily voluntary as the tourism industry is “...relatively free from regulation” (Tepelus & Cordoba, 2005: 135). Therefore, their deliberate adoption by stakeholder groups ultimately determines how successful ST theory will be implemented. The next section now reviews and evaluates some key limitations restricting the realisation of ST theory.

### *2.5.1 Conceptual and Practical Limitations*

Implementation of the sustainability concept into tourism development has faced several limitations from its earliest origins (Hall, 1998: 13). Bramwell and Lane (1993a: 4) assert, “It is easy to discuss sustainability. Implementation is the problem”. While the principles of sustainable development have been widely adopted globally, effective practice has been limited by a combination of conceptual and practical difficulties (Butler, 1998: 27). Due to these limitations, Sharpley (2009: xvii) argues there is a “...significant gap...between the idealism of the concept of sustainable tourism development...and the reality of tourism development in practice”. These difficulties are reviewed further below with the aim of showcasing the complexities of implementing sustainable development theory into tourism practice.

Initial conceptual limitations arise with the notion of sustainability itself. Sustainable development is an ambiguous and broad concept, yet was and remains the most popular solution to mitigating tourism impacts. Specific questions about STD including “...what is to be sustained, by whom and how” reveals few answers but nonetheless remain vital to efficient implementation and justifying the “validity” of the concept (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 10). Beyond these basic inquiries, the STD concept remains intangible through the multitude of struggles practitioners experience in converting the idea to a “...workable set of policies and practices relevant to real world tourism” (Sharpley, 2009: xvii). This is most likely because of the vagueness surrounding its core theory which creates an indefinable concept (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006: 1275). Southgate and Sharpley (2002: 244) also argue that lists of principles, or codes of conduct, lack detail and are “...of limited practical value”. Easily misconstrued theory has allowed for its “manipulation” amongst tourism stakeholders, thus prohibiting success (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 118).

As previously discussed (Section 2.3), ST is primarily concerned with the "...wise use of resources" yet the understanding of this varies considerably based on the values of different stakeholders (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 82). Indeed, herein lays a primary conceptual limitation where STD is dependant more on "...value judgments than on empirical research or other factual evidence" (Swarbrooke, 1999: 24). This limitation could potentially be remedied through the existence of a universally adaptable framework which could be applied to various tourism developmental contexts. However, Southgate and Sharpley (2002: 261) contend, "...the imposition of a universal blueprint for tourism development, a set of 'meta-principles' founded on mainstream planning and designation processes, is inappropriate given the diverse developmental contexts and needs of tourism destinations, particularly in less developed countries". Tosun (2001: 289) has also argued that because STD principles were initiated from developed countries, they subsequently have failed to adapt to the "...conditions in the developing world". In turn, this has lead to a lack of policy formulation and mandatory "coherent legislation" which would regulate the industry (Tepelus & Cordoba, 2005: 135). Further development of these conceptual limitations will expose the potential of STD as either a "...realistic set of guidelines for developing and managing tourism" or a "...politically attractive objective that is unachievable in practice" (Sharpley, 2002: 322).

Ko (2001: 817) argues that little practical methodology has been developed when attempting to implement STD. Although an indistinct conceptual framework contributes to this circumstance, there are also practical limitations which limit STD potential. Above all, these limitations exist in the tourism industry itself and are scattered throughout a system that is fragmented through the competing interests and control issues between several stakeholder groups (Sharpley, 2009: 74; Berno & Bricker, 2001). As a result, decision making becomes nearly an impossible task due to lengthy effort of balancing individual interests (Oriade & Evans, 2011: 69). A key aspect of this research and STD in general is that stakeholder collaboration is essential to STD and requires input from all groups. For example, Tosun (2001: 289-290) demonstrates that STD is "...an enormously difficult task to achieve in developing countries without the collaboration of the international tour operators and donor agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund". Furthermore, communication between these groups can often be limited, particularly in developing countries where certain areas are remote and lack telecommunication access (Oriade &

Evans, 2011: 79). However, Oriade & Evans (*ibid*) argue this can be remedied through the use of “conventional communication methods” such as forums, meetings and workshops (see also Byrd *et al.*, 2009: 698).

Additional practical limitations include the lack of financial resources, expertise, infrastructure and the priorities of economic development (Tosun, 2001: 291). These issues are commonly found in the developing world, can be mutually inclusive and present significant challenges for keeping up with the ‘standard’ of other international tourism projects (*ibid*). Tourism is often seen as an immediate source of revenue in these contexts and consequently may not always include sustainability in management structures (Tosun, 2001: 299). Furthermore, the competition amongst stakeholders for resources in ST signals the need for a “political solution” (Berno & Bricker, 2001: 12). However, at present there have been very few policies or strategies created by the public sector regarding STD (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006: 1275).

In summary, there are a multitude of conceptual and practical limitations that prohibit effectively implementing STD. Conceptually, STD is a complex idea which does not allow for a universal model of application. Instead, STD requires “...measures that are both scale- and context- specific” (Lew & Hall, 1998: 200). This will assist in dealing with the assortment of practical issues on the local level. Sharpley (2009: 77) also contends local tourism development should reflect its true goals and aspirations and not conform to the “...rigid, western-centric perspectives on nature, conservation and economic-based modernization”. This is an effective approach in ensuring each destination copes with its own environmental, socio-cultural and economical elements and in turn shortens the gap between theory and practice.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to critically examine ST theory and practice to develop a broad understanding of the concept. This was done by reviewing the history of STD, its underlying principles and major stakeholder groups and implementation limitations which are related to contextual factors found at the study site for this research. Reasoning behind this examination lies in the fact that it is crucial to understand fully the ST concept in order to facilitate answering the defined research question. This chapter has demonstrated a key gap in STD; namely that whilst the concept is a respectable goal to aim for, its implementation continues to be a difficult task. Also

identified in this chapter is the absolute importance of stakeholder involvement and collaboration amongst each of the six identified groups. Stakeholder actions and perceptions was a fundamental aspect of this study and will be discussed further in Chapter Four. While some might consider STD to be a minor solution to a major problem, it is argued that if each destination adapted their own unique set of ST principles and practical application strategies, this effort could collectively contribute to global sustainability in the sector. The next chapter on ecomuseology seeks to highlight the concept's unique principles which could potentially be used in the sustainable development of tourism.

## **Chapter 3.**

## **3 Ecomuseology.**

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### **3.1 Introduction**

The subject of this chapter corresponds to another key element in the research question: ecomuseum philosophy. The previous chapter explored ST theory and practice to provide a base foundation of knowledge on the subject. This examination was necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding on any issues, benefits and challenges in the ST sector. This chapter introduces and examines ecomuseology to establish its significance as a heritage management framework and initiate the process of identifying and analysing areas of synergy with ST theory and practice. The overall aim of this chapter is to critically assess ecomuseology and its defining philosophy, principles and challenges. This aim will be achieved by considering a number of central themes. The first theme is the historical background and creation of ecomuseology (Section 3.2) and outlines the origins and influences on its contemporary state. This is followed by examining the philosophical framework with a particular focus on definition and theory (Section 3.3), relationships with the environment and local communities. Ecomuseum principles are then examined (Section 3.4) before the final section (3.5) explores the conceptual and practical limitations of the ideal.

### **3.2 Historical Background**

To acquire an in-depth knowledge on a particular subject, it is often the case that one must retrace its historical roots and review the influences and decisions which shaped its current condition. Ecomuseology has a brief, but important, history behind its evolution in the peripheral field of museology. Therefore, before the following sub-section investigates the recent history of ecomuseology, the developments within the world of museology that led to the creation of the ecomuseum will first be examined. These events have been fundamental in the formation of ecomuseology and affect its defining principles and theory today.

From history's earliest versions of 'traditional' museums in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy up until present day, museums have developed in numerous ways. Two key developments that broke from traditional form, and viewed as key influencers of the ecomuseum, are open-air museums and Heimatmuseums (Babic, 2009: 240; Engstrom, 1985: 207; Davis,

1996: 116; Cruz-Ramirez, 1985: 242). Arguably the better known example of the two was demonstrated by Arthur Hazelius in Sweden with his creation of the world's first open-air museum (1891), Skansen (Davis, 2011: 54). In displaying reconstructed farmhouses to the public in central Stockholm, Skansen represented a new museum model that was a "...new and radical way of interpreting and preserving threatened heritage" (Bergdahl, 2006: 103). Although Germany's Hietmatmuseums are also considered to be one of the predecessors of ecomuseums, they are often disregarded due to their associations with Nazism (Cruz-Ramirez, 1985: 242). However, it was the creation of these local, community museums and their progressive techniques in linking museums with society that established their place in museological history (Babic, 2009: 240). Although these two early concepts played inspirational roles in the development of ecomuseology, the following sub-section will detail other crucial events that started in the 1960s and led to the creation of the ecomuseum within a 'new museology' movement.

### ***3.2.1 Shifting from Traditional Museology to Ecomuseology***

Ecomuseums were created within a larger movement known as 'new museology' (Poulot, 1994: 67). The social and political unrest of the 1960s, combined with the rise of environmentalism and post-modernism, was instrumental in the re-imagining and re-shaping of many cultural organisations, including museums (Maggi, 2006: 63; Davis, 2011: 9). As such, traditional museum methods and roles needed to be re-evaluated (Davis, 2011: 57). General discontent amongst practitioners and the public with the museum's role in society led to continual changes in museological theory and practice (Corsane, 2006a: 111). Davis (2011: 59) contends, "There was a radical reassessment of both theoretical and practical aspects of museums, with imaginative ideas permeating all museum functions". It was under these conditions that a new museological movement started to form.

Central to the new museology movement was the desire for museums to step beyond their walls and become more actively involved in the present and future needs of their communities (Graybeal, 2010: 15; Davis, 2011:65). As the values of society became more culturally and environmentally conscious, museums sought to mimic this transformation. Mayrand (1985: 200) similarly agrees, having stated, "The new museology is not just an initiative to promote constant innovation. It mobilises the supporters of a radical transformation of the aims of museology" (see also Donghai,

2008: 29). Museums would now be taking on a role where social responsibility, cultural preservation and environmental conservation would be an essential part of their agenda (Davis, 2011: 59).

Also contributing to the new museological movement was the joint UNESCO and International Council of Museums (ICOM) round table meeting (1972) held in Santiago, Chile (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 150). Largely considered a turning point in the new museology movement, the key conclusion of the seminar was that museums need to establish a bond with their communities to inspire both parties in the protection of heritage (Babic, 2009: 246; Davis, 2011: 262). One of the ways in which this community bond would be established is through the model of the integrated museum, where museum philosophy shifts away from institutions and more towards communal ownership, empowerment and collaboration (Davis, 2004: 94). Manifestations of these so-called integrated museums started to appear globally and focused on the democratisation of heritage (Graybeal, 2010: 15). Open-air museums, folk museums, community museums, ethnic museums and others were created to continue the conservation of objects, but also to safeguard technologies and skills that represented the importance of everyday life (Davis, 2011: 56; Graybeal, 2010: 15).

One of the first integrated museums, and another influence on ecomuseology, was created in 1967 in the South-east corner of Washington, D.C. (Kinard, 1985: 220; Fuller, 1992: 329). The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum was created by the Smithsonian Institute as a community-based museum which reflected the contemporary culture of its largely African-American community through their curatorship. This local museum was created with the notion of museums moving beyond the traditional and becoming an “...instrument for social change” which must “...serve its total community” (Kinard, 1985: 218-220). However, in the early 1970s a new tangible expression of the new museology movement was created that would become one of the largest symbols of the movement, the ecomuseum.

The term ‘ecomusée’ first appeared in France in 1971, and is widely considered to be the product of two key French museologists, Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine (Corsane, 2006b: 403; Davis, 2011: 66-67; Donghai, 2008: 30; Murtas & Davis, 2009: 151; Joubert, 2006: 91). Each had particular contributions to the concept. On the one hand, de Varine wanted museums to become more democratic and involve communities in their work; on the other hand, Rivière wished to place human affairs into broader environmental contexts (Corsane, 2006b: 403; Davis, 2011: 66-67).



Although de Varine had coined the neologism, Rivière had been introducing ecological ideas into museums since the early 1930s where his involvement in ethnography led a desire to demonstrate previous and current French culture in its original location (Donghai, 2008: 30; Davis, 2011: 67; 1996: 115; Xiangguang, 2006: 38; Heron, 1997: 11; Hubert, 1985: 186). As Poulot (1994: 67) stated about Rivière, "...he defined the scope, inspired the philosophy, and envisioned the practical applications of the ecomuseum". Focused on these two ideologies outlined by de Varine and Rivière, the ecomuseum movement was initiated and began to develop a theoretical structure and codes of practice (Corsane, 2006b: 403).

A symposium held in Paris in 1972 on the 'Museum and Environment' listed several conclusions based on the ecomuseum ideal. It stated that museums were at the service of their communities, and that "...a new kind of museum would be created, specifically and fully ecological, and which could justifiably receive the name of 'ecomuseum'" (ICOM, 1973: 120). Indeed, the ecomuseum, with its innovative approach to community empowerment in local environments would be considered a revolutionary model in the museum world and tangible evidence of the new museology movement (Davis, 2011: 62). This type of museum would move beyond the physical walls and embrace a community and its territory, emphasising the importance of place (Fuller, 1992: 329).

Although a pioneering concept, the ecomuseum movement can trace its origins to many of the earlier events and museum models listed above (Davis, 2004: 95). Social change, new innovations such as the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, further development of open-air museums in Scandinavia, community museums in Mexico, international seminars such as Santiago in 1972 and the formulation of new museological concepts in the early 1970s all contributed to the formulation and rise of ecomuseology (de Varine, 2006a: 54). Davis (2011: 87) explains that ecomuseums "...originated as a very special way of working, an enabling mechanism that would result in the conservation of cultural and natural heritage, the maintenance of local cultural identity, the democratisation of the museum and the empowerment of local people". The following sub-section will discuss one of the first organisations to use the ecomuseum label and review how its structure and operations has influenced ecomuseum philosophy and practice globally.

### 3.2.2 *Ecomusée du Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines*

Traces of ecomuseology can be found in the early rural work of Rivière, but it was the joint collaboration with de Varine and Marcel Evrard (1971-1974) that established one of the world's first ecomuseums around the French towns of Le Creusot and Montceau-les-Mines (Babic, 2009: 238; Davis, 2011: 68; Hudson, 1996: 15; Poulot, 1994: 71). Encompassing an area of approximately 500 sqm, the Ecomusée du Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines is comprised of lands formerly used for iron and steel works (Le Creusot) and coal mining (Montceau-les-Mines) (Davis, 2011: 73). Due to the rapid industrial decline after the Second World War, there had been rising unemployment during the 1960s in the area (ibid). It is at this point when de Varine, Evrard and Rivière, along with local administrators, initiated a new museum experiment that would provide jobs and help locals rediscover their own identity (Babic, 2009: 238; Hubert, 1985: 187).

Bellaigue-Scalbert, former director of the ecomuseum, stated that the museum was a community based project founded on the "...exploration of ordinary daily life" (Bellaigue-Scalbert, 1981: 228). The project was supported around and toward the community (Poulot, 1994: 72). Thus, there were no visitors to the ecomuseum, but "inhabitants" who possessed and managed its collections (de Varine-Bohan, 1973: 244-246). A unique feature of this first ecomuseum was the usage of *in-situ* antennae, or satellite sites, throughout the community, which were dispersed around the chateau-based headquarters. The antennae ranged from educational and cultural centres to research hubs (Evrard, 1980: 227-228; Hudson, 1996: 16). de Varine-Bohan (1973: 242) described the ecomuseum during its construction, stating, "The experiment undertaken by the urban community of Le Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines reveals a new conception of the role and very nature of museums". Today, the ecomuseum remains an important aspect of museum culture, and also in relation "...to rural life and economic development" (Davis, 2011: 74).

The Ecomusée du Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines would go on to influence institutions and individuals globally and acted as a catalyst for the ecomuseum movement (Evrard, 1980: 230; Davis, 1996: 116; Hudson, 1996: 16). Indeed, Davis (2011: 72) stated that the "...significance of Le Creusot cannot be overstated". After an expansion in France during the 1970s, the new museological approach then found functional settings in other parts of Europe and francophone Canada before moving to Latin America and Asia (Maggi, 2006: 63; Fuller, 1992: 330). Contemporary examples of ecomuseum

practices are discussed further in later chapters (7&8). The next section reviews the philosophical framework and defining characteristics behind ecomuseology.

### 3.3 Definition and Philosophy

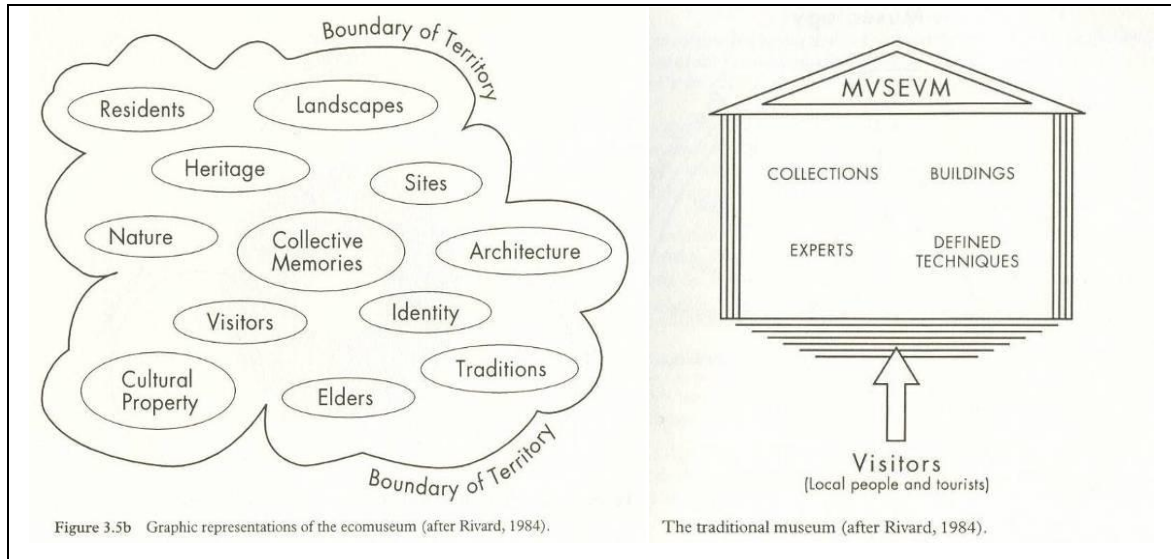
Like sustainable tourism, ecomuseology is a multifaceted concept and not easily defined. Various definitions have been created since the term was coined, each providing some of the key characteristics found in ecomuseums. However, none have universally applied due to the constant state of variation found in ecomuseum philosophy and practice (Cogo, 2006:99; Querrien, 1985: 198; Dalibard, 1992: 2; Davis, 1996: 123; Babic, 2009: 245; Graybeal, 2010: 15). The word ‘ecomuseum’ itself is a translation of the French word *ecomusée* into English, which compounded the terms ecology and museum. The prefix ‘eco’ is derived from the Greek word ‘oikos’, meaning habitat or home (Ohara, 2006: 131; Davis, 1996: 121). Much like ecology is used to describe the relationship between living organisms and the environment, ecomuseology studies the relationships between community inhabitants and their environment (cultural and natural) in a given territory (de Varine, 2006b: 60).

Various scholars and practitioners have contributed their version of an ecomuseum definition, all of which describe the concept in unique ways (Yu, 2006: 43). These include those issued by Pierre Maynard (1982), Mark Watson (1992) and Peter Davis (1999). Rivière produced three separate definitions, which evolved from emphasising ecology and the environment to stressing societal issues before his final version (1980) was created (Donghai, 2008: 31). This last poetic and lengthy definition describes the ecomuseum as a “...mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image... an expression of man and nature...of time...an interpretation of space” (Rivière, 1985: 182-183). René Rivard (1988), a Canadian museologist, then simplified the definition through the use of dual equations comparing the traditional museum to the ecomuseum (Davis, 2011: 82). These equations (Figure 3.1) provide a succinct and basic definition of what an ecomuseum constitutes.

***Traditional Museum = building + collections + experts + public***

***Ecomuseum = territory + heritage + memory + population***

(Rivard, 1988)



**Figure 3.1 Traditional Museum model versus Ecomuseum model**

(Davis 2011, after Rivard, 1984)

Rivard’s useful definition of the ecomuseum placed particular emphasis on the notion of territory and the ecomuseum as a designated geographical area (Davis, 2004: 96). Later definitions tend to be more inclusive of the issue of sustainability and “long-term solutions” (Davis, 2011: 84). For example, the definition created by the Italian Autonomous Provincial Authority of Trento and IRES (2004), an ecomuseum administration authority, states, “An ecomuseum is a dynamic process by which communities preserve, interpret and value their heritage in relation to sustainable growth. Ecomuseums are based on community consensus” (Cogo, 2006: 97). Davis (1999) further simplified this, describing the ecomuseum as “a community-lead heritage or museum project that supports sustainable development” (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 151). Regardless of which is used, all of these definitions echo similar sentiments of territory, community and relationships with the environment. It is with this understanding that the next sub-section will continue to examine the theory of ecomuseology.

### 3.3.1 Theory

*The ecomuseum is an important approach to the management of our surroundings.*

Dalibard 1992: 2

This sub-section seeks to further outline the philosophy of ecomuseology, which has been most fully described by Peter Davis (1999 & 2011) who features prominently throughout this chapter. As seen in Rivard's equations, ecomuseum philosophy possesses certain features that differentiate from 'traditional' museums and has made it increasingly popular in heritage conservation (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 224; Murtas & Davis, 2009: 151). Reviewing the philosophy of ecomuseology will be done through an analysis of its theoretical framework, using Rivard's definition of an ecomuseum as the basis for this discussion. As such, the four basic elements of territory, heritage, population and memory will be examined. Afterwards, a more in depth look will be given to ecomuseum relationships with the natural environment and local communities.

The concept of territory is vital to both the philosophy and practice of ecomuseums (Hubert, 1985: 188; Fuller, 1992: 330; Davis, 2011: 5). The *in-situ* nature of territory establishes the geographical boundaries of an ecomuseum, distinguishing it from the limited scope of an enclosed building or space, commonly found in traditional museum models. Defined boundaries place ecomuseums on a local, human scale, aid communication and maintain particular identities (Bellaigue-Scalbert, 1985: 195). Territories in an ecomuseological framework exist beyond administrative borders and are selected from a variety of sources such as topography, dialect or architecture (Davis, 2011: 269; Babic, 2009: 251; Donghai, 2008: 37). Ecomuseums view territories as a "living museum" where collections are experienced from a much broader outlook (Galla, 2002: 69). Ecomuseum territories are established disregarding size, but because of their interrelationships with a community's culture and physical environments which form their identity and 'sense of place' (Parkes, 2001: 68; Fuller, 1992: 330). Also amidst the concept of territory lies the design of 'fragmentation'. Rather than selecting a single site to represent the territory, ecomuseums often establish 'antennae' sites that branch out from the designated centre of operations to promote the holistic, *in-situ* interpretation of "living heritage" (Lloyd & Morgan, 2008: 11; Tremaine, 1989: 10).

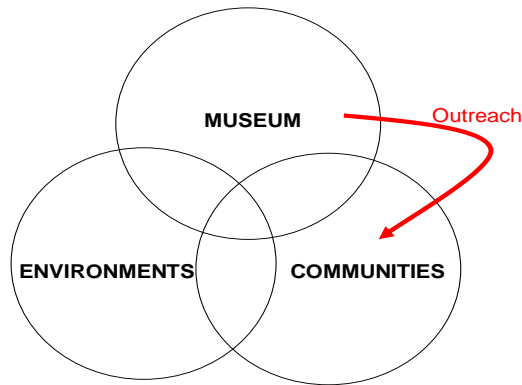
Heritage, the second element in Rivard's equation, refers to all elements of both the natural and cultural world that contribute to local distinctiveness (see Figure 3.1). This includes elements from the built and physical environment (both immovable and

movable), tangible and intangible heritage resources. As such, heritage resources in ecomuseums encompass all elements that distinguish a location, many of which are often not regarded as valuable in other heritage management frameworks. Value is given to the details of ordinary life and everyday issues, such as the case of the Ecomusée du Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines (Bellaigue-Scalbert, 1981: 228; Poulot, 1994: 80-81). Interpreting this heritage *in-situ* and retaining a traditional way of life is an essential aspect of ecomuseology and significant for maintaining local identity (Davis, 2011: 271). Davis (2011: 279) contends, “The significance of local identity is central to the philosophy of the ecomuseum”. In ecomuseums, heritage should be celebrated on a small scale with the collective memory of the community serving as tools for recording and development (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 150).

Following heritage, Rivard includes the final elements of memory and population. Memory is the ability to store and evoke information and experiences, which is congruent with the ecomuseum directive to preserve and give meaning to heritage. Ecomuseums accomplish this through different techniques including research, documentation and interpretation (Perella *et al.*, 2010: 440). Research and documentation of heritage resources needs to ensure that it embraces the “two-fold temporal mode” of ecomuseums (Bellaigue-Scalbert, 1985: 195). In other words, it is important to capture heritage diachronically rather than synchronically. This ensures the holistic interpretation and retained memory of heritage resources via “...communication through time and space” (Dahl, 2006: 125). As community changes are inevitable, techniques such as documentation and interpretation are vital strategies for ecomuseums to be successful (Davis, 2011: 286).

Under ecomuseum philosophy, the local population is not excluded from these techniques but conduct a primary role in their function (Collomb & Renard, 1982: 112; Davis, 2011: 85). Community staff and volunteers who have an interest in the operation should collaborate with professional researchers (Davis, 2011: 286; Bellaigue-Scalbert, 1985: 195). Through this hands-on approach, community members develop an increasing bond with their environment and become more attached to it over time (de Camargo, 1989: 56). Engstrom (1985: 207) agrees, stating that ecomuseums “...must be brought into being in collaboration with the population and reflect their desire to explore, document and explain their own history”. The notion of population, and their involvement in ecomuseum curatorship and documentation, signals a distinct difference from the traditional model where ‘experts’ are predominantly the lone curator (Yu,

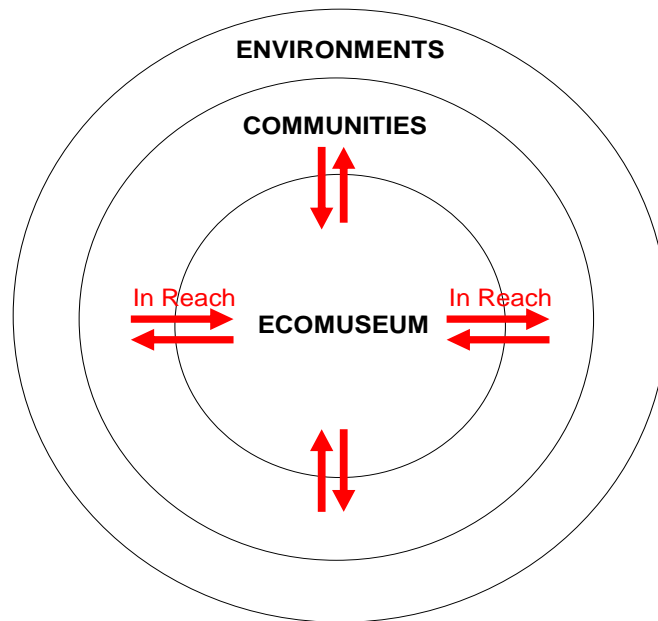
2006: 43; Davis, 2011: 25). de Varine (2006b: 61) summarised this alteration, asserting, “One of the advantages of the community (eco)museum is its interactivity...It is a two way media, where the concrete knowledge and experience of the citizen is exchanged with the more learned theoretical knowledge of the specialist, through a jointly built exhibit”.



**Figure 3.2: Traditional Museum Outreach Strategy**

(Corsane, 2006a)

As a result of this integration and empowerment of local populations, ecomuseums are considered to be democratic institutions that are “instructive and responsive” to community interests (Corsane, 2006a: 112; Graybeal, 2010: 16; Bergdahl, 2006: 106; Davis, 2011: 277; Maggi, 2006: 65; Fuller, 1992: 328). Corsane (2006a: 115) argues that ecomuseums operate through a strategy of ‘in-reach’ where institutions and organisations are located more centrally within society and the environment (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3). This translates to an objective and effective approach in dealing with a key issue, the multitude of stakeholders typically involved in ecomuseum projects (Lloyd & Morgan, 2008: 10-11). Their unified cooperation is crucial in heritage management.



**Figure 3.3: Ecomuseum Inreach Strategy**  
(Corsane, 2006a adapted from Davis, 1999)

Ecomuseology has attempted to break away from the dominant Euro-centric and western model and possesses the ability to adapt to heritage values in all cultures through its flexible, evolving approach (Babic, 2009: 243). Overall, the theory of ecomuseology is rooted in a democratic approach where community members embrace their heritage (Corral, 2010: 220; Perella *et al.*, 2010: 439). The following two sub-sections focus, in more detail, on this approach as it applies to the local environment and community.

### ***3.3.2 Environment, Sustainability and Community Participation***

The ecomuseum is dedicated to the environment, both natural (physical) and cultural (built) landscapes (de Varine-Bohan, 1976: 136). In order to truly be considered an ecomuseum, it must reflect an “ecological point of view”, or the development of community life in relation to the conditions set forth by the natural surroundings (Engstrom, 1985: 206). Davis (1996: 121) underlines, “...it is a broad definition of ecology which is demanded by the ecomuseum philosophy, which emphasizes the need to place museum exhibits within a larger environmental framework”. To make the natural world more relevant to people’s everyday lives, ecomuseums should explain both how communities use their environment (e.g. raw materials, power source) and list its broader aspects such as habitat, flora and fauna (Davis, 1996: 111). This will



emphasise the inseparable links between nature and culture and should be portrayed in both past and present contexts (Dahl, 2006: 125; Davis, 2000: 317; Davis, 2011: 274-276). By demonstrating the functions of, and relationships between, natural and cultural landscapes, ecomuseums are capable of assisting with communication that assesses community strengths and weaknesses (Perella *et al.*, 2010: 439). In turn, this can facilitate sustainable management strategies.

Devotion to environmental resources in ecomuseums requires a fundamental mission to their conservation and preservation. As an instrument that is often created for local economic development with a dual purpose of safeguarding natural and cultural heritage, the ecomuseum should incorporate a sustainability framework that considers all natural, cultural and economic assets (Davis, 2011: 276). Perella *et al.*, (2010: 445) argue:

*“As a constitutive element of territorial identity and the interface of the three pillars of sustainability, the institution of the ecomuseum ideally should be able to foster the landscape as the central point of a process in which the community can be involved in taking care of, developing and managing its own territory. This is especially true of rural and marginal areas. The approach should not be conservative, but based on a dynamic and participatory process of understanding, redefinition and communication of the local identity.”*

However, and as noted in Chapter 2, linking conservation and development continues to be challenging, and in many cases seemingly unattainable (de Camargo, 1989: 55). Ecomuseums can succeed where others failed via their democratic strategy to include and educate the local community (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 160; Cogo, 2006: 98; Perella *et al.*, 2010: 439; Galla, 2002: 69). Cogo (2006: 98) concurs, arguing that involving the local community works to change people’s attitudes and is “...one of the conditions necessary for creating effective, sustainable development”. Community involvement in ecomuseums is often carried out through various forms of ‘heritage education’. This education details the aforementioned links between local culture and nature and raises the public consciousness of their conservation responsibilities (de Varine, 2006b: 60; Galla, 2002: 69; Davis, 1996: 116). It is also important to remember that the economic development of a community is equally important in ensuring a sustainable agenda and must be considered in any framework. Ultimately, ecomuseums have the potential to actively sustain local cultural, economic and natural assets and it is through the

approach of joint decision-making with communities that will determine levels of success.

As seen above, the core elements of ecomuseum philosophy can only be achieved if the local community is recognised as the main stakeholder (Davis, 2011: 279; Parkes, 2001: 68). Ecomuseums subscribe to the fact that museums and communities should be integrating “...the family home with other aspects of the community, such as the natural environment, economics and social relationships” (Fuller, 1992: 328). Community involvement in ecomuseums works to enhance the project and is central to stimulating social, cultural, environmental and economic development (Scheiner, 2006: 89; Cogo, 2006: 98; Hubert, 1985: 189). Moreover, ecomuseums are shaped around community needs and should provide educational programmes, employment, exhibitions and community learning centers (Fuller, 1992: 328-331). In turn, this will stimulate their sense of belonging to their territory and their cultural identity (Maure, 2006: 70; Graybeal, 2010: 16; Davis, 2011: 32; Scheiner, 2006: 89). The following section now moves beyond the theory of ecomuseology and examines the principles which typify ecomuseum practice.

### **3.4 Ecomuseum Principles**

Encapsulated within ecomuseological philosophy are a variety of principles, or indicators, that characterise individual ecomuseums (Corsane, 2006b: 404). Several authors, most notably Boylan (1992), Corsane & Holleman (1993), Hamrin and Hulander (1995) and Davis (1999) have reviewed ecomuseum literature and practice and provided their ideas about what a comprehensive indicator list would possess (Corsane, 2006b: 404; Davis, 2011: 91-92). Each study demonstrated that there were shared characteristics amongst several ecomuseums, whilst each ecomuseum also varied greatly and possessed diverse characteristics. Initially, Boylan (1992), and Corsane and Holleman (1993), produced comparable indicator lists which focused on main concepts such as territory, fragmentation, interdisciplinary approaches to interpretation, democracy and community empowerment and the nature of the ecomuseum “customer” (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 225; Davis, 2011: 92). Hamrin and Hulander (1995) listed 18 separate ecomuseum characteristics, yet Corsane *et al.*, (2007a: 102) argue that this list is not exhaustive and makes “...little reference to the natural environment, to the need for distinctiveness within the geographical area, to past or contemporary environmental

issues, to the role of living collections”. Davis (1999) produced the following list of ecomuseum principles which was an amended version of all of the above checklists:

- *The adoption of a territory that is not necessarily defined by conventional boundaries;*
- *The adoption of a ‘fragmented site’ policy that is linked to in-situ conservation and interpretation;*
- *Conventional views of site ownership are abandoned; conservation and interpretation of sites is carried out via liaison, cooperation and the development of partnerships;*
- *The empowerment of local communities; the involvement of local people in ecomuseum activities and in the creation of their cultural identity; and,*
- *The potential for interdisciplinarity and for holistic interpretation is usually seized (Corsane et al., 2007a: 102; Corsane et al., 2007b: 225).*

Although the work by these authors has certainly been crucial to the development of ecomuseum principles, it was the list generated by Corsane *et al.*, (2004) which can arguably be considered the most comprehensive and was selected for use in this research project. This list, along with its use as an evaluation tool, is presented in the following sub-sections.

### **3.4.1 The 21 Principles**

Corsane *et al.*, (2004) developed the following list (Table 3.1) of principles based on a continuing review of ecomuseum literature and practice and also inclusive of the abovementioned indicator lists (Corsane, 2006b: 404). The list comprises 21 ecomuseum principles, or indicators, and serves as a “...guide to good practice” (Davis, 2011: 285). The list can be broken down into three subsets with 1 to 6 focusing on the democratic and participatory nature of ecomuseums, 7 to 12 demonstrating what an ecomuseum includes and covers and 13 to 21 explaining an ecomuseum’s actions and methods (Corsane, 2006: 109). It should be noted that each of these principles are discussed in greater detail in Chapters Seven and Eight.

**Table 3.1: The Twenty-One Principles**(Corsane *et al.*, 2004)

1. Be steered by local communities
2. Allow for public participation from all the stakeholder and interest groups in all the decision-making processes and activities in a democratic manner
3. Stimulate joint ownership and management, with input from local communities, academic advisors, local businesses, local authorities and government structures
4. Place and emphasis on the processes of heritage management, rather than on heritage products for consumption
5. Encourage collaboration with local craftspeople, artists, writers, actors and musicians
6. Depend on substantial active voluntary efforts by local stakeholders
7. Focus on local identity and a 'sense of place'
8. Encompass a 'geographical' territory, which can be determined by different shared characteristics
9. Cover both spatial and temporal aspects, where, in relation to the temporal, it looks at continuity and change over time rather than simply trying to freeze things in time
10. Takes the form of a 'fragmented museum', consisting of a network with a hub and antennae of different buildings and sites
11. Promotes preservation, conservation and safeguarding of heritage resources *in-situ*
12. Gives equal attention to immovable and movable tangible material culture, and to intangible heritage resources
13. Stimulates sustainable development and use of resources
14. Allows for change and development for a better future
15. Encourages an ongoing programme of documentation of past and present life and people's interactions with all environmental factors (including physical, economic, social, cultural and political)
16. Promotes research at a number of levels – from the research and understanding of local 'specialists' to research by academics
17. Promotes multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to research
18. Encourages a holistic approach to the interpretation of culture / nature relationships
19. Attempts to illustrate connections between: technology/individual, nature/culture, and past/present
20. Provide for an intersection between heritage and responsible tourism
21. Brings benefits to local communities, for example, a sense of pride, regeneration and/or economic income

This list seeks to include all potential elements of ecomuseum philosophy. However, whilst this list may provide a comprehensive directory of what an ecomuseum would ideally represent, the presence and/or quantity of these principles will vary significantly. This is largely due to the variation amongst ecomuseums which makes it difficult to “...apply a set of agreed standards” that all must achieve (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 234; Davis, 2006: 76). Corsane (2006b: 404) stresses:

*However, although common ecomuseum indicators can be listed, it should be noted that no two ecomuseums will display all of the same indicators. Each ecomuseum will be unique and will place a different emphasis on various aspects. Consequently, each will show a different configuration of the indicators in different proportions. This is because the core maxim of the ecomuseum ideal is that an ecomuseum will respond continually to shifting local environmental, economic, social, cultural and political needs and imperatives, as determined by the local communities working with other stakeholders.*

The flexible nature of ecomuseology ensures that ecomuseums continue their existence as living and dynamic organisms (Corsane, 2006a: 111). Nevertheless, there are still common themes found in all ecomuseums which utilise these principles, including community participation and ownership of heritage resources and management processes, sustainable development and responsible tourism (Davis, 2011: 94). While lists such as these 21 are accepted, there still remains a lack of widespread recognition and practice, which Davis (2011: 261) feels could be linked to the confinement of these issues within the “academic sphere”. However, indicator lists such as this one have been used in the evaluation of ecomusems and is discussed more in the following section.

### **3.4.2 Assessment**

Little work has been conducted in the assessment of ecomuseum practice in relation to its philosophy (Davis, 2006: 77; Corsane *et al.*, 2007a: 101). Evaluation tools for ecomuseums are still developing, which places indicator lists at the forefront of assessing both ecomuseums and similar heritage institutions or models globally (Davis, 2011: 94). Traditional museums are measured through several established methods (e.g. visitor counts, collection management, fundraising), whilst ecomuseums, with their focus on local community, territory, heritage resources and visitors, present a more difficult case for performance measurement (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 233-234; Davis,

2006:77). Davis (2006: 77) contends that performance standards might be more “inward-looking”, highlighting the needs of the community as well as visitors.

The 21 principles are comprehensive enough to respond to local environments and measure the outcomes of ecomuseum practice based on its philosophical objectives (Davis, 2006: 75). Davis and Rogers conducted a pilot study in 2005 using the 21 indicators in northern Italy which demonstrated their successful use in evaluating ecomuseums or similar heritage management institutions (Corsane, 2006b: 404). Corsane (2006b) also completed a study using the 21 indicators to evaluate the Robben Island Museum and World Heritage Site in South Africa. In accordance with Davis, he found that the “...use of the ecomuseum indicators can be a worthwhile exercise when one wishes to evaluate an integrated heritage management project” (Corsane, 2006b: 416). Another evaluation study conducted in northern Italy by Corsane *et al.* (2007a: 114), which assessed five ecomuseums, revealed that all five “...function in very different ways”. Corsane *et al.* (2007a: 114) argue that this “enormous” variation in such a small geographical setting is one of the contributing reasons why ecomuseum evaluation has been fraught with difficulty.

Beyond their complicated evaluation, the benefits from ecomuseums can still be demonstrated through these studies. Outside of the general benefits such as increased revenue or visitor numbers, other benefits from ecomuseums start to emerge such as the acquisition of various types of ‘capital’ including human, social, cultural and identity (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 235). The study done by Corsane *et al.* (*ibid*) in Italy revealed that ecomuseums provided local community members with leadership skills, networking opportunities and an increased understanding about their place and its history. As such, evaluating ecomuseums should consider the personal growth and development of local community members in relation to the project (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 236; Fuller, 1992: 331). Although ecomuseums and similar heritage institutions present challenges in their evaluation, indicator lists still have the power to assess practice in relation to the core philosophical roots of community participation and heritage conservation and preservation.

### 3.5 Limitations of the Ecomuseum Ideal

*It is difficult to create an ecomuseum, it is maybe even more difficult to give it continuity and sustain it. Also, the best ecomuseum lives a dangerous life and runs a permanent risk of disappearance.*

Maggi, 2006: 66

Before investigating how ecomuseology can support STD, it is important to have an understanding of the limitations concerning the ecomuseum concept. Ecomuseology has been disputed by numerous theorists and practitioners since its inception (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 153). One of the overall limitations is the presence of substantial differences worldwide in the philosophical and practical approaches to ecomuseums (Davis, 2011: 262). While this is aligned with their flexible and individualistic nature, it also presents challenges in their effective implementation. As such, both the conceptual and practical limitations of ecomuseology will be examined while outlining their potential to hinder ecomuseum development.

#### 3.5.1 Conceptual Limitations

Several conceptual limitations are highlighted in this section and represent some of the fundamental concerns in ecomuseum philosophy and practice. The first of these emerges within the ecomuseum's own title. The label of 'ecomuseum' is adopted by several organisations globally which do not necessarily reflect ecomuseum principles (Hubert, 1985: 187; Babic, 2009: 251; Davis, 2011: 266; Maggi, 2006: 65). Locations in countries such as France (Joubert, 2006: 92) and Sweden (Bergdahl, 2006: 104) have witnessed the misuse of the term in different forms including the use as a marketing tool, easier provision for acquiring funds or producing a short-term tourism plan (Davis, 2011: 266; Babic, 2009: 251). Davis (2011: 268) also indicates, "Several organizations using the term fail to involve local communities in developing strategy or in their operations". Thus, achieving a more universal understanding of the concept is limited due to its misrepresentation of ecomuseum philosophy amongst the greater public. For a concept that is already complex, this additional confusion excludes many communities from potentially taking control and safeguarding their cultural and natural heritage through the ecomuseum framework.

Peter Howard (2002) has also highlighted key conceptual limitations of ecomuseums. Howard (2002: 63) argues that ecomuseums could risk the future of heritage and

emphasises their tendency to focus on economic growth instead of heritage protection. He (2002: 66) stresses that heritage is most often viewed as a “commodity” in ecomuseology and that heritage-rich areas are economically driven, which ultimately leads to their destruction. In this instance, the initiatives of safeguarding the local way of life and securing a community’s identity succumb to economic priorities, where the tourist agenda dominates actions (ibid). Howard (2002: 69) conducted a brief evaluation of ecomuseums in France and describes two ecomuseums that were created 25 years ago and are starting to see signs of deterioration due to a number of factors. He (2002: 69) asserts, “The locals, however, perceived the work of the ecomusée as purely to attract visitors to the area...Equally they made no connection between heritage conservation and any industry other than tourism”. Although ecomuseum philosophy calls for community development and the provision of employment for some of its members, it is widely perceived heritage management is the primary goal of ecomuseology with economic development being a secondary effect. These thoughts are discussed further with specific reference to the study site of this research, in Chapters Seven and Eight.

The notion of time and heritage representation in ecomuseums can also limit their effectiveness. Ecomuseums often present an area’s history and forget about current situations (Davis, 2004: 97). In doing so, this creates a particular identity which has little in common with the present-day community (Davis, 2011: 266). Within this issue of time, they also tend not to portray information about the natural environment today which Davis (1996: 122) argues fails “...to achieve one of the major cornerstones of the ecomuseum philosophy”. Disregarding the present situation, and in particular the state of both the cultural and natural environments, does not allow for the creation of a sustainable framework for the locality’s resources (ibid).

Another important conceptual limitation is also often found within community involvement. First among these is the firm desire by communities to initiate and direct the ecomuseum ideal within their locality (Howard, 2002: 69). Ecomuseum creation and management by outside institutions such as the government, experts or heritage organisations limits potential success in an organisation where a bottom-up approach is vital (Yu, 2006: 44; Corral, 2010: 237; Davis, 2004: 96). Ecomuseums are rooted in their community empowerment, and the strong presence and dominating role of external stakeholders ultimately reveals that the ecomuseum has failed (Yu, 2006: 44-45). Further conceptual limitations include the persistence with a stereotypical model



(Ohara, 2006: 137) and linking experts' knowledge with the real needs of communities (Yu, 2006: 44).

### 3.5.2 *Practical Limitations*

Beyond the conceptual limitations for ecomuseums, they also face challenges in their daily, practical management roles. Maggi (2006: 63-65) has highlighted key structural problems in training, leadership and continuity of the initiatives. Training is needed for ecomuseum management personnel to improve expertise, but also for interested local community members (Maggi, 2006: 66; Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 234). It is particularly important on a concept that is still relatively new and requires in-depth knowledge (*ibid.*). A lack of leadership from within the community can also severely limit ecomuseum projects (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 160). Effective community leadership has proven to engage local communities in ecomuseum projects, thus enhancing their chances of success (*ibid.*). In addition, there is the concern of continuity within ecomuseum projects (Maggi, 2006: 63; Murtas & Davis, 2009: 160). In his evaluation of ecomuseums in France, Howard (2002: 69) revealed a loss of “trans-generational interest” in protecting heritage in certain communities. Davis (2006b: 213) similarly agrees, stating, “Perhaps the greatest threat to sustainability in these voluntary organizations is the age and skill profile of the individuals involved, with an urgent need to pass on knowledge to a younger generation”.

Another relevant obstacle to ecomuseum development includes the lack of outside financial assistance (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 234; Davis, 2006b: 213). Ecomuseums are “cooperative ventures” that rely on multiple funding sources and often struggle with financial problems (Davis, 2011: 285). Hudson (1996: 19) affirms, “Ecomuseums and near-ecomuseums elsewhere are surviving, often with great difficulty, by frankly admitting that they are in the market-place and by learning the art of getting their money from whatever sources they can, forgetting some of their ‘principles’ in the process”. Corral (2010: 238) also describes how the early stages in ecomuseum development involve expenses predominantly from the public administration, which influences decision making and management from political and civic power leaders.

Furthermore, several authors have identified other key practical limitations for ecomuseums such as establishing a participation framework for stakeholders (Galla, 2002: 74-75), the selection of appropriate collection material to represent a community

(Davis, 2011: 267), research (Maggi 2006: 66) and a lack of strategic planning (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 234). However, in order to avoid the limitations that these challenges may cause to ecomuseum development, Maggi (2006: 66-67) suggests that solutions can be found in networking and international cooperation between ecomuseums for best practice exchange, and the use of self-assessment tools.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to critically examine the philosophy and practice of ecomuseology. This was done in order to elucidate the concept's significance in answering the research question of how ecomuseum philosophy can support STD. An extensive assessment of ecomuseum literature was used in analysing ecomuseum history, philosophy and principles. This assessment provided the researcher with considerable guidance in analysing the potential interactions between ecomuseology and ST. For example, the importance placed on stakeholder engagement, community empowerment and recognition of all heritage resources are ecomuseological principles that share the same philosophy and practical guidelines as STD. Furthermore, it also provided the researcher with a framework for designing and executing fieldwork at the study site, which is covered further in the next chapter (four). In particular, this chapter guided the design of the questionnaire and interview questions and allowed the researcher to observe the study site in relation to ecomuseum theory and practice. Also highlighted in this chapter were some of the conceptual and practical difficulties in implementing the ecomuseum ideal. This became especially useful as the researcher discovered the strengths and weaknesses of both heritage management and tourism frameworks at the study site and evaluated the potential for the integration of ecomuseum philosophy. For example, the conceptual limitation of primarily focusing on economic development (Sub-section 3.5.1) as opposed to heritage management was recognised early on and throughout this research project as a potential area of concern due to the study site's poor economic opportunities (discussed further in Chapters Five through Eight). The next chapter now describes the research strategy and methods used for data collection.

## **Chapter 4.**

## 4 Methodology.

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### 4.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate how the principles of ecomuseology could support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi region of Guyana. In order to achieve this aim, a specific research approach and design was selected. It was first necessary to identify potential ‘areas’ within the sustainable tourism framework at the study site where ecomuseology principles could be utilised. This was accomplished by exploring the perceptions of six specific and associated stakeholder groups (Section 2.4). As mentioned in Chapter Two, stakeholder involvement is fundamental in the sustainable development and management of tourism. As a result, understanding their thoughts, experiences and attitudes was integral in the design of this research. The designated methodological approach for this study was selected to critically compare and analyse data collected from fieldwork, with relevant data found in the literature on sustainable tourism and ecomuseology (Chapters Two & Three).

This chapter presents the chosen research approach and design. In particular, it examines the methods used for data collection and analysis. The research approach was selected in relation to the aims and objectives of this study (discussed further below) whilst the research design was configured around the collection and analysis of data. The introduction (Sub-sections 4.1.1 - 4.1.2) for this chapter elaborates on the significance of tourism research involving stakeholder perceptions and indigenous communities. The following section (4.2) then focuses on the overall methodological approach, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Furthermore, it discusses the contextual reasons for selecting a mixed-methods approach, chosen data-collection tools and limitations of this strategy. Section 4.3 reviews the research design including the chosen data groups and respondents, sequential strategy and further limitations before the final section (4.4) examines how the data was analysed.

#### *4.1.1 Tourism Research and Stakeholder Perceptions*

Sustainable tourism is a central topic in this study, and a variety of research methods have been used on the subject (Melkert & Vos, 2010: 37). Initially, as with most social

sciences, the positive paradigm, or quantitative approach, has been dominant in data collection and analysis in tourism research (Decrop, 1999: 157; Melkert & Vos, 2010: 34; Riley & Love, 2000: 165; Walle, 1997: 524). Historically, one of the main disciplines within tourism research involved marketing, which widely used quantitative methods (Walle, 1997:532-533). However, quantitative methods are now being used in conjunction with or replaced by qualitative techniques (Walle, 1997: 526; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003: 5). This is largely because tourism studies now involve multiple topics and demographics and require a multi-disciplinary research strategy (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001: 78; Robinson *et al.*, 2011: xi). Indeed, tourism scholars today must embrace a range of methodological techniques for conducting research (Walle, 1997: 534; Riley & Love, 2000:164-165).

As stated above, stakeholders are the critical component in the sustainable development of tourism. In this study, a stakeholder refers to "...any person, group, or organization that is affected by the causes or consequences of an issue" (Bryson & Crosby, 1992: 65 from Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell, 2000: 272). As a result, it is essential to explore their perceptions and values in an attempt to better comprehend them as an individual and as a group (Byrd *et al.*, 2009: 693). Although exploring individual stakeholder perceptions in tourism is important, few studies have been carried out that compare multiple stakeholder groups in a destination (Byrd *et al.*, 2009: 693; Andriotis, 2005: 69). Furthermore, Byrd *et al.* (2009: 694) argue that no study can be found which includes all of their four identified stakeholder groups: tourists, private industry, public organisations and host community. Andriotis (2005: 69) argues that this could be attributed to a number of difficulties including "...limited time, low budget, and the refusal of business and public sector people to participate in the survey due to workload". The relatively few studies which have compared multiple stakeholder groups have shown varied perceptions on tourism management and development which limits collaboration (*ibid*). This further outlines the need for understanding all stakeholder perceptions for the sustainable development of tourism.

This study compared the views of the six stakeholder groups identified by Swarbrooke (1999): public sector, the industry, voluntary sector, host community, media and tourists (Section 2.4). Interaction with all six groups empowered each individual stakeholder group by giving them a voice during data collection. In turn, the 'reality' of the situation, as it relates to the research question, was revealed through their respective perceptions. Their individual responses to the designated data collection techniques

were collected and analysed to explore any differences in perceptions on the sustainable development of tourism in the region and how this might be improved through the principles of ecomuseology.

#### **4.1.2 Indigenous Communities**

Host communities at the study site, one of the stakeholder groups for this study, predominantly comprise indigenous populations. The researcher for this study is non-indigenous, which often presents a number of limitations in researching indigenous groups. Hinch and Butler (2007: 2) argue that one key challenge from this scenario is the difficulty for non-indigenous researchers to correctly capture “indigenous voices”. Moreover, Smith (1999: 42) asserts that most indigenous criticisms of research are expressed within the single terms of “...white research, academic research or outsider research”. Indeed, these criticisms express the inherent differences and beliefs between western and indigenous cultures (ibid). To indigenous peoples, research involving them evokes a “...set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power” (ibid). To remedy this variance between ‘western-oriented’ and indigenous cultures, research was conducted in a way that conveys equal value between researcher and respondent. For example, interviews occurred *in situ* in the homes and places of work for local community members. Furthermore, the researcher worked to ensure indigenous viewpoints were interpreted as accurately as possible.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, which Simpson (1993: 164) contends is necessary to correctly gather indigenous perceptions on tourism development. Furthermore, Simpson (ibid) argues that while some tourism impacts on indigenous populations can be researched through quantitative techniques, the “...conceptualization and meaning of cultures and objects” may best be explored through qualitative methods. Ultimately, these potential challenges within indigenous communities were acknowledged and considered during data collection.

Also worth noting is that a letter of intent discussing the proposed research was sent to each indigenous community where research was conducted (Wowetta, Aranaputa, Surama, Fair View and Annai) and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA) in Guyana. In turn, written permission and endorsement from the *Toshao* (leader) of each

community and recognised by the MoAA was gained before traveling to the research site for data collection.

## 4.2 The Methodological Framework: A Mixed-methods Approach

This study adapted a conceptual framework that employed a mixed-methods approach, utilising both quantitative and qualitative strategies. There has long been a debate on superiority between these two methods; each often referenced to “distinctly different paradigms” (Brannen, 1992: 3; see also Bartezzaghi, 2007: 193; Bryman, 1992: 57; Walle, 1997: 524). However, neither approach is superior to the other. In fact, there is a need for both approaches in the empirical search for knowledge in social science (Bartezzaghi, 2007: 193; Punch, 2005: 236; Creswell, 2003: 15; Maxwell, 1996: 17). Bryman (1992: 60-61, emphases added) argues:

*“Quantitative research is especially efficient at getting to the ‘structural’ features of social life while qualitative studies are usually stronger in terms of ‘processual’ aspects. These strengths can be brought together in a single study... Quantitative research readily allows the researcher to establish relationships among variables, but is often weak when it comes to exploring the reasons for those relationships. A qualitative study can be used to help explain the factors underlying the broad relationships that are established.”*

Furthermore, Bartezzaghi (2007: 193) and Brannen (1992:3) contend that the central consideration of choosing a research framework is the desired quality of the research and the selection of an appropriate strategy to answer the research question (see also Punch, 2005: 63). This section outlines the reasons for choosing a mixed-methods approach, the techniques used for data collection and the associated limitations.

The conceptual framework for this research integrated both numerical (quantitative) and analytical (qualitative) strategies. Both methods are associated with various epistemological theories, namely positivism for quantitative research and interpretivism for qualitative research (Brannen, 1992: 6; Decrop, 1999: 157). The reasoning behind the inclusion of both methods relates back to the research question which asks:

*How could ecomuseology principles be used to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi region of Guyana?*

Identifying research questions provides the structure for empirical procedures by demonstrating what data will be necessary to answer it (Punch, 2005: 33). Based on the

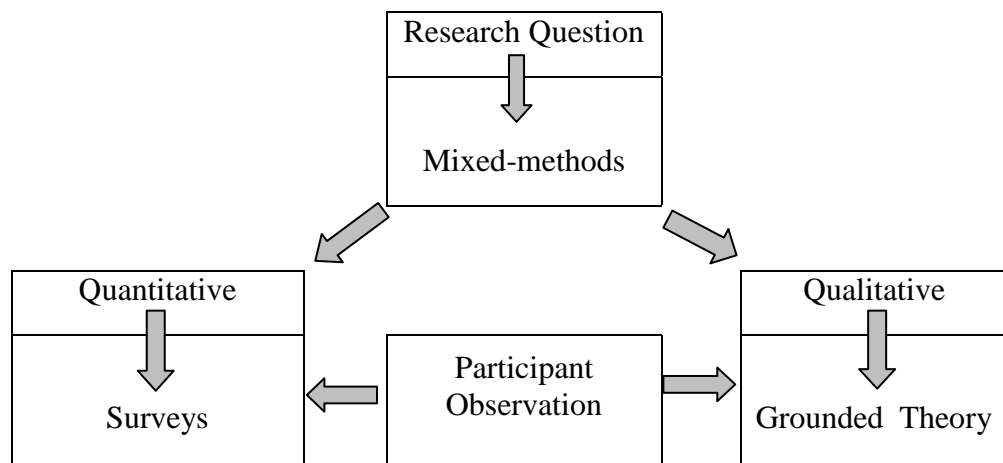
identified question for this research, a number of deduced implications are found. The word 'how' in the research question denotes that the approach is exploratory in nature and does not possess a testable hypothesis (Jennings, 2001: 18; Punch, 2005: 15-16). Jennings (2001: 18) argues that exploratory research is carried out when there is limited data on the subject being investigated. This lends itself to qualitative methods and is more concerned with theory generation (Punch, 2005: 16; Creswell, 2003: 18; Melkert & Vos, 2010: 35). However, the research question also references ecomuseology and sustainable tourism, both of which are established theories. This signals the potential for testing established variables through quantitative techniques (Lew, 2011:21). Despite a dual link with known and unknown theories, a mixed-methods approach can still be employed to both verify and generate new theories (Punch, 2005:16).

Due to this overlapping presence of both pre-determined and un-determined theories, the research question is both hypothetical and exploratory (Creswell, 2003:119). In other words, it was possible to verify the existence of sustainable tourism practices at the study site, but the nature of *how* ecomuseology could support its development had yet to be determined. As a result, two particular strategies were followed within the mixed-methods approach: surveys (quantitative) and grounded theory (qualitative). Surveys were chosen because they could provide a base line of information to aid theory exploration (Jennings, 2001: 18). In particular, they provide generalisations about a population by studying a sample of the people and producing a numeric account of tendencies, values and attitudes of the larger population (Creswell, 2003: 153-154; Punch, 2005: 75). Surveys provided quantifiable information about the sustainable nature of tourism practice at the study site. In turn, this directed the exploration of where ecomuseology could be utilised.

While surveys established the profile of stakeholders and sustainable tourism at the site, there was still the overall need to discover how a 'relationship' with ecomuseology principles could be used to support its development. Moreover, this specific study had not yet been conducted at the study site and signalled the need for a qualitative approach, due to the lack of a testable hypothesis. Bryman (1992: 60-61) argues that in these instances, qualitative studies can assist with clarifying the "underlying" dynamic of these relationships. In congruence, Munsters and Richards (2010: 209-210) assert that exploratory relationships "...cannot be understood in terms of cause and effect or be reduced to universal laws". As a result, a theory was generated during data collection and analysis. Constructing a theory embodied a qualitative research strategy



known as the grounded theory approach. This methodological approach was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and aims to generate theories which are ‘grounded’ in the empirical data (Stevenson, 2007: 188; Denscombe, 2007: 89). Glaser (1992: 14) argued that generating theory “...is a very powerful way to bring concepts of reality to a substantive area”. Although typically associated with qualitative studies, a grounded theory approach can also be used with quantitative data (Glaser, 1992: 11). Indeed, this study used both quantitative and qualitative data for theory generation and is discussed more below (Sub-section 4.4.2).



**Figure 4.1 Research Approach**

In summary, a mixed-methods approach was selected to explore stakeholder perceptions in relation to the research question for this study (see Figure 4.1). Data was collected from the six identified stakeholder groups by a combination of methods. These included a literature review, participant observation, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Each of these methods was selected based on their applicability in answering the research question and are discussed further in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.2.1 Pilot Study**

Data collection and analysis were divided between a literature review and fieldwork. Fieldwork involved three data-collection methods: participant observation, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Brewer and Hunter (1989: 77-78) argue that the purpose of fieldwork is to monitor activities and behavior in natural surroundings. In turn, this allows for the construction of “realistic theories” which fit accordingly (ibid). Furthermore, fieldwork is more effective when the researcher uses multiple data-collecting techniques (Brewer & Hunter, 1989: 78). Although a review of

the literature was ongoing throughout this study, fieldwork only occurred between November 2011 and February 2012. However, prior to these dates, a pilot study was conducted to reduce potential issues in data collection and/or analysis.

Turner (2005: 2) argues that pilot studies contribute to minimising risks for a study so that it can be more efficiently executed. The mixed-methods approach presented in the previous section was employed to test the effectiveness of the data collection and analysis techniques. In particular, a pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and sequential implementation strategy of the research approach (Creswell, 2003: 158). The pilot study was conducted in early November (2011) while the primary data collection period was held from late November (2011) – February (2012) (Section 4.4).

Questionnaires were given to ten individuals representing various stakeholder groups to ascertain their understanding and engagement with the material. This helped to examine the reaction from participants to the featured questions and facilitate improvements (e.g. terms, manner) where needed. Overall, the questions were understood by the participants which confirmed that the researcher could use them further during primary data collection. Furthermore, the time commitment and amount of resources needed to employ the fieldwork were tested as they can often be a weakness in data collection (Creswell, 2003: 215). For example, discovering the length of time it took for individuals to complete a questionnaire and also the travel time between organisations helped the researcher to plan better for data collection after the pilot study. The questionnaires were then analysed and interview questions formulated based on these ten responses. However, it is worth noting that final interview questions were not created until all questionnaires had been undertaken (discussed further in Section 4.3). The pilot study demonstrated that a quick turnaround in analysing the quantitative data would be possible, and therefore useful for conducting the semi-structured interviews immediately thereafter. The data collected during the pilot study was then later included in the overall analysis.

#### **4.2.2 Literature Analysis**

Throughout this study, there was an ongoing critical review of the literature. As described by Punch (2005: 41), literature is often reviewed as part of the planning and development stage in quantitative studies and “...brought in” during the analysis stage to

discover emerging concepts in qualitative studies (see also Creswell, 2003: 32). Both academic literature and grey literature were analysed for this study and focused on the key topics of sustainable tourism, ecomuseology, the study site and its stakeholders. This analysis provided a guiding agenda for investigating how to use ecomuseology principles to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi. The types of literature analysed and their relevance to the research question are discussed in this subsection.

Academic literature has guided the theoretical framework of this study. Creswell (2003: 46) argues that the key aspects of the academic literature review are the identification of gaps in knowledge about the research topic and the supporting evidence provided by previous researchers. Initially, academic publications were reviewed to highlight key gaps in the literature on sustainable tourism development with particular reference to the study site. This was in turn followed by an examination of the principles and theory of ecomuseology. These topics were explored in correlation with Research Aims 1 and 2 and have been presented in the previous two chapters for the reader. Relevant literature on the two topics was then used in the creation and execution of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Ultimately, academic literature was compared with empirical data to start the process of theory generation (Chapters Five through Eight), a typical occurrence in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2003: 46; Jennings, 2001: 312).

Another important aspect of the literature review was grey literature, or literature outside of the networks of mainstream commercial and academic publishers (Soomai *et al.*, 2011: 50). Grey literature typically includes technical reports, newsletters and datasets which are often hidden from public view (Ranger, 2005: 1). Grey literature utilised for this research consisted of policies, management plans, Memorandums of Understanding, marketing material and organisational frameworks from stakeholder groups where possible. These documents served as an additional support (along with academic literature) for data collected during fieldwork by providing further insight into the processes and thoughts of stakeholders.

### **4.2.3 Participant Observation**

During the entirety of the fieldwork for this study, the researcher utilised the method of participant observation. Participant observation was useful in comparing the literature, interviews and questionnaires with the reality of the situation on site (Brewer & Hunter,

1989:45). Indeed, this method is typically used to explore and interact with the activities and behaviours of research participants. In turn, this often leads to a rapport being developed between the researcher and those being observed (Angrosino, 2008: 162; Fontana & Frey, 2008: 132; Pereiro, 2010: 178). This permits the researcher to gain a deeper insight behind the thoughts and values of research participants, leading to more in-depth and rich data (Punch, 2005: 183). Ensuring the reliability of this in-depth and rich data rests in the legitimacy of the data collection styles used in participant observation (Pereiro, 2010: 178). Participant observation requires the taking of field notes, which detail the research site along with the actions of individuals. Field notes can provide further validity to a study through a comparison with other data to identify any similarities and differences (Creswell, 2003: 185). Participant observation descriptions provide a ‘window view’ for the reader and in accordance must be “factual, accurate and thorough” (Patton, 1987: 12).

Participant observation was used during both quantitative and qualitative fieldwork. Participant observation is a vital aspect of qualitative research and compliments other qualitative techniques, particularly interviews as the two are “mutually reinforcing” (Patton, 1987: 13; Pereiro, 2010:177; Brewer & Hunter, 1989: 78). This is because of their ability to gain an internal view of the situation and assess if the data is also being expressed through the interviewee’s behaviour (Brewer & Hunter, 1989: 78; Fontana & Frey, 2008: 132). Participant observation provides the researcher with more understanding on the local experience and culture and how these affect motivations (Pererio, 2010:177-178). The self-administered collection of quantitative data (questionnaires) also involved participant observation as it required the research to be on-site amongst the participants. As with qualitative methods, this served to enhance and add validity to the surveys.

#### ***4.2.4 Questionnaires***

Quantitative research is founded on the practice of collecting data for statistical analysis (Melkert & Vos, 2010: 34). A major quantitative strategy is found in surveys, and in particular questionnaires (Punch, 2005: 99). Although surveys can be considered for both quantitative and qualitative data, it refers to the former in this study (Jennings, 2001: 262). Surveys are instrumental in understanding the role of tourism in a destination due to their ability to produce a profile and behavioural information on respondents (Richards, 2010: 13). Surveys can also be considered as “descriptive

research” through their ability to portray the phenomenon under study (Jennings, 2001: 18). A key survey tool, the questionnaire, was used to sample a small portion of the targeted population. Creswell (2003: 153) asserts that by studying this sample, numeric descriptions can then be made on the “trends, attitudes or opinions” of the total population (see also Punch, 2005: 99). Indeed, producing a profile that described the activities and opinions of the larger population was the main reason for selecting a survey strategy. Furthermore, questionnaires have a rapid turnaround in data collection and analysis, which was useful in the sequential strategy (Section 4.3) of this study (Creswell, 2003: 154). The following paragraphs detail the specific reason behind selecting a survey approach and the process of developing the questionnaire.

The aim of using a questionnaire (Appendix A) was to construct a profile on the tourism framework in the Rupununi. This profile would be created from stakeholder perceptions and literature and identify various aspects of the framework including: stakeholder priorities and power dynamics; tourism infrastructure; the importance of sustainability in local tourism development; educational resources; associated impacts; and, benefits and the use of any natural and/or cultural conservation efforts. To collate this information, a structured, original questionnaire was developed to survey individuals from each of the six stakeholder groups.

The first step in designing a quantitative strategy requires identification of the “proposed variables” (Creswell, 2003: 95; Jennings, 2001: 244). Thus, relevant academic literature on sustainable tourism and ecomuseology was examined and used in the development of questions. In particular, questions were designed around the 21 identified principles of ecomuseology (Sub-section 3.4.1) and their placement within the three pillars of sustainability. This combination of material was included to ascertain potential answers to the research question. For example, Question 15 on the questionnaire asks, “Do the cultural and heritage attractions in the Rupununi show a relationship between nature and culture?”. This is in direct correlation with ecomuseology Principle 19, which states, “Attempts to illustrate connections between: technology/individual, nature/culture, and past/present”. Richards (2010: 17) contends that once you have identified the relevant topics, they have to be converted into an accessible format for respondents while also providing the answers the researcher is seeking. Thus, intricate consideration was given to the design of the questionnaire to ensure all respondents could fully comprehend the questions. Additional factors were considered such as the clarity, length and logical flow of questions (Richards, 2010: 19).

The questionnaire was divided into five main sections with a total of 18 questions. These included an initial section identifying basic demographic information about the respondent (e.g. stakeholder role, age, gender, education) followed by four thematic sections on sustainable tourism: general knowledge; environmental; socio-cultural; and, economical. The majority of questions were in a closed format but provided space for open answers; a common arrangement in most questionnaires (Oppenheim, 1992: 112). Question formats included a mixture of ‘yes or no’ inquiries, standard ranking scales and Likert scales. The Likert scale measures respondent attitudes through a five point scale that ranges from strongly disagree through undecided to strongly agree (Jennings, 2001: 250). Each questionnaire had a unique tracking number to account for distribution quantities, location and date.

The survey was cross-sectional and carried out in December, 2011. However, and as mentioned previously, prior to this (November, 2011) the questionnaire was tested in the pilot survey to ensure the content material was understandable and improve the layout and individual questions (Creswell, 2003: 158). The researcher distributed the questionnaires through a self-administered approach, also allowing for the use of participant observation. As mention in Chapter One, the Rupununi has a poor infrastructure which usually meant that travelling to different villages to speak with stakeholders entailed long walks, opportunistic lifts from passing vehicles and some interesting motorbike rides through the savannah. The self-administered approach was found to be more efficient than email distribution, particularly in the remote indigenous communities which lack the necessary resources. Respondents were given the questionnaire and then left alone to complete it. This was done to minimise respondent bias from the researcher’s presence. However, it should be noted that some participants needed clarification on certain questions. In these instances, the researcher assisted with completing the survey but was diligent in assuring that participants had a clear understanding of the question and felt comfortable in giving an accurate and honest response. Oppenheim (1992: 103) advocates this style of self-administered approach and argues:

*“This method of data collection ensures a high response rate, accurate sampling and a minimum of interviewer bias, while permitting interviewer assessments, providing necessary explanations (but not the interpretation of questions) and giving the benefit of a degree of personal contact.”*

The survey was used to describe a specific population, sometimes referred to as a “descriptive survey” (Finn *et al.*, 2000: 88; Jennings, 2001: 18). The purpose of these commonly used surveys is to describe a sample population through simple percentages (Punch, 2005: 75). This is in contrast to a correlation survey which tests relationships between variables (*ibid.*). Although this study does make comparisons between stakeholder group perceptions, these were not analysed through experimental (t-test, analysis of variance) statistical tests (Punch, 2005: 66). Correlation tests were not used because the descriptive format was sufficient for constructing a profile on the tourism framework (Jennings, 2001: 18). In other words, a correlation survey would have been better to principally examine the differences between stakeholder perceptions and not to create a profile on the study area based on these perceptions (Byrd *et al.*, 2009: 695-696). Individual descriptive surveys were collated for each stakeholder group and then analysed to elaborate further on the profile of the tourism framework.

It should be noted that the questionnaire format and content was the same for all six stakeholder groups. This presented a key challenge for accurately capturing the perceptions of tourists as they were less aware of certain aspects of the tourism framework in the Rupununi. For example, while they could personally value the importance of sustainability (e.g. Question 8) and describe certain tourism features (e.g. Question 15), they tended to have less knowledge on key issues such as benefits and impacts on host communities. However, while this was a limitation to the study, this fact in itself became useful in identifying the amount of available educational information.

#### ***4.2.5 Semi-structured Interviews***

Understanding stakeholder perceptions is fundamental to this study. Capturing their perceptions is necessary to discover what sustainable tourism *means* to each stakeholder group (Maxwell, 1996: 17). As a result, this meaning can assist with answering the research question by identifying areas in need of support. While questionnaires were used to gather generalisations, there remained a need to ‘go behind the scenes’ and uncover the thoughts, values and attitudes as they correspond to individuals from each group. This was made possible through the interactive nature of semi-structured interviews. This sub-section describes semi-structured interviews in more detail and the reasons for its inclusion in this research framework.

Although surveys are used to describe a total population, they do not theorise about the relationships between individual attitudes and actions (Creswell, 2003: 153). These relationships are better suited to be explored by qualitative methods. Qualitative methods, particularly semi-structured interviews, continue the links from surveys by exploring the relationship between its variables (Brannen, 1992: 23). Melkert and Vos (2010: 34) define qualitative research as research “...that aims to obtain in-depth insight into the social reality on the basis of a relatively small number of respondents or observations”. Qualitative methodologies do not usually rely on employing statistical analysis from a set of defined variables. Instead, they are best suited for situations where little is known about the subject matter to be analysed. Kvale (1996: 11) argues, “The basic subject matter is no longer objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted”. Indeed, qualitative researchers are sometimes referred to as “data enhancers” (Ragin, 1994: 92 from Melkert & Vos, 2010: 34). Interviews, as a main data-collection technique in qualitative research, seek to provide rich and detailed accounts of people’s thoughts and activities (Mason, 2002: 64; Punch, 2005: 168; Stevenson, 2007: 190). These experiential accounts showcase the discovery of thoughts and attitudes as they correspond to each unique interviewee (Silverman, 2000: 35; Punch, 2005:168).

As mentioned above, the specific qualitative technique selected for this study was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews strike a balance between the strict protocols of structured interviews versus the much more informal unstructured interview (Kvale, 1996). Semi-structured interviews by nature are inductive and exploratory; ideally suited for theory generation (Stevenson, 2007: 190). The lack of formal structures produces data that has both “richness” and “depth”, giving a more nuanced understanding behind the personal meaning of the respondent (Fox *et al.*, 2010: 76). They typically tend to exist in a friendly conversational style while maintaining a line of enquiry (Kvale, 1996: 6; Munsters, 2010: 58). Furthermore, the interviewer controls the dialogue while covering the main topics of research (*ibid.*). Punch (2005: 172) asserts that if done correctly, semi-structured interviews should resemble a “prolonged and intimate conversation”. The relaxed atmosphere should allow interviewees to comfortably “...formulate in a dialogue their own conceptions of the lived world” (Kvale, 1996: 11).

To achieve data from the respondents that has ‘depth’ and ‘richness’, open ended questions were asked *in-situ* within the confines of the individual stakeholder group. In



particular, this involved going to many individual's homes or places of work. Sitting in the kitchen of a local Makushi home and paying close attention to their daily life undoubtedly contributed to this 'depth' and 'richness'. During data collection and typically found in semi-structured interviews in general, there was no set number of questions. Instead, Kvale (1996: 124) argues that there should be a list of suggested questions which cover relevant themes. However, the order in which they are asked should remain flexible (ibid). Furthermore, follow up questions should be contextually specific depending on the interviewee (ibid). The interviewer steers the conversation through the introduction of topics and line of questioning, but aims to have the respondent doing most of the communicating (Kvale, 1996: 126). The next sub-section focuses on the limitations of a mixed-methods approach and its individual techniques.

#### **4.2.6 Limitations**

The selection of appropriate methodological approaches is vital to any research project and is dependent on its question, aims and objectives. This study presented both known and unknown variables, requiring a strategy that was simultaneously hypothetical and exploratory. Using Bryman's (1992: 60-61) expressions, which are 'structure' and 'processes' as a model, a mixed-methods approach was selected to: (1) establish a *structure* concerning the respondents and study area (quantitative), and (2) develop an understanding of the *processes* of this structure from the perspectives of the respondents (qualitative) (see also Jennings, 2001: 18). However, while the selection of multiple methods was deemed necessary to fulfill the aims of the study, limitations can be found in each approach and their combined use (Creswell, 2003: 148).

Firstly, practical limitations were found in the amount of time and resources needed to conduct a study of this magnitude (Miller, 1991:160-161). The study site is a remote, difficult and expensive area to reach and opportunities to do so were minimal because of limited funding and time. As questionnaires and interviews require multiple respondents before themes start to emerge, detailed planning was necessary to ensure a sufficient number of participants were acquired. This sub-section further reviews the limitations of a mixed-methods approach and how these limitations were minimised.

As mentioned above, surveys have a history of being the common technique used in tourism research (Walle, 1997: 524; Riley & Love, 2000:164). However, one of the main limitations of surveys is the lack of understanding on the "...nature of society and

human-kind” (Walle, 1997: 525). Quantitative techniques can sometimes produce “sterile” research that is not as in-depth and humanising as qualitative research (Pereiro, 2009: 180; see also Walle, 1997: 525). Indeed, exploring the thoughts and opinions of people through empirical research often requires diverse forms of evidence. As a result, employing a single method would not be sufficient for capturing an accurate reality from respondents.

Qualitative research aims to understand, from the perceptions of individuals, a “...wide array of dimensions of the social world” (Mason, 2002: 1). However, capturing an objective understanding of these perceptions is fraught with difficulty. Limitations in conducting qualitative research, particularly semi-structured interviews, can primarily be found in the biases of the researcher (Kvale, 1996: 286; Creswell, 2003:196; Punch, 2005: 176). Researcher bias influences the way respondent’s perceptions are interpreted, which can significantly alter data (Kvale, 1996: 286; Patton, 1987: 166). Kvale (1996: 286) similarly agrees, adding that bias from both the interviewer and interviewee should be considered. Consequently, researchers must simultaneously be responsive while establishing distance from participants (Brannen, 1992: 5; see also Pereiro, 2010: 178; Munsters & Richards, 2010: 210-211). Moreover, Patton (1987: 167) argues that researchers should conduct fieldwork “with no axe to grind, no theory to prove, and no predetermined results to support”. Participant observation has also been closely linked with bias where the researcher is “...both a participant in and observer of the situation” (Punch, 2005: 182, see also Pereiro, 2010:177-178). As a result, questions begin to form on the validity of data based on the effects of the researcher’s presence on the situation and his/her ability to capture an objective reality without applying it to his/her own socio-cultural background (Pereiro, 2010: 178; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 7).

Bias is a limitation because of the lack of validation it generates in research (Patton, 1987: 165-166). Validity is important as it suggests the research is authentic and credible (Creswell, 2003: 196). However, Patton (1987: 166) argues that it is not likely that any one person or method can ever be truly “objective”. Since there is no holistic method for establishing complete validity in a study, a mixed method approach can serve as a cross-technique validation strategy (Punch, 2005: 98). This process, also known as ‘triangulation’, uses and compares data from multiple methods to make research findings more credible (Finn *et al.*, 2000: 35; DeCrop, 1999: 159; Bryman, 1992: 63). Triangulation was created out of the recognition by researchers that all

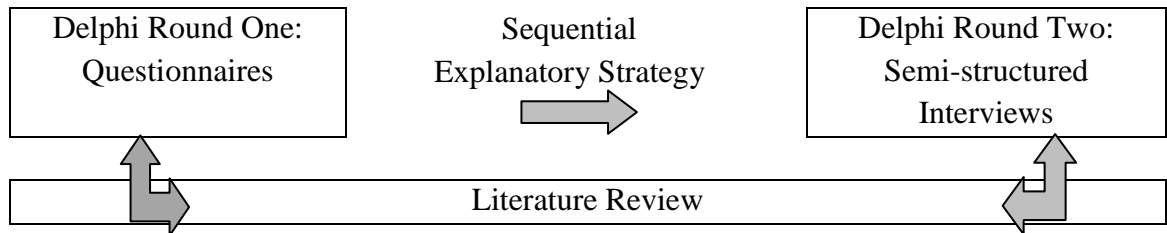
methods have “inherent biases” that could be counterbalanced, or cancelled, by “the biases of other methods” (Creswell, 2003: 15). These limitations provided the impetus for a mixed-methods approach.

In addition to triangulation, Kvale (1996: 286) suggests researchers should clarify any potential bias, particularly their positionality (see also Creswell 2003: 195). This is primarily because unacknowledged bias runs the risk of invalidating the results from a study (Kvale, 1996: 286). Therefore, it should be noted that the researcher is a non-indigenous, non-Guyanese white male and former tourism manager of an organisation at the study site. These key facts were considered throughout data collection and analysis in the attempt to keep a consistently objective perspective and are discussed more in Section 4.4. However, the researcher would like to point out that due to the qualitative nature of this study, positionality is inevitably going to affect the research design. For example, the researcher may have had a different social and geographical upbringing than Rupununi residents which could limit the researcher’s understanding of the local context. However, the researcher’s previous time spent living in the Rupununi also enabled him to have a strong degree of social proximity with the local residents and their daily lifestyles. This certainly helped in the design of the research strategy (Section 4.3) and enabled the researcher to minimise some of the limitations of the study, especially the practical details of travel, introductions and accommodation. It also enabled the researcher to better understand the divisions that exist between him and local residents.

Integration between quantitative and qualitative methods has much potential. Researchers choose to combine them in order to minimise the weaknesses of each approach and maximise their strengths (DeCrop, 1999: 159). However, methods should be appropriately selected according to the desired response (Melkert & Vos, 2010: 39). The incorrect use of a particular method has potential to provide invalid data. Furthermore, mixing methods runs the risk of delivering inconsistent results. For example, Bryman (1992: 64) argues that when doing semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, different subjects often end up being discussed. This results from having different question structures for each method (ibid). Therefore, consideration was placed on ensuring that interview questions echoed questions from the surveys. This ensured continuity through the mixed-methods approach and the presence of similar themes and concepts.

### 4.3 Research Design: Respondent Identification and Sequential Interpretation

The previous section (4.2) reviewed the overall methodological approach taken for this study. This section now examines how the approach was used to collect data, also known as the research design (Jennings 2001: 24). Figure 4.2 highlights the overall strategy used in the design and is discussed further below.



**Figure 4.2: Research Design**

After determining that a mixed-methods approach was best suited to the research question, it was necessary to then identify the respondents, or sources of data. Punch (2005: 24) asserts that the research design categorises sources of data into groups, providing an essential structure to the study. These data groups were categorised according to the chosen sampling tool, a modified Delphi Technique. This has resulted in the formation of three data groups: (1) literature, (2) Delphi Round One (questionnaires) and (3) Delphi Round Two (semi-structured interviews). This section reviews the Delphi Technique and the reasons for its selection. It also examines the sequential data collection strategy, identified data groups and limitations of the overall research design.

#### 4.3.1 Delphi Technique

As mentioned above, stakeholder perceptions are considered vital to understanding sustainable tourism development at the study site. Thus, the respondents selected for data collection were those stakeholders who have direct links with Rupununi tourism. While some of the stakeholder groups contain individuals or organisations that are internationally based or affiliated, it was those with a local presence that were mostly selected for data collection with the exception of two Skype interviews that were done to a lack of availability of the respondents. Capturing the perceptions of these stakeholders presents a view into the minds of those most knowledgeable on Rupununi tourism. This strategy falls in line with the Delphi Technique which has been found

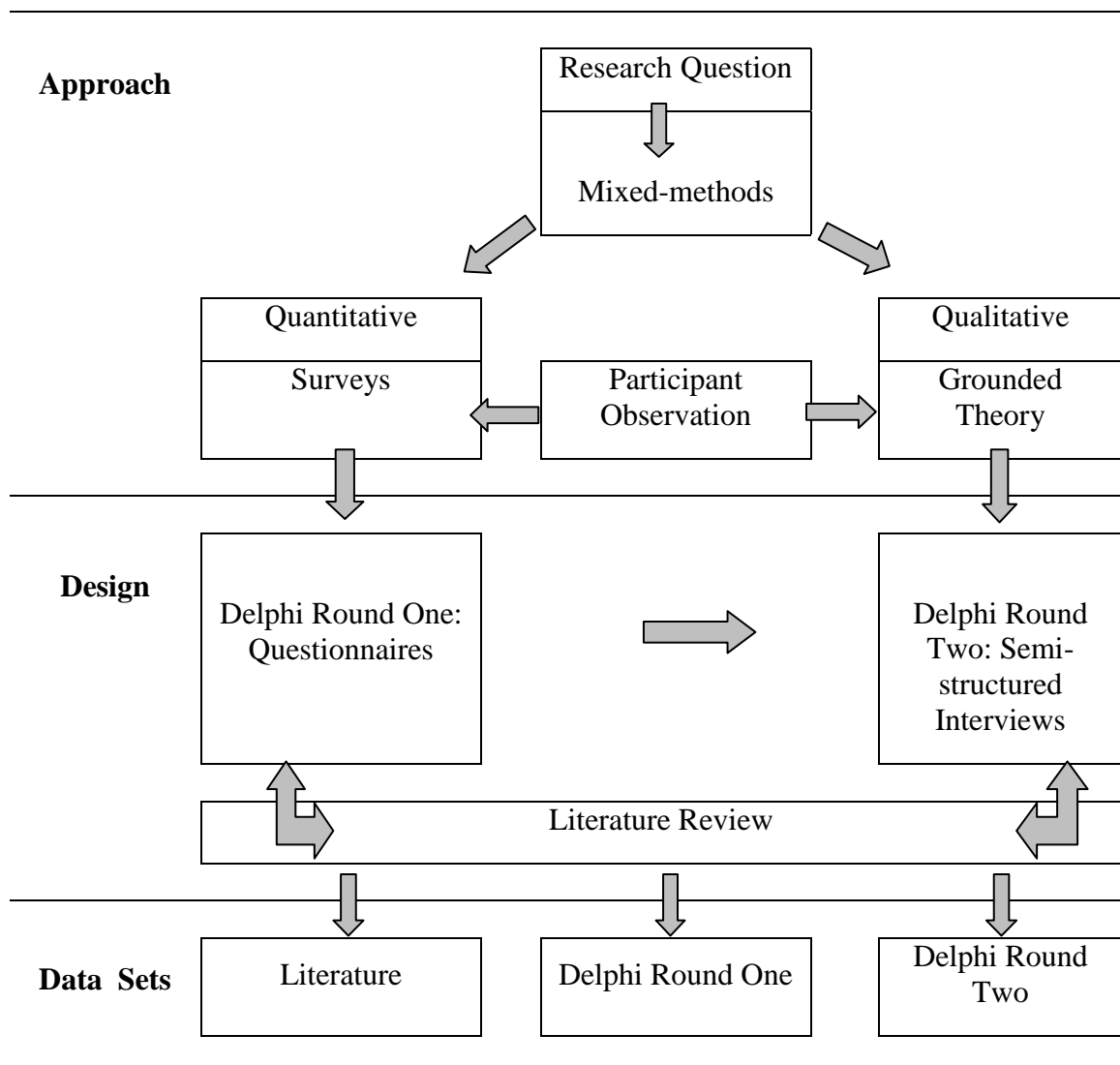
increasingly applicable to tourism research (for example see Kaynak *et al.*, 1994; Green *et al* 1990; Miller, 2001).

The Delphi Technique is a method of collecting expert opinions in an effort to gain consensus on how to solve a complex issue (Kaynak *et al.*, 1994: 19; Green *et al* 1990: 271). Furthermore, and pertinent to this study, Miller (2001: 353) asserts, “If ever a topic could be described as a complex problem and also one lacking in perfect knowledge then sustainability would appear to be so”. The Delphi Technique normally solves these problems without its expert participants having to meet “face to face” (Green *et al.*, 1990: 271). Furthermore, Delphi studies typically occur in three or less stages, also referred to as rounds (Green *et al.*, 1990: 273; Miller, 2001: 353; Kaynak *et al.*, 1994: 19). Typically during these rounds, questionnaires are distributed to a designated group of experts on a particular topic or issue. Green *et al.* (1990: 271) assert that feedback from the previous round is intended to shift the participants toward a mutual agreement. This agreement isn’t necessarily the “definitive answer” to the issue, but rather an “aid in the development of possible solutions” (Miller, 2001: 353). Green *et al.* (1990: 271) identified two key advantages from using the Delphi Technique: (1) results are from individuals and not groups in constant contact which limits potential bias; and, (2) all responses are anonymous and tend to be more honest and impartial.

The order in which data-collection techniques are employed can facilitate insight into their analysis (Creswell, 2003: 16). Creswell (2003:18) argues that a mixed-methods approach employs its individual techniques either “simultaneously or sequentially” depending on the research question. In alliance with the Delphi Technique, this study used a sequential explanatory strategy (see Figure 4.2 above). In this strategy, findings from one method are later used to expand the findings from another (Creswell, 2003: 215). Indeed, the results from the first round questionnaires were used to inform and guide the second-round interviews. Several authors contend that when using mixed-methods, the order in which they are employed often signifies a power dynamic (Brannen, 1992: 11; Bryman, 1992: 62; Creswell, 2003: 221; Melkert & Vos, 2010: 34). For example, the application of questionnaires first in this study might signal that quantitative data is the primary data source, with qualitative data being supplementary. However, for this research the two methods acted as complimentary to one another and were equally valued.

The Delphi Technique was selected for this study to capture the perceptions of ‘experts’ on Rupununi tourism. Here, the term ‘experts’ refers to those individuals

(stakeholders) who are actively involved in tourism in the Rupununi. In addition, this study adopted a modified version of the technique. While the use of experts remained, the operational aspects of the Delphi Technique were altered. The first modification was the employment of only two stages or rounds. This was unfortunately due to the limited time and budget available to gather input from all six stakeholder groups for three rounds. Although it could be argued that the pilot study constituted the preliminary stage, thus allowing for the full three stages considered to be adequate (Miller, 2001: 353). Secondly, while the first round was comprised of questionnaires, the second round utilised semi-structured interviews instead of the normal, repeated use of questionnaires. These modifications were deemed appropriate given the hypothetical and exploratory nature of the required research approach.



**Figure 4.3: Research Approach, Design and Data Sets**

This study developed three main data sets: literature, Delphi round one and Delphi round two. The process of arriving at these data sets is presented in Figure 4.3. This diagram unites the approach (Section 4.2) with the design (Section 4.3) and demonstrates how the research question produced the data sets. The data sets are a mixture of theoretical and empirical data and are examined more in the following sub-sections.

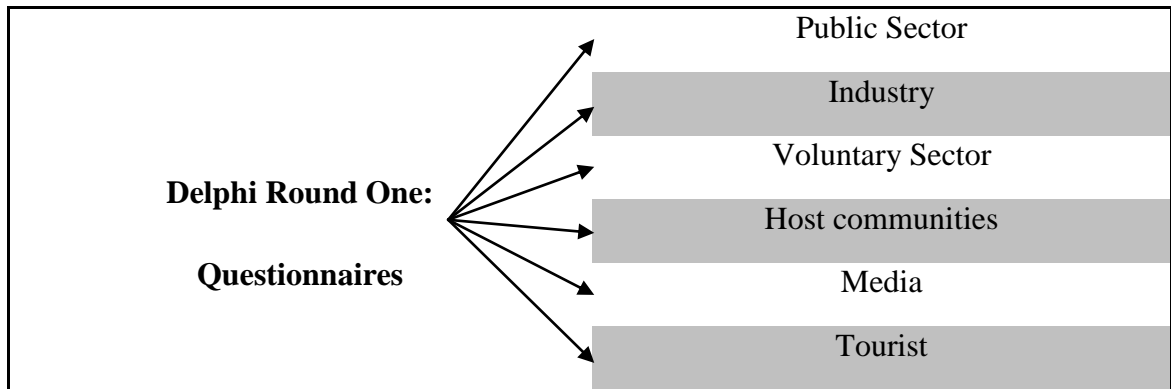
### ***4.3.2 Literature***

In this study, literature represents data that is hypothetical and not empirically collected. Punch (2005: 27) argues that data is any evidence or information which can be used to create or assess ideas. Indeed, literature was a key data set for this study due to this very notion, which it carried out in three main roles. First, reviewing the literature identified key gaps of knowledge particular to this study. Secondly, literature was used in the development of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Eventually, it was compared with data from the other two sets to generate theories on how to answer the research question. This data set was comprised of both academic and grey literature, involving various texts on sustainable tourism, ecomuseology and the study site. Moreover, the academic texts presented established theories which were used to develop parallel connections between the three subjects. The following two sub-sections discuss the remaining two data groups which were empirically collected and then compared against the literature.

### ***4.3.3 Delphi Round One: Building a Structure***

As stated above, exploring how ecomuseology could support STD initially required an examination of the tourism framework in the Rupununi. To accomplish this, stakeholder perceptions were investigated to build a structural profile based on this framework. The tools for this investigation were questionnaires, participant observation and a literature analysis which guided the formulation of questions. Within this data set, there are six sub-sets of data, each corresponding to a stakeholder group (Figure 4.4). Within the stakeholder groups, a small sample size was used to represent the total population (Creswell, 2003: 153). The intended use of this data set was to highlight numerical patterns amongst the data subsets on tourism trends and issues in the Rupununi. It would also help to quantify inconsistencies in attitudes and thoughts between the stakeholder groups themselves. As stakeholder collaboration is crucial to

STD, this would help to identify any further issues in need of support. The following paragraphs review how respondents from each stakeholder group were selected.



**Figure 4.4: Delphi Round One Data Group Subsets**

Identifying respondents for the questionnaires entailed both planning and spontaneity. As the researcher was familiar with the study site and had contacts within the various stakeholder groups, a rough ‘guide’ for data collection was created. This guide featured a list of respondents who were considered to be experts with a “working knowledge” on the research topic (Green *et al.*, 1990: 273). As mentioned above, the notion of experts refers to all individuals directly involved in Rupununi tourism. This includes, as examples, policy makers, host-community residents, tour guides, operations management and travel operators. Although a list was made for each stakeholder group, there remained a need to have a larger sample size for adequate representation. As a result, a ‘snowballing technique’ was used to increase the amount of respondents who were consistent with the Delphi approach and its inclusion of expert knowledge. The snowballing technique refers to the targeted sampling of individuals based on the suggestions of previous respondents (Castellanos-Verdugo *et al.*, 2010: 118).

Sampling for questionnaires tends not to be ‘purposive’, or conducted with a deliberate focus in mind (Punch, 2005: 187). Instead, quantitative studies are focused on “people sampling” where results can be inferred back to the larger population (*ibid.*). However, as this study required expert perceptions only, sampling was necessarily calculated in most cases and the respondents were pre-determined by the researcher. Moreover, snowballing lends itself to sampling that is random in the sense that these respondents were not individually pre-determined by the researcher. This random selection further contributes to the collection of data that is representative (Punch, 2005: 102). It was also important to determine how many respondents would be needed to have sufficient representation for each stakeholder group in order to start identifying trends.



Determining respondent numbers for each group was a compromise between acquiring a representative sample and the resources available for the study. Acquiring a representative sample is crucial to descriptive surveys and thus important for this study (Finn *et al.*, 2000: 88). Punch (2005: 103) contends that the researcher should determine how representative a sample size is in relation to the larger population. Therefore, there was an attempt to provide a balanced consistency in obtaining a representative percentage of experts from each group. Green *et al.* (1990: 273) refers to the selected sample of experts as the Delphi panel. The composition of the panel for this study can be found in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Delphi Round One Panel Composition**

(adapted from Green *et al.*, 1990: 274)

<b>Panel Group</b>	<b>Individual group components</b>	<b>Round One Sample Size</b>	<b>Total Population Size (estimated)</b>	<b>Representative % of Population</b>
<b>Public sector</b>	All government officials	6	20	30%
<b>Industry</b>	Tour operators, accommodation providers, etc.	21	75	28%
<b>Voluntary sector</b>	CI, WWF	9	50	18%
<b>Host community</b>	Five communities: Fair View, Annai, Aranaputa, Surama, Wowetta	17	50	34%
<b>Media</b>	Limited to local media outlets	11	25	44%
<b>Tourists</b>	Number of tourists	55	1500 (annually)	4%

The representative sample size from each stakeholder group depended on the size of the overall population, which was the total amount of experts within each group. Preliminary investigations into the size of each stakeholder group were conducted in the pilot study by researching the number of individuals/organisations within each group (as suggested by Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010: 117). For example, within the designated

host communities (Surama, Annai, Aranputa, Fair View, and Wowetta) there were found to be around 50 individuals directly involved in tourism. From this, 17 individual questionnaires, representing 34% of the total population, were collected and analysed. However, it is important to note that while this method worked to ensure a representative sample, it was difficult to quantify the overall population for all groups. Using the media as an example, there are several media outlets throughout the world that have direct involvement in the Rupununi through their coverage on tourism in the region. This includes everything from international conglomerates such as the *BBC* and *National Geographic* to local newspapers like the *Stabroke News* or *Guyana Chronicle*. As a result, stakeholder groups were mostly limited to local (Guyana) individuals or organisations to fit within the confines of the time and resources available.

Table 4.1 presents figures on the sample size of the six stakeholder groups during the first round of the Delphi technique. Both the sample size and the estimated size of the total population are outlined. Within the table, the individual components, or members, of each panel group are generally identified. As mentioned, the focus was on stakeholders with a presence within Guyana. Respondents for all groups were found in either the Rupununi (host community, industry, tourists) or Guyana's capital, Georgetown (public sector, industry, voluntary sector, media). Furthermore, it should be noted that the host-community stakeholder group encompasses five individual communities (Rewa, Aranaputa, Annai, Surama, Wowetta) to ensure ample resident input (as suggested by Jamal & Getz, 1995: 198). These five communities were selected because they contain the most developed tourism operations within the North Rupununi. There are communities with tourism activities in the other sections of the region (e.g. Yupukari, Nappi), but again due to limited resources, it was not possible to gain access to these areas.

Along with the literature analysis and questionnaire, participant observation was also used to construct a profile on tourism development at the study site. Participant observation was principally used to examine tourism operations in the Rupununi. Tourism operations refer to the tourism resources and policies found in each of the host communities. The researcher was particularly observant on the following: educational sources (interpretation panels, guided tours); tourist activities; examples of environmental or cultural conservation; sanitary state of the site; and, behaviour of the respondents. The researcher interacted with a number of tourism staff within the host communities and participated in several of their tourism activities, including guided

tours and recreational activities. The notes taken on these observational key points are the sole interpretation of the researcher and subject to bias. Thus, the questionnaires served to mitigate this limitation by providing further data on behalf of the respondents themselves.

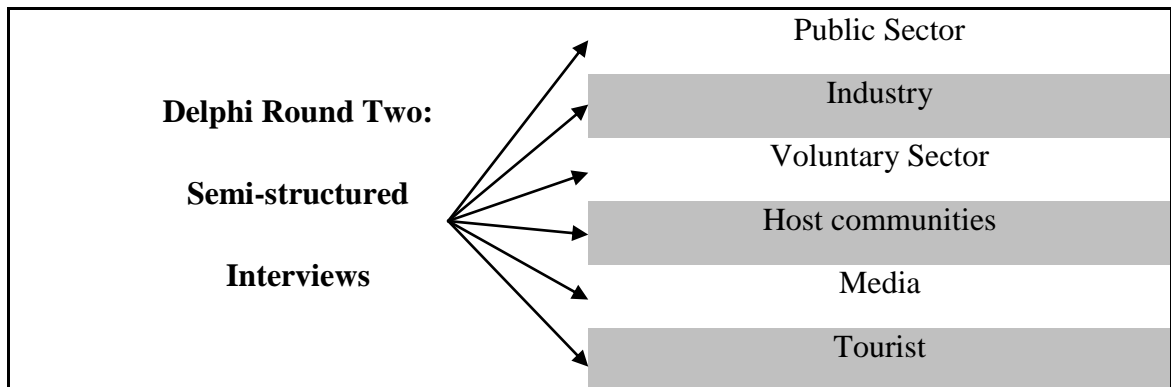
In summary, 119 questionnaires were collected between November 2011 and February 2012 in either the Rupununi or Georgetown. Respondents were initially identified through a pre-determined list. However, this list was expanded through the snowballing technique to acquire additional respondents that fitted accordingly within the Delphi strategy. The tourism network in the Rupununi, and Guyana in general, is quite small so discovering additional ideal respondents entailed little difficulty.

#### *4.3.4 Delphi Round Two: Exploring the Processes*

The second round of the Delphi Technique provided this study with its final data group. While round one built a **structural** profile on the tourism framework in the Rupununi, round two was concerned with exploring the **processes** of that structure. This was accomplished by further investigating the thoughts, actions and values of those in control of the processes - the stakeholders. Gaining a deeper insight into these processes required a more exploratory approach into stakeholder perspectives. Therefore, a qualitative approach with the specific application of semi-structured interviews and participant observation was used for this exploration. The intended purpose of this data set was to discover emergent themes for theory generation. To achieve this aim, a specific group of experts were selected to be interviewed. As previously seen in set one, these experts represented all six stakeholder groups (Figure 4.5). This sub-section examines the use of the sequential strategy and how respondents were selected from each stakeholder group.

Central to this research design is the use of a sequential explanatory strategy. Within this strategy, results from both rounds worked to mutually reinforce the other (Creswell, 2003: 215). Indeed, the questionnaires were used to inform and guide the second round interviews. In particular, the results were used in the formation of themes to be covered within the interviews. However, the researcher was careful not to discuss the questionnaire results with interview respondents. Instead, the chosen themes and rough outline of questioning were maintained. Furthermore, the interviews expanded the results from the surveys by providing explanations on various elements of the tourism

profile created in round one. As noted in Bryman (1992: 60), the results from the questionnaires were also useful in selecting respondents for a qualitative investigation because it helped to identify potential individuals.



**Figure 4.5: Delphi Round Two Data Group Sub-sets**

Identifying the respondents for round two was similar to the ‘purposive’ system used in round one (Punch, 2005: 187). Punch (2005: 188) argues that any sampling strategy should align with the study’s purpose. Indeed, one of the aims for this study was to generate a theory in regards to the research question. Therefore, with the Delphi Technique in mind, an initial list was created with selected experts. However, a key difference was the amount of respondents. Qualitative research is less concerned with achieving representativeness and attributing data to a larger population. Instead, it is more concerned with exploring the perceptions of a select few key individuals to gain a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon (Kvale, 1996: 102).

A qualitative approach was dually selected for this study to aid in the process of generating a theory grounded in the data. Grounded theory is a process where data are simultaneously collected, coded and analysed in the search for emerging theories (Castellanos-Verdugo *et al.*, 2010: 118). This process lends itself to theoretical sampling where the respondents are not pre-determined in the methodological design (*ibid*). The flexibility in this data collection process “...allows the researcher to place the emphasis on one concept or another” (*ibid*). As a result, respondents for this study were chosen during fieldwork, specifically after the results from Delphi round one were analysed. Castellanos-Verdugo *et al.* (2010: 18) assert that this is in accordance with the constant comparison method used in grounded theory. Snowball sampling, a common sampling technique used in qualitative studies and grounded theory, was used minimally. This was due to the researcher already having an extensive network of contacts in the region from the first round of data collection (Jennings, 2001: 139).

Although it would have been preferable to identify respondents for interviews while collecting data in the field, resource limitations forced the researcher to prepare a definitive list prior to the interviews.

**Table 4.2: Delphi Round Two Panel Composition**

(adapted from Green *et al.*, 1990: 274)

<b>Panel Group</b>	<b>Round Two Sample Size</b>
<b>Public sector</b>	3
<b>Industry</b>	5
<b>Voluntary sector</b>	4
<b>Host community</b>	4
<b>Media</b>	2
<b>Tourists</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	22

Table 4.2 outlines the Delphi panel for round two. In particular it locates which stakeholder groups the respondents come from and how many were interviewed from each group. In total, 22 interviews were conducted. The respondents were chosen as they are considered to be individuals who are highly involved in tourism development in the Rupununi, which is particularly relevant to this stage of the study (Scott & Cooper, 2007: 204). Moreover, Munsters (2010: 59) argues:

*“This selection criterion enhances the representativeness and reliability of the in-depth interviews because the interviewed service providers will voice not only their personal opinion but also the ideas of the stakeholders they represent.”*

For example, the interviewees included high ranking members of the public sector, managing directors from the industry, travel authors in media organisations and *Toshao*'s from host communities. Exploring the perspectives of these individuals was aimed at gaining an understanding of the attitudes and values of the central decision makers within each group.

As mentioned above, participant observation and semi-structured interviews were the tools used for data collection in the Rupununi and Georgetown. Similar to the first

Delphi round, participant observation was employed to assess tourism operations and the behaviour of the participants. Field notes taken on these subjects were used as supplementary evidence to the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The interviews involved open-ended questions and were conducted in a manner consistent with an informal conversation. This relaxed atmosphere assisted with gathering data which had depth and richness.

The number of interviews conducted was in direct correlation to the amount of time and resources available and when the theoretical saturation level was reached. This is the point where additional interviews do not offer any new concepts or knowledge (Castellanos-Verdugo *et al.*, 2010: 118; Kvale, 1996: 102). Kvale (1996: 103) argues that conducting fewer interviews can often be better for a study. This is due to a focus on quality over quantity and taking more time to effectively prepare and analyse fewer interviews (*ibid*). Moreover, it allows for a more detailed investigation of the relationships between participants and the situation (*ibid*).

#### **4.3.5 Limitations**

Initial limitations found in the research design concern the type and amount of respondents. A core limitation is the sole inclusion of participants who are considered experts. Identifying who in fact was considered an expert was entirely subject to the researcher's interpretation. An attempt was made to minimise this through the selection of individuals who had obvious involvement and knowledge in Rupununi tourism. On the one hand, excluding individuals or organisations who are not involved in tourism development in the Rupununi limits the overall scope and potential for the study. On the other hand, stakeholder experts were solely chosen because they are the key actors in STD (Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell, 2000: 72). Their actions, values and opinions ultimately determine the potential of using ecomuseology to support STD. Thus, capturing their perceptions holds the key to answering the research question.

In addition, the amount of stakeholder respondents could have been increased to provide additional representativeness in the questionnaires and to explore more themes in the interviews. However, as time and resources were limited, this was not possible. Nonetheless, the number of respondents for both the questionnaires and interviews was considered appropriate based on the research aims and objectives. In particular, the researcher felt a sufficient sample was collected to represent the larger population for

the quantitative study (Creswell, 2003: 153). Moreover, the semi-structured interviews allowed for the adequate emergence of themes towards theory generation (Kvale, 1996: 102).

The researcher's own past experience within the study site contributed to the way the respondents were identified and could be considered a limitation. However, personal knowledge on particular candidates who would be beneficial for questionnaires and interviews was acknowledged by the researcher. Prior relationships between the researcher and respondent could have further contributed to bias from the respondents. To counter this, unknown individuals were selected where possible to minimise bias. Ultimately, there was a constant effort to having an objective approach in selecting respondents. The guarantee of anonymity for participants also helped to promote more honest responses. Moreover, employing the snowballing technique during questionnaires allowed for the inclusion of a significant range of previously unknown participants.

As mentioned in sub-section 4.2.6, there was uniformity in the content and format of both the questionnaires and interviews. This was to establish consistency in comparing the results from each stakeholder group. However, tourists were perhaps not as knowledgeable on key subjects due to a lack of experience at the study site. Nonetheless, gathering their input remained vital and proved useful in analysing the results.

Practical limitations in the research design were found in the ever present lack of time and resources, which were crucial elements in the research design (Creswell, 2003: 215; Kvale, 1996: 92). Accessing all six stakeholder groups required a great deal of effort, time and finances. The many multi-hour trips through dense jungle terrain were consistently demanding but necessary, valuable and quite often entertaining. Moreover, the researcher's previous experience in the area minimised, where possible, these practical challenges in data collection.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis**

Employing a mixed-methods approach produced a mixture of theoretical and empirical data formats. This included literature, numerical questionnaires, field notes and theme-driven interviews. Thus, it was necessary to apply a data analysis strategy that was responsive to all methods. Regarding theoretical data, the analysis of literature was

continuous throughout this study and conducted before, during and after fieldwork. It was during fieldwork that the remaining three data sets were empirically collected. As seen in Table 4.3, data was collected through a specific sequential design. A pilot study was conducted in early November (2011) which was then followed by the questionnaire distribution in December (2011). After the questionnaires had been analysed, the semi-structured interviews were carried out in January (2012). Eventually, both rounds of the Delphi technique and the literature were used in triangulation during the last stage of analysis.

This sequential strategy guided the overall chronological structure for data analysis. In particular, data from the questionnaires was analysed and used to inform the interviews. The interviews were then analysed after each respondent in conjunction with a grounded theory approach. Field notes from participant observation were used to support findings for each technique. The following sub-sections examine in more detail how data was analysed for both the quantitative and qualitative techniques. Also reviewed is how the use of triangulation supported the reliability of the findings for each approach.

**Table 4.3: Data Analysis Timeframe**

<b>January 2011</b>	<b>November 2011</b>	<b>December 2011</b>	<b>January - February 2012</b>	<b>March 2012 – February 2013</b>
Literature Analysis	Pilot Study	Delphi Round One: Questionnaires and Participant Observation	Delphi Round Two: Semi- structured Interviews and Participant Observation	Triangulation
		Literature Analysis		

#### **4.4.1 Quantitative Analysis**

As stated in sub-section 4.2.4, questionnaires were used to describe a sample group of a larger population, otherwise known as a descriptive survey (Finn *et al.*, 2000: 88). Descriptive surveys are analysed “one piece at a time” and describe this sample through simple proportions and percentages (Punch, 2005: 75; Jennings, 2001: 283). Indeed, samples from each stakeholder group were acquired to describe their overall group



perceptions on the tourism framework. Once each group had been surveyed, these descriptive surveys were compared against each other to better comprehend individual group priorities, thoughts and attitudes in relation to the greater whole. However, this did not require the use of experimental correlation tests (t-test, analysis of variance) because the descriptive format was sufficient for building a profile on the tourism framework. In other words, the principal aim of the questionnaire was not to determine if there were differences between each group, but to identify the perceptions of the group itself (Byrd *et al.*, 2009: 695-696).

Responses from each questionnaire were categorised by the individual questions and demographics. The responses were first entered into an *Excel* spreadsheet to develop a matrix. This matrix was created to organise individual responses to create holistic, descriptive information that represented the thoughts of all stakeholder groups. This was done by constructing formulas to calculate sums and averages from the data (Jennings, 2001: 281). An analysis of the matrix developed findings which were used to infer generalisations about the tourism framework at the study site. For example, it was found that 87% of all participants feel that tourism in the Rupununi is providing financial benefits. These findings are further canvassed in Chapter Five.

#### **4.4.2 Qualitative Analysis**

Despite the presence of established theories in the research question, there was still an overarching, exploratory inquiry. This was primarily because a study of this nature had not been conducted in this geographical context before. As a result, a theory was generated during data collection and analysis. This theory construction followed a systematic process known as grounded theory. Although grounded theory is typically associated with qualitative studies, it can also be accomplished with data from quantitative studies (Glaser, 1992: 11). As Glaser (*ibid*) succinctly states, “It’s all data for the analysis”. The process of theory generation for this study began while the quantitative data was being analysed. As numerical patterns on the tourism framework emerged, they were evaluated and then used to develop themes for the interviews. Afterward, the interviews were constantly analysed and explored during and after data collection (Jennings, 2001: 196). Denscombe (2007: 99) argues that this strategy falls in line with the grounded theory approach, which involves the repetitive assessment of themes and concepts. The following paragraphs review how the qualitative data was coded by theme and then analysed.

Qualitative data used in the analysis process included the field notes from Delphi rounds one and two and the semi-structured interviews from round two. The analytical process began with the extensive and time-consuming transcription of the interviews and organisation (formal typing) of the field notes (Kvale, 1996: 103). These two steps led to a stronger engagement with the data and are part of a larger process called coding. The central aim behind coding was to break the data down into smaller parts to discover patterns and frequent themes (Creswell, 2003: 192). Coding was done manually by the researcher primarily due to an individual preference. Computer programmes, such as *NVivo*, are available to enhance the coding process (Creswell 2003: 193). However, these programmes require additional training and are more useful with larger sets of qualitative data (ibid). For example, Creswell (ibid) asserts that computer programmes are particularly useful when there are more than 500 pages of transcripts, which is considerably more than this study acquired. Furthermore, the researcher desired to establish a ‘connection’ with the data by constantly revisiting ideas and themes in a more tangible setting.

Data coding occurs in three distinct steps. This includes open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Creswell, 2003: 191). In relation to the first step, the transcriptions and field notes were colour coded while identifying frequent key words or phrases. Mind maps were also created around central themes, using the sub-categories as the basis for analysis and chapter outlines. Glaser (1992: 38-39) contends that this strategy is called ‘open coding’. Open coding occurs when data is broken down and inspected for “similarities and differences” to generate conceptual meaning (ibid). Once key words or phrases were identified, they were then separated into thematic categories relating to the research question (Glaser, 1992: 39-40). For example, a lack of information was a consistent theme featured throughout the field notes and interview transcripts and was developed into a category. ‘Axial coding’ was then used to group these categories together to compare themes and establish connections (Glaser, 1992: 61-62). Ultimately, ‘selective coding’ was used to extract a “...story from the interconnection of these categories” (Creswell, 2003: 191). Glaser (1992: 75) argues that selective coding begins once a definitive connection between categories evolves into a “core category”. A core category explains a pattern in the data through a generated theory (ibid). After an initial, full coding stage, the data was reviewed again, and again. Notes were constantly recorded during this process to capture thoughts and opinions (Jennings, 2001: 197). This process of constantly comparing allowed for the

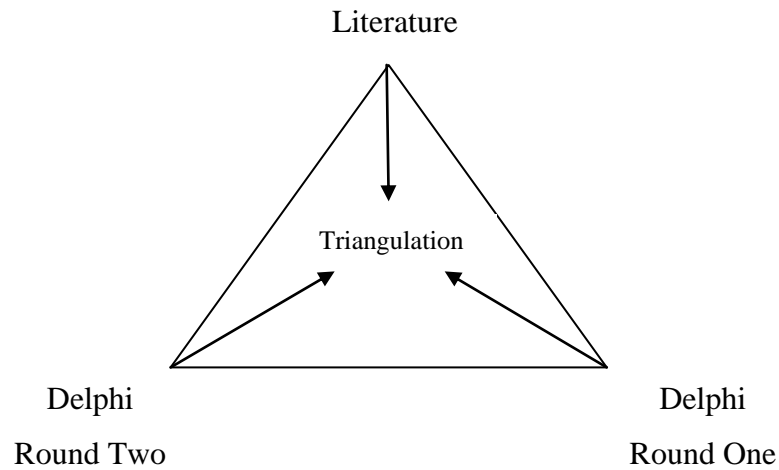
detailed placement of individual responses within categories and the subsequent exploration of the relationships between these categories.

Following a grounded approach to construct a theory also required the researcher to acknowledge his previous experience and knowledge of tourism in the Rupununi. Indeed, it was this experience and knowledge that initially inspired a study on the research question. As a result, the researcher had some preconceived notions regarding the research problem. Nonetheless, the exploration into theories and methodologies relative to this study created new foundations of previously unknown knowledge for answering the research question. Moreover, the researcher attempted to approach this study with objectivity and to disregard any prior presumptions. The following subsection examines how triangulation also helped to minimise any bias during data collection.

#### **4.4.3 Triangulation**

The inclusion of multiple sources of data for this study has allowed the findings to have more credibility. This was accomplished through the method of triangulation whereby the findings from each method were compared against each other (Finn *et al.*, 2000: 35; Decrop, 1999: 159; Bryman, 1992: 63). Decrop (1999: 158) asserts that based on the “triangle analogy” there should be three different sets of data that are used to converge on a single point of analysis. This study echoes that same support structure and is presented in Figure 4.6.

In general, findings between data sets were compared and also within the data sets themselves. More specifically, the literature, questionnaire responses (Delphi round one) and findings from the interviews (Delphi round two) were all compared against each other in the search for connections and variations. Furthermore, field notes within both Delphi rounds were compared against the main data collection method and also the literature. This included checking the reliability of people’s actions versus their spoken opinions, crediting information from interviews with organisational documents and comparing the perceptions of different stakeholders (Patton, 1987: 161). In addition, DeCrop (1999: 158-159) argues that studying information from these different sources limits both personal and methodological biases and “...opens the way for richer and potentially more valid interpretations” (see also Puczko *et al.*, 2010: 73).



**Figure 4.6: Triangulation**

Triangulation, in conjunction with a constant comparative method, was undertaken from the beginning of the research design through to data analysis (Decrop, 1999: 159). Patton (1987: 161) notes that triangulation during data analysis can be an ambiguous process. He (ibid) cautions that quantitative methods can end up answering different questions than those from qualitative methods. As a result, this can misconstrue the generated theory. However, careful consideration was given to the preliminary and ongoing design of the questionnaire and interview format to ensure this would not be an issue. In the end, the triangulation of the different data sources showed consistent patterns and contributed to the overall credibility of the findings.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The methodological approach and design for this study were selected to investigate how ecomuseology principles could be used to support STD in the Rupununi. To accomplish this, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to explore stakeholder perceptions. This exploration involved deductive (theory measurement) as well as inductive (theory generation) processes. Ultimately, the methodological strategy for this study was created so that a structural profile could be developed about the Rupununi tourism framework and then its processes explored. These actions are manifested in the following two chapters (Five and Six). Chapter Five reviews the facets of the Rupununi tourism structure before Chapter Six then explores areas, or processes, within that structure that were identified as being significant to this research project.

## **Chapter 5.**

## 5 The Rupununi Tourism Structure.

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### 5.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to identify and critically examine the opportunities, challenges and stakeholders involved in tourism development in the Rupununi. Achieving this goal supports one of the key objectives (Aim 3) of this thesis: building a profile on Rupununi tourism. As mentioned in Chapter Four, constructing a profile on Rupununi tourism is vital to discovering how ecomuseology can be used to support its sustainable development. After a profile of the Rupununi tourism structure is produced in this chapter, Chapter Six then analyses areas of significance within that structure. These areas are relevant and specific to this study and were identified from data set two (questionnaires) and explored in data set three (interviews). It should be noted that in using the word ‘structure’, the researcher is referring less to assembling a diagram or arrangement of parts. Instead, constructing a structure in this instance involves examining the interrelation of parts (e.g relationships) within a complex system.

Understanding the Rupununi tourism structure is only achievable by considering all of the data sets of this study, which are all represented in both Chapters Five and Six. This includes a combination of the field notes, literature, questionnaire data and interview responses. As mentioned in the previous chapter, data set two represents the field notes and questionnaires, which were answered by 119 people representing 18 organisations and five communities within the six stakeholder groups (Table 5.1). This current chapter primarily uses a mixture of literature, field notes and questionnaires in its analysis of Rupununi tourism. The questionnaire was designed with the 21 principles of ecomuseum philosophy (Corsane *et al.*, 2004; Corsane, 2006b; Corsane *et al.*, 2007a) serving as the central focus within the three main pillars of sustainability. As a result, the answers that were given assisted with examining how ecomuseology could support sustainable tourism development. Indeed, these principles were a constant theme throughout the assessment of Rupununi tourism. In general, stakeholder viewpoints were collectively represented and analysed as opposed to individual comparisons between the six stakeholder groups, although comparisons are made occasionally (e.g. importance of sustainability between each stakeholder group). This was done because their holistic understanding was considered more important for constructing a profile on

**Table 5.1: Questionnaire Compositions - Data Group 2**

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Public Sector</b>	9	18-29: 12% 30-39: 44% 40-49: 44% 50-59: 0 60+: 0	Male: 33% Female: 67%	Primary: 0 Secondary: 44% Bachelors: 44% Masters: 11% Doctorate: 0
<b>Industry</b>	21	18-29: 43% 30-39: 24% 40-49: 33% 50-59: 0 60+: 0	Male: 33% Female: 67%	Primary: 5% Secondary: 57% Bachelors: 29% Masters: 9% Doctorate: 0
<b>Host Community</b>	17	18-29: 18% 30-39: 29% 40-49: 41% 50-59: 12% 60+: 0	Male: 53% Female: 47%	Primary: 18% Secondary: 77% Bachelors: 5% Masters: 0 Doctorate: 0
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	6	18-29: 0 30-39: 3 40-49: 3 50-59: 0 60+: 0	Male: 50% Female: 50%	Primary: 0 Secondary: 0 Bachelors: 83% Masters: 17% Doctorate: 0
<b>Media</b>	11	18-29: 55% 30-39: 36% 40-49: 9% 50-59: 0 60+: 0	Male: 55% Female: 45%	Primary: 0 Secondary: 27% Bachelors: 73% Masters: 0 Doctorate: 0
<b>Tourists</b>	55	18-29: 9% 30-39: 22% 40-49: 31% 50-59: 27% 60+: 11%	Male: 49% Female: 51%	Primary: 0 Secondary: 0 Bachelors: 67% Masters: 29% Doctorate: 4%
<b><u>Total / Average</u></b>	119	18-29: 20% 30-39: 28% 40-49: 33% 50-59: 14% 60+: 5%	Male: 47% Female: 53%	Primary: 3% Secondary: 27% Bachelors: 51% Masters: 17% Doctorate: 2%

Rupununi tourism than comparing stakeholder opinions between groups. Therefore the results are presented as a total percentage for all 119 questionnaire participants from the six groups and individual group comparisons are only made when deemed necessary.

Also presented along with the quantitative results are comments from the interviews in data set three (Table 5.2). The abbreviations, representative of each group, used in the

table showcase how direct quotes will be referenced in the remaining chapters of this thesis. As stated above, Chapter Six elaborates on key areas of significance that were identified as a result of the questionnaire but explored in the interviews. Therefore, much of the data from set three is presented in that chapter. However, during the semi-structured interviews, data emerged that helped to elaborate on the key topics for this chapter: the heritage resources, tourism challenges and stakeholders. As a result, they were included where appropriate to further illustrate a particular issue, or subject.

**Table 5.2: Interview Respondents – Data Group 3**

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
<b>Public Sector</b>	3	P1 - P3
<b>Industry</b>	5	I1 - I5
<b>Host Community</b>	4	C1 - C4
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	4	V1 - V4
<b>Media</b>	2	M1 - M2
<b>Tourists</b>	4	T1 - T4
<b>Total</b>	22	

The next section (5.2) within Chapter Five traces the evolution of tourism in the region as well as its current state before the benefits and challenges of tourism development in the region are examined (Section 5.3). Finally, the stakeholders of Rupununi tourism are identified with elaboration on their roles within the industry presented in Sections 5.4 and 5.5. It should be noted that there is little available literature on the study area and therefore certain key texts were frequently used providing a significant amount of information. These include *Rupununi: Rediscovering a Lost World* by Watkins *et al.* (2010), a team of biologists and nature photographers; *Guyana*, the country's only tourism guide book and written by Kirk Smock (2008); and, the *Rupununi Community Tourism Blueprint*, prepared by CI (2010). These three texts were essential for this chapter and are featured consistently throughout.



## 5.2 Tourism Development

In an area that possesses world-class heritage resources but remains plagued by a privation of employment opportunities, tourism has evolved to become a seemingly ‘logical’ option for local development. Sinclair (2003: 141) argues that locations similar to that of the Rupununi, which are home to extensive biodiversity and remote indigenous communities, hold a “...comparative advantage in the tourism market”. This notion was resonated by the majority of interviewees, with a member of the public sector (Interview P1, 2012) stating, “...it [Rupununi] has a lot of attractions that can lure visitors from almost anywhere in the world, especially those who want to be part of a pristine system”. This section retraces the evolution of tourism development in the Rupununi (Sub-sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.2) and how this aligns with national development strategies. It also identifies the tourism product (Sub-section 5.2.4) and the tendency of stakeholders to focus on natural heritage resources (Sub-section 5.2.3).

### 5.2.1 *Evolution of Rupununi Tourism*

The development of tourism in the Rupununi has followed Guyana’s national growth strategy for the sector. This has included the late development of tourism in the country due to its previous dependency on mining and agriculture (Sinclair, 2003: 141; CI, 2003: 4). However, as economic diversification and foreign currency became desirable, tourism grew to be a focal point of Guyana’s sustainable development plans for its abundance of heritage resources (CI, 2003: 2; CI, 2010: 3; Dilly, 2003: 64). Indeed, only a small percentage (.00004%) of the international tourism market would be required to become the leading foreign exchange earner for Guyana’s small economy (CI, 2003: 2). Both the national government and local Rupununi administration have embraced tourism and are anxious to expand the industry with the goal of eventually competing with other popular Latin America destinations (Shackley, 1998: 207-208; CI, 2010: 13). Combining Guyana’s wealth of heritage resources with being the only English-speaking country in South America presents a unique advantage for tourism development. During the 1980s and 1990s, tourism activity increased substantially in the country with the addition of a tourism portfolio to the Trade Ministry, multiple private sector enterprises and an umbrella organisation to assist the private sector - the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (Sinclair & Ali, 2006: 93). One interviewee (Interview I2, 2012) commented that after the Tourism and Hospitality Association was formed, “...the Rupununi was one of the main focuses”. The Guyana

Tourism Authority, the national, semi-autonomous governing body for tourism, was established in 2002, adding what Sinclair and Ali (2006: 95) describe as the “...administrative ground...for the tourism take-off”. It was during this time frame that the Rupununi started to move forward with its own progress in tourism development.

Tourism in the Rupununi has its origins in the cattle ranches which have hosted visitors since the 1920s (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 206-207). However, it was around the 1980s that tourism development in the region started to formulate in a more organised manner (*ibid.*). A number of private enterprises that have become mainstays in Rupununi tourism were created in the following decade including the cattle ranch Karanambu (1983) and Rock View Lodge (1993). Since 2000, tourism development has increased emphatically, with 75% of today’s tourism businesses in the region officially opening their doors after this time (CI, 2010: 30). Furthermore, out of the 16 tourism businesses in the Rupununi today, nine of them have opened since 2004 (*ibid.*). These nine businesses are predominantly comprised of several indigenous communities including Surama (2004), Wowetta (2004), Annai (2005), Aranaputa (2005), Nappi (2006), Rewa (2006), Yupukari/Caiman House (2007) and Fair View (2008) (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 206-207).

Rupununi tourism development has been heavily influenced by the work of a few key organisations. Numerous donors have contributed to developing the tourism product while further financial assistance and equally important technical advice came from a local NGO the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (hereafter referred to as Iwokrama), international NGO Conservation International and the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) (Smock, 2008: 240). These three organisations have strong local presences, particularly Iwokrama and the NRDDB which are based and operated in the Rupununi. Iwokrama established an ecotourism programme and river lodge in 2003 as part of their conservation management efforts. They also began a promotional campaign in the adjacent communities to the reserve for the development of “community-based ecotourism” (Bynoe, 2006: 7). Iwokrama and CI have also assisted with workshops and capacity building sessions for Rupununi businesses and communities interested in tourism (CI, 2010: 3; Edwards, 2006: 69). These sessions provided technical assistance and advice for the development of tourism and “...initiated steps towards networking of tourism operations in the region” (CI, 2010: 3).

Iwokrama's and CI's involvement has proven to be a significant step forward in developing tourism in the Rupununi as they sought to demonstrate how tourism could assist with protecting local resources while generating economic benefits (Smock, 2011: 18). This especially caught the attention of local communities who started to realise new value in their local heritage resources and the importance of sustainability and began to create tourism products of their own (Smock, 2008: 24, 231). The first community-based tourism project was set up by Surama (2004), which after its initial success was then followed by several communities throughout the Rupununi (Sub-section 5.4.2) (CI, 2010: 27). These projects, combined with improvements to the road from Georgetown to Lethem and daily flights to Annai, have led to what CI (2010: 27) refers to as "...an impressive quality of tourism initiatives including infrastructure, interpretation, facilities management and food and beverage services" (see also Smock, 2008: 231). This capable tourism framework and infrastructure has now positioned businesses and communities in the Rupununi to allow for an increase in visitors.

### ***5.2.2 Current State of Development***

At present, tourism has evolved to become a highly targeted economic activity for several communities and businesses in the Rupununi. Indeed, one interviewee (Interview I3, 2012) asserted, "As a matter of fact, everything that is done in the Rupununi today has a bearing and linkage to tourism promotion". When asked during the collection of questionnaire data if there was a demand for sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi (Question 9a), an overwhelming 95% of respondents (113) agreed with the remaining 5% unsure and none stating tourism was unwelcome in the region. This finding has been reinforced by the continuous support offered by the region's administration for tourism (Sub-section 5.4.5) as well as the recent onslaught of new tourism enterprises (CI, 2010: 13). One interviewee (Interview P2, 2012) asserted:

*"Tourism development in the Rupununi is now the thing of the day because every village is now focused on how they can get into the business of tourism after seeing the successes of some communities that are already involved in tourism; and it is actually bringing more focus from the world's attention."*

This backing for tourism is most likely attributed to a variety of key benefits (Sub-section 5.3.1) such as increased employment avenues, a push for sustainability by

stakeholders whom value local cultural and natural heritage and the societal improvements attributed with development (e.g. schools, education, health care). The Rupununi has become steadily successful and an icon of tourism in Guyana, marketed as “...the gem of the tourism product” (Interview P3, 2012; see also CI, 2010: 27; Edwards, 2006: 69; Dilly, 2003: 66). Tourism operations in the area have been internationally recognised for their efforts, winning several awards (e.g. Caribbean Excellence in Sustainable Tourism Award, Community Benefit Award) for their work in tourism development (GTA, 2012).

There currently exists a moderately sized tourism framework in the Rupununi. Out of the 16 tourism businesses, only four of them have more than ten years of experience (CI, 2010: 30). Approximately 300 persons are directly employed by tourism enterprises, the majority (63%) of which works part time (ibid). Accommodation options include more than 200 available beds with a further 60 hammock spaces (CI, 2010: 30; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 206-207). Moreover, CI (2010: 30-31) notes that nearly all (94% or 15) tourism businesses plan to expand their business over the next five years with upgrades in accommodation, facilities, product development, training and increased marketing efforts. This infrastructure, united with the available heritage resources, has shaped a product that multiple stakeholders describe as full of ‘potential’ for tourism success (CI, 2010: 27; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 207; CI, 2003: 5; Interview I3, 2012; Interview I5, 2012; Interview P1, 2012; Interview V3, 2012).

Despite the available infrastructure and wealth of resources, there remains a significant amount of “unrealized potential” (CI, 2003: 5). This is primarily because businesses are receiving low quantities of visitors (CI, 2010: 28). Currently, there are around 1,200 to 1,500 leisure visitors to the Rupununi annually who stay for seven to ten days in the area, with one to two nights at individual locations (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 206-207; CI, 2010: 28). While the more established lodges (e.g. Iwokrama, Karanambu, Rock View, Dadanawa) continue to receive steady visitors, other businesses, particularly communities, continue to wait for the solid stream of guests (Smock, 2008: 241). For example, in 2008 more than half (56% or 9/16) of tourism businesses had 100 or fewer guests (CI, 2010: 31). Smock (2008: 241) asserts:

*“Workshops are attended, trails are cut, guides are trained, birds and mammals are identified and lodges are built, and yet still only limited numbers of visitors come. The ‘build it and they will come’ philosophy*

*rarely works and it becomes even more difficult in a country without a steady flow of tourists.”*

Tourism income generated during that same year (2008) amounted to an estimated one million U.S. dollars, which is considered low against its potential (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 207). The vast majority of these visitors come via inbound tour operators who take a percentage of all visitor revenue (CI, 2010: 28-29). However, before revenue and the visitor count can increase, marketing, capacity building and conservation actions are needed to improve the outcome (CI, 2010: 28; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 207). Further expansion of regional tourism businesses will need to consider these factors into their development plans.

Ultimately, tourism in the Rupununi is at a crossroads. It is entering a time where there have been small signs of significant growth, which is only likely to continue. Interviewees described Rupununi tourism as: “blooming...becoming a hot spot to the outside world” (Interview C2, 2012); “...in a state of change...definitely shifting” (Interview M2, 2012); “...shown tremendous progress” (Interview M1, 2012); “...has a lot of potential, has a far way to go” (Interview I3, 2012); and, “...has the potential to be very sustainable and bring in a lot of revenues...I don’t think it’s realized its potential” (Interview I5, 2012). Due to its young state, impacts from tourism have been minimal and therefore growth is seen as the primary objective, and although tourism development does possess significant potential, management frameworks need to be cautious and consider the three main pillars (economic, environmental, socio-cultural) of sustainability. This is discussed more in Chapter Six.

### **5.2.3 ‘Natural’ Visitor Engagement**

*Last frontier, kingdom of nature, wild country, naturally wild – all familiar descriptives that permeate the brochures and travel writings that focus upon Guyana.*

(Sinclair & Ali, 2006: 87)

Tourism in the Rupununi, and Guyana as a whole, has largely been driven by its natural heritage resources (Smock, 2008: vii). The wealth of world-class biodiversity and natural landscapes has evoked a certain sense of place about the Rupununi that creates notions of a ‘pristine’, natural world teeming with exotic wildlife (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 257). Although the culture of local indigenous communities offers an added

element into the tourism product, the primary marketing message sent to residents and potential tourists alike was that tourism in the Rupununi revolved around nature (Sinclair & Ali, 2006: 93). The Rupununi's advantages in wildlife viewing, particularly bird watching, have attracted visitors from all over the world (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 207). Indeed, for the past seven years, bird-watching has been pushed as the primary activity to attract the ecotourism market to the Rupununi (Smock, 2008: 17; CI, 2010: 27). This has resulted in targeted marketing in this niche market, guide training programmes focused on birding and the creation of activities based around bird watching (CI, 2010: 27, 35).

**Table 5.3: Guest participation in activities offered by tourism businesses in the Rupununi**

(CI, 2010: 33)

Activities	% of Businesses	# of Businesses (16 total)
Birding	93.8%	15
Wildlife watching	87.5%	14
Rainforest/nature interpretation	75.0%	12
Indigenous culture	75.0%	12
Walking	68.8%	11
Fishing	68.8%	11
Hiking/trekking	56.3%	9
Horseback riding	56.3%	9
Wilderness expeditions	56.3%	9
Rest/relaxation	50.0%	8
Farm tours/agritourism	50.0%	8
Purchasing arts/crafts	50.0%	8
Educational tours/workshops	50.0%	8
Botany walks/tours	43.8%	7
Boat-based tours	43.8%	7
Volunteer travel experiences	37.5%	6

The concentration on nature tourism has been most evident in the visitor engagement activities offered by most Rupununi attractions (Table 5.3). Birding and wildlife watching have consistently been the most popular activities by visitors since tourism's inception in the area (CI, 2010: 9). CI (2010: 33) report, "It is clear that the number one activity for guests is birding, according to 94% of the lodges". A media stakeholder

(Interview M2, 2012) commented on the birding focus but a need to explore new options: “When we first started, it was birding and so a lot of people focused on birding, so it’s getting people to think outside that box”. Other activities listed by businesses include wildlife watching (88% or 14/16), rainforest/nature interpretation (75% or 12/16) and indigenous culture (75% or 12/16) (ibid). Some of the least popular activities include educational tours (50% or 8/16), botany walks (44% or 7/16) and purchasing arts/crafts (50% or 8/16) (ibid). These activities characterise an industry which focuses on natural heritage resources.

#### 5.2.4 *Community-based Indigenous Eco- Tourism: Finding the Right Brand*

Rupununi tourism is referenced by several titles. It is most often referred to with the topical ‘ecotourism’ label. However, it has also been called ‘indigenous’ and ‘community-based’ tourism (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 179; Sinclair, 2003: 140). Whilst this abundance of brands may be confusing (Section 2.2.3), each holds some truth in their depiction. The following definitions (Table 5.4) are associated with each brand of tourism.

**Table 5.4: Rupununi tourism types and definitions**

Type of Tourism	Definition
<b>Ecotourism</b>	<i>Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (TIES, 1990)</i>
<b>Community-based Tourism</b>	Tourism activities are primarily developed and managed by the local population, which encourages communal participation (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 99; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008: 124)
<b>Indigenous Tourism</b>	Tourism activity in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction (Hinch & Butler, 1996: 9)

While not all 16 tourism business in the Rupununi will fit appropriately within each tourism type, the majority are in fact based in communities, predominantly run, or influenced, by indigenous people and are concerned with environmental conservation and the well-being of local people. These defining attributes are further explained in the remainder of this chapter. The three main tourism types in the Rupununi also fall under a new and growing form of tourism referred to as ‘alternative’ tourism. Under this model tourists are seeking out more authentic and experiential activities that are ‘off the beaten path’ (Sinclair, 2003: 141; Dilly, 2003: 58; CI, 2003: 2). The Rupununi presents a product that seemingly fits under this category where tourism still exists in a young state and maintains that authentic sense of place. An interviewee (Interview V1, 2012) from the voluntary sector stated that the Rupununi “...is ideal for [alternative tourism]” while tourist interviewees described the area as “unspoilt” (Interview T2, 2012) and commented, “...that’s one of the reasons we wanted to come here. Because there has not been a lot of birders come to Guyana and you get a more real experience than when it’s been exploited” (Interview T3, 2012).

In alignment with ecotourism principles, tourism businesses in the Rupununi are nearly all small-scale and nature based. Ecotourism is viewed by stakeholders as an idyllic form of development to pursue as it allows for economic growth while also encouraging the conservation of natural resources and preserving indigenous culture (Edwards, 2006: 69; Smock, 2011: 20; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 164). Smock (2011: 20) states:

*“... ecotourism provides [the forest’s] rich biodiversity a voice. Through ecotourism, people can experience firsthand the forest’s biodiversity, its cultures, its indigenous inhabitants, its ecosystem services, and the current efforts that are being implemented to preserve all of it.”*

Although ecotourism is an appropriate label for many tourism products in the Rupununi, the title is also being misused by communities who wish to further distinguish their product. For example, during data collection, some communities (e.g. Annai, Surama) also referred to their product as ‘cultural’ tourism, which focuses on cultural heritage and is different from the nature-minded ecotourism. Moreover, informal conversations with questionnaire participants in Annai village revealed that they identify their tourism product purely as cultural tourism and not the more common nature-based ecotourism. However, there still remains confusion amongst those directly involved in tourism in the village as to what type of tourism they are promoting. This is most evident in the



juxtaposition of claims by those who were interviewed and the welcome sign for visitors to the village (Figure 5.1). The researcher asserts that the tourism product is in fact more cultural tourism in character than ecotourism, but the popular catchword remains in use by villagers and tourists alike.

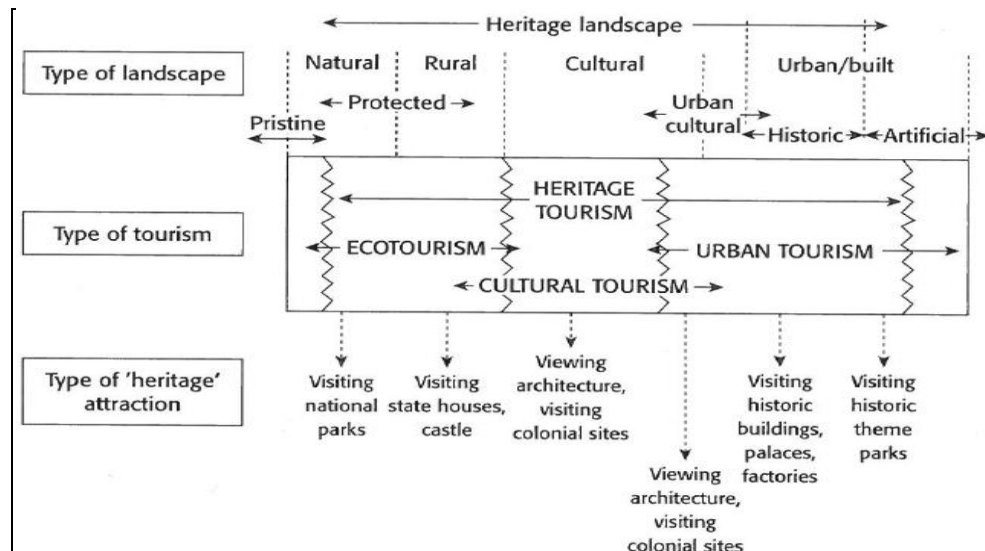


**Figure 5.1: Annai Village Tourism Sign**

Although some communities wish to solely pursue cultural tourism, this does not mean that the link with nature would be absent. On the contrary, while cultural tourism is centred more on cultural heritage, it is quite difficult to separate the natural and cultural heritage resources in locations like the Rupununi. The relationship between culture and nature must remain a key facet of Rupununi attractions, particularly due to the strong dependency local communities have on the natural environment. At this point, this well-known relationship between indigenous culture and nature is effectively demonstrated in tourism attractions in the area. Indeed, 95% (113/119) of questionnaire participants agreed that the cultural attractions in the Rupununi demonstrate a relationship with nature. This is most evident in the guided nature tours that describe the various uses the natural environment have for communities (e.g. hunting, construction, crafts, and medicine).

In their book on heritage tourism, Timothy & Boyd (2003: 9) argue that heritage landscapes navigate across a variety of backgrounds extending from nature-based ecotourism to culturally driven urban tourism (Figure 5.2). This model helps to illustrate the overlapping nature of tourism types involving heritage resources and that they should not be viewed as disjointed, but rather as a corresponding concept (ibid). Therefore, it may be better yet to avoid unnecessary confusion with correctly typecasting Rupununi tourism, and simply refer to it as heritage tourism. It is through

this nomenclature that the full spectrum of heritage resources would be adequately represented through the correct title. The next section (5.3) reviews the specific benefits and challenges that Rupununi stakeholders face.



**Figure 5.2: The Heritage Spectrum: An Overlapping Concept**

(Timothy & Boyd 2003: 9)

### 5.3 Benefits and Challenges

Tourism has been found by many stakeholders to be a general solution to many of the socio-economic adversities of the region. Even though the benefits might be easily identifiable, there are many challenges facing advancement in the sector. Understanding the benefits and challenges the sector faces is necessary in the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the Rupununi tourism structure. This section analyses the benefits of tourism and how they might help to mitigate any development issues through recognised strengths and opportunities. It finishes by then examining what challenges are limiting tourism development, including weaknesses in the framework and threats to progress.

#### 5.3.1 Benefits

Research from this study revealed that creating sustainable livelihoods is the central goal for many stakeholders in developing tourism (Sub-section 7.5.1). This approach ensures that a variety of benefits are achieved, including employment and financial stability, improved access to health services and education, the safeguarding of natural

and cultural heritage resources and the enhancement of socio-cultural capital. Benefits are imperative for tourism development to be successful. An industry professional (Interview I3, 2012) commented that the very "...concept of tourism is to bring benefits to the resident communities; financial, educational, cultural". Another interviewee (Interview V3, 2012) reinforced this claim, arguing:

*"At the end of the day, people want to be able to develop, individually and in their communities, so it has to have benefits. It must be tangible benefits for people on the ground and see its impact, that things are improving in the village, revenue is used to improve healthcare, buy a boat engine, to be able to take people out of the village to the hospital, improvement in health facilities, more money in people's pockets, better facilities for education and tourism."*

At present, tourism in the Rupununi has generated many concrete benefits for stakeholders. This is what several stakeholders consider to be the most logical result based on the area's developmental circumstances such as the lack of economic activities and isolated location (CI, 2003: 5). CI (2010: 5) argues that the isolated location becomes advantageous in attracting the specific niche market of eco-minded tourists. They (2010: 4) further stress that tourism also leads to indirect benefits such as the "provision of local goods and services", which benefits the wider population. An interviewee (Interview M1, 2012) from the media elaborates on this notion:

*"So the income... has become a more communal income now. Because the person who can cook a good tasty dish cooks for the tourists, the person who can do good tour guiding gets part of the income, the person who can prepare the room and do the linen gets a part of the income, the person who can showcase the artistic skill and education of what tourism hospitality has here to offer also does, so there is a more communal business that is being shared with the income. And that is a great plus for us, it's not individualistic anymore where people do the things for themselves but more communal. And why I use the word communal is because that's the kind of living that is experienced in the North Rupununi. A communal sort of business and because of that communal way of living, they actually do everything in that way, work, income, socializing, etc."*

Questionnaire data revealed that 92% (110/119) of participants agree that tourism has created employment for individuals and host communities in the Rupununi. Furthermore, 87% (104/119) of respondents agreed that tourism has brought financial benefits to Rupununi communities. An interviewee (Interview P2, 2012) from the public sector described the specific benefits brought about from tourism, affirming:

*“The benefits are the jobs, things like tour guiding; they have more training on catering, cooking, more infrastructure development in the community. Being that most of the businesses are community owned, the benefits go directly back to the communities so they can actually support the people in the community, like education, health, etc.”*

Benefits from tourism development in the Rupununi can also be found in the protection of heritage resources and the development of socio-cultural capital. Tourism requires heritage resources to operate, and as a result this translates into fostering their protection. Tourism has already influenced environmental conservation initiatives in several villages (discussed further in Chapter 6) and will likely play a central role in the future designation of protected areas, such as the Kanuku Mountains (CI, 2003: 12-13). In addition to the benefit of safeguarding heritage resources, 76% (90/119) of questionnaire participants agreed that tourism has also brought social benefits to Rupununi stakeholders. Interestingly, only 3% (4/119) had felt it had not while the remaining 21% (25/119) (mostly tourists who lack a frame of reference on local circumstances) were unsure. Funnell and Bynoe (2007: 165) argue that social benefits, including the development of social capital, are equally important to the more visible benefits of employment and income.

Social benefits include improved education and healthcare, higher standards of living and the enrichment of human capital through “education and skills training” (Bynoe, 2006: 16). A member of the host community (Interview C2, 2012) affirmed that tourism influences human development “...because through tourism you can build someone’s capacity in the areas of hospitality services, finances, accounting, all these other disciplines”. Several interviewees also spoke of the improved family dynamic resulting from tourism as it now allows for families to stay together instead of the traditional departure by the men to look for mining or logging work (Interview M2, 2012; Interview C4, 2012). Furthermore, 84% (99/119) of stakeholders believed that tourism has promoted a sense of pride about the Rupununi amongst residents and other stakeholders alike, another key socio-cultural benefit of tourism. An industry stakeholder (Interview I2, 2012) supported this, saying for tourism, the benefit is to give “...back pride into their culture, help introduce the future to them in the way that it doesn’t destroy their past”.

Realising these benefits has been made possible by a unique combination of strengths and opportunities outlined in a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis by CI (2010: 37):

### *Strengths*

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- *Only English speaking country in South America*
- *Kaieteur Falls, the world's longest single drop waterfall*
- *Government's avoided deforestation policy*
- *New and "undiscovered" destination*
- *Undisturbed wilderness*
- *Extensive primary rainforest*
- *Diverse and interesting habitats*
- *Rich biodiversity*
- *Endangered wildlife species (e.g., Jaguar, Giant Anteater, Giant River Otters, Black Caiman)*
- *Avifauna diversity, including near-endemic, rare and specialty species*
- *Fauna and flora diversity – primates, butterflies, bats, orchids, trees, Amazonia water lilies, etc.*
- *Rich, authentic indigenous culture*
- *Scientific research and conservation programmes including community-based initiatives*
- *Iwokrama, a national treasure*
- *Accommodating, friendly, hospitable people*
- *Fantastic food: quality, healthy, variety, taste*

### *Opportunities*

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- *Link research, conservation and tourism*
- *Supportive partners willing to cooperate on initiatives*
- *Grants and other project assistance can be obtained*
- *Green season packaging and pricing*
- *Media is interested in Guyana as a tourism destination and for government's climate change international leadership*
- *Takutu Bridge linking Guyana and Roraima, Brazil*
- *Niche tourism market growth opportunities - ecotourism and wildlife watching, birding, eco-indigenous, Equestrian, volunteer conservation, fishing, overland expeditions*

These strengths have heavily influenced the arrival of visitors to the Rupununi and thus are integral in the delivery of benefits. Furthermore, the listed opportunities such as linking of research, conservation and tourism and stakeholder collaboration has the potential to improve the tourism product, thus contributing more social, environmental and economical benefits to stakeholders. In the end, stakeholders understand that benefits are vital to tourism development and the successful delivery of them has made all stakeholders more enthusiastic about the sector's growth.

### 5.3.2 Challenges

As will be discussed in the next sub-sections, sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi faces many current and potential challenges (CI, 2010: 14). As tourism shifts more into being the primary economic activity in the region, these challenges act as significant barriers. These include a combination of high transportation costs, a remote location and poor infrastructure, lack of training, product development, extractive industry interests, stakeholder collaboration, funding and marketing. These challenges and their impact on tourism are analysed below.

#### 5.3.2.1 Funding and Management

The lack of funding for tourism development has limited progress for many communities and businesses. This could potentially be because investors are still timid about investing in a destination which lacks a significant market presence and remains so difficult to reach. An interview (Interview I3, 2012) with a member of the industry revealed:

*“Basically...they are cash-strapped and there is serious convincing to do to convince people to buy in. While some other agencies see it as we would see it, it’s a long term investment for communities to bolster themselves because people are not giving money these days unless they can see longevity of purpose.”*

Other stakeholders discussed the lack of funding as a central challenge as it pertains to purchasing sustainable energy (e.g. solar panels) (Interview M2, 2012) and having an effective management team responsible for Rupununi tourism (Interview I5, 2012). Several stakeholders expressed concern over the lack of effective management on financial resources (Interview C1, 2012), business administration (Interview C4, 2012) and service delivery (Interview I1, 2012; Interview I4, 2012; Interview I5, 2012).

#### 5.3.2.2 Remote Location, Transportation and High Costs

In his guidebook (only one that is published and dedicated solely to Guyana) on Guyana, Smock (2008: 241) stresses, “Communication and transportation can be logistical nightmares in the Rupununi”. In congruence, an interviewee (Interview V2, 2012) affirmed that these two issues make up “...40% of the problems” facing sustainable tourism development. As discussed above, the region is isolated and the lone road providing access, although improving, remains in a very basic state that is

only manageable via 4x4 and a few crafty ‘mini-bus’ drivers providing public transport. This combination of factors has resulted in high transportation costs which limits tourist numbers, particularly from the national and regional market and is “...one of the main challenges” to tourism development (Interview P2, 2012; see also Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 15; CI, 2010: 14). Tourists that were interviewed also revealed their surprise with the high cost of transportation (Interview T1, 2012) and the ‘catch-22’ in the need to improve the road, stating:

*“Some of the challenges are also some of the beauty of the place. The road is clearly a great limitation. But if you pave it, it will be a disaster. If you pave it, you will have...more tourists, but for someone like me, I wouldn’t be interested”*  
(Interview T3, 2012).

Another interviewee (Interview V4, 2012) commented that the road “...is a great opportunity, but we have to manage it carefully...let us use the road and not let the road use us”. Plans to pave the road are continually being discussed and will certainly increase tourism and general traffic through the area, a future challenge that will require effective management structures (*Stabroek News*, 2010)

Referring back to the high transportation costs, this has meant that the overall price of the tourist experience is elevated because it becomes expensive “...to move goods...to deliver training...to build...” (Interview V1, 2012). Tour operators have suggested that tourism prices in Guyana are 15 – 20% higher than major competitors in Latin and South American countries (CI, 2010: 9-10). Multiple stakeholders agreed this is a key limitation as tourists are more likely to choose another competitor destination. A member of the media (Interview M2, 2012) stated, “The costs in Guyana... it’s expensive as a destination. So it’s getting people aware of it, and then convincing them or giving them reasons to pay a premium to go there”. In this instance, marketing becomes vital to success although it remains one of biggest challenges for the Rupununi product.

### **5.3.2.3 Marketing**

Marketing and the provision of information to tourists exists as one of, if not the, main challenges for tourism development in the Rupununi (CI, 2010: 28). A community member (Interview C2, 2012) concisely affirmed this view, stating, “I think one of the biggest challenges is...for some communities, marketing. It might be there, the product

is there, but it's not adequately marketed". Although there is currently a push for increased marketing, the region's stakeholders have very limited marketing resources (CI, 2010: 9; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 207). Moreover, there is a distinct lack of information on the Rupununi product available to potential visitors, along with poor packaging and "weak branding" (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 6). All of these factors have contributed to a poor placement and a low profile within international tourism markets (CI, 2010: 28). Stakeholders assert that resolving these issues will require "creating awareness of where it is and why people should...go there" (Interview M2, 2012) and "a fixed focus for marketing...having a brand that people can buy into, people understand" (Interview V1, 2012).

#### 5.3.2.4 Further challenges

Additional challenges revealed by stakeholders and also found in the literature include stakeholder collaboration, product development and the threat of large, extractive industries (e.g. mining, oil). Several interviewees described the need for improved collaboration amongst all stakeholders with the public sector, specifically on issues such as transportation (Interview I1, 2012; Interview V2, 2012) and marketing (Interview C2, 2012). Product development has also proven to be a key challenge in promoting the Rupununi experience as it "...doesn't deliver what it promises" (Interview I5, 2012). An industry professional (*ibid*; see also CI, 2010: 37) argued:

*"I think that you could get people paying a lot more and having a much better experience than they do. ... A lot of its promotion is wildlife and all that and it doesn't deliver that it really needs product development. ...There's no really in depth educational programs ...If you look at what is going on with experiential tourism in other destinations in Latin America, there is a lot better product, in terms of how it is delivered, the interpretation aspect of it, the learning, the connection to the people, the staging of it, all of it, the really high quality product".*

This has meant that while the Rupununi may possess world-class heritage resources, there remains a challenge in providing quality visitor engagement through in-depth interpretation and educational experiences (CI, 2010: 37). Many other destinations offer more consistent viewing opportunities for many of the same wildlife species, so enhancing the experience and educational aspects will assist greatly in improving the product (CI, 2010: 9). Anticipated challenges for the future will involve the paving of the Georgetown-Lethem road, which is likely to bolster interest and activity from extractive industries (CI, 2010: 14). Drilling for petroleum, large-scale agriculture and



mining are all potential threats in the region, which has a shortage of protected areas (CI, 2010: 9). A voluntary sector interviewee (Interview V4, 2012) contended that if these industries begin development in the Rupununi, communities will “...really need to have a plan, make sure they have their rules and regulations for people coming into their communities”. CI (2010: 14) argues that the future of sustainable tourism will rely on the communities’ abilities to do this and also to enforce the already present laws regarding the protection of heritage resources.

#### **5.4 *In-Situ* Stakeholders**

Tourism stakeholders in the Rupununi are comprised of host communities, private businesses and non-governmental organisations from the voluntary sector. As discussed above, there are a total of 16 tourism businesses in the Rupununi (Table 5.5), eight of which are community-based enterprises. The remaining eight are a mixture of privately owned and operated businesses, with the one exception being Community and Tourism Services (CATS). This is a joint initiative between a host community (Surama), Rock View Lodge, Iwokrama and a tour operator based in Georgetown (Wilderness Explorers). This section reviews the stakeholders located within the Rupununi region and analyses their role in tourism development.

**Table 5.5: Sixteen Rupununi Tourism Businesses**

(CI, 2010: 30)

<i>Rupununi Attractions / Tour Operators</i>
<b>Annai Eco-Tours</b>
<b>Aranaputa Eco-Basin Tours</b>
<b>Bushmasters</b>
<b>Community and Tourism Services (CATS) / ATTA Rainforest Lodge</b>
<b>Fair View Village</b>
<b>Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre</b>
<b>Karanambu Lodge</b>
<b>Maipaima Lodge at Nappi</b>
<b>Rewa Eco-Lodge</b>
<b>Rock View Lodge</b>
<b>Rupununi Learners Incorporated / Caiman House at Yupukari</b>
<b>Rupununi River Drifters</b>

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**Rupununi Trails**

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**Savannah Inn**

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**Surama Village Eco Tourism**

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**Wowetta Kwanru Tours**

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#### **5.4.1 Host Communities**

Communities' involvement and empowerment are vital aspects of sustainable tourism development. Their participation ensures that they receive benefits from tourism development as the "...local stewards of the resources" (CI, 2010: 3; see also Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 226). In turn, this is likely to promote their ongoing connection to the sustainable development of heritage resources and industry as a whole (CI, 2010: 3). Presently, there are ten communities in the Rupununi with a vested interest in tourism development. Eight of these already have 'products' that operate at various levels of development, with the remaining two considering the option. Furthermore, Funnell and Bynoe (2007: 169-170) state that all Amerindian communities located within, and neighbouring, the Iwokrama reserve have, or are planning to, initiate tourism projects. This progression has been possible through community will-power intermixed with assistance from Iwokrama, the NRDDDB and various other donor agencies (Smock, 2008: 241). Communities have been encouraged by the initial success of Surama and the ongoing support from stakeholders to develop tourism as a way to sustain their way of living (*Explore Guyana*, 2011: 12). Ultimately, there will be opportunities for most communities to be linked with sustainable tourism (CI, 2010: 27).

To date, Rupununi communities have been highly involved in tourism development. Seventy five percent (89/119) of questionnaire participants agreed that host communities are empowered in making tourism decisions in the Rupununi, with only 9% (11/119) feeling they were not. The remaining 16% (19/119) were unsure and were largely made up of tourists who, again, lacked the sufficient knowledge to accurately comment. According to CI (2010: 30), Amerindians are highly involved in Rupununi tourism. They (*ibid*) assert:

*"The data reveals that there is a very high rate of Amerindian participation in tourism in the Rupununi. Half of the entities are Amerindian-owned and most of them employ Amerindians. All of the businesses indicated that 60%*

*or more of their employers are Amerindian while 13% of them reported 95% or more Amerindian employees.”*

A member of the industry (Interview I5, 2012) supported this claim, affirming, “I think tourism development has gone better in the Rupununi than most regions because communities have a lot of control over it”.

Interviewed tourists were also able to take notice of the high involvement of communities in tourism and their communal lifestyles in general. A local stakeholder indicated that business is run communally because “...they actually do everything in that way” (Interview M1, 2012). In agreement, a tourist (Interview T2, 2012) stated:

*“It seems very unique. I have been traveling in most countries in South America and seen ecotourism in most places. And I am really impressed with this, because as I understand it, it is very community-based which is quite different. ...Here I can feel the communal spirit.”*

In their comprehensive report on community-based tourism development in the Rupununi, CI (2010) assessed all ten of the community enterprises and ranked them according to their level of market readiness. Ranking was divided into three tiers which are explained in Table 5.6. Further descriptions and current stages of development of these communities are provided in the following two sub-sections (5.4.2 & 5.4.3). The goal of providing these descriptions is to give the reader a heightened sense of the leadership and resources found within the various communities.

**Table 5.6: Community-based Tourism Businesses.**

Adapted from Conservation International (2010: 29-30)

Tier	Communities	Description
1	Surama, Yupukari, Nappi, Rewa	These communities have made significant investments in tourism infrastructure and all have sufficient natural and cultural resources to become a destination in their own right.
2	Annai, Fair View, Wowetta, Aranaputa	These communities need to make significant investments to develop their products, for access to a much larger market and stream of tourists.

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3	Kumu and Rupunau	These communities currently do not regularly offer products to tourists, but do have an interest in doing so in the future
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#### **5.4.2 Tier One: Surama, Rewa, Nappi and Yupukari**

The communities within tier one are already experiencing a consistent influx of international tourists each year (CI, 2010: 29). They have each shown impressive initiative in starting and maintaining tourism projects and while although market ready, still require additional effort to enhance the experience for visitors. A consistently positive experience is likely to generate more word-of-mouth marketing and repeat business, thus adding to the sustainability of the enterprises. Improvements to community tourism projects in this tier lie in the need for product development; more specifically interpretation and equipping guides with more knowledge about the flora, fauna, cultural heritage and topical issues (ibid). Surama, the flagship of community-based tourism in the Rupununi, is described in the next sub-section.

##### **5.4.2.1 Surama**

Surama is located about 29 kilometres from Annai and has a population of approximately 300 residents, most of which are Makushi and still live traditional lifestyles (CI, 2010: 15). Surama was the first community-based tourism enterprise in the Rupununi (2004) and today stands as its flagship while “moving towards being a leader in the area” (Interview M2, 2012; see also CI, 2010: 62; Smock, 2008: 234). Created by its dynamic leader, Sydney Allicock, the community project began in 1998 when various private tour operators, the NRDDDB and Iwokrama encouraged the community to consider tourism as a way of creating sustainable livelihoods for its residents (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 172; CI, 2010: 16). It was hoped that tourism would also assist with revitalising Makushi culture which is facing threats from increased visitors and changing patterns in lifestyles (discussed further in Chapter 6) (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 58). After training workshops on key tenets of the industry (e.g. hospitality, marketing, tour guiding), Surama has steadily established itself as a key destination in the Rupununi with several experiences to keep visitors engaged.

Surama's main attractions include bush walks, birding, wildlife-viewing and cultural tours (e.g. school, church, cassava project) and performances (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 172; Smock, 2008: 236; Chan, 2012: 26; CI, 2010: 15). The performances include traditional songs, dance and stories and help to showcase the cultural identity of the village (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 58; CI, 2010: 15). Performances are also centered around a cultural exchange with guests where tourists are encouraged to interact and share their culture with community members in a "two-way learning process" (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 58; see also Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 172; Bynoe, 2006: 8). Seeing local residents smile during their colourful and energetic performances of local songs and dances signalled a strong sense of pride amongst the community.

Tourism activities are managed through the village council, and more specifically a tourism committee (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 58-59). The committee is responsible for representing the community and also communicating with the NRDDDB and the Surama Advisory Development Council (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007:174; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 59; Lynch, 2012: 52). Tourism decisions are discussed first with communities and agreed upon before the management committee carries them out (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 173). Funnell & Bynoe (2007: 174) argue that at least two-thirds of households felt they had been active participants in ecotourism discussions and decisions. As a result, approximately 90% of community residents are in favour of the project (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 59-60). Interview respondents also spoke of Surama's strong community involvement and leadership, with a member from the public sector (Interview P3, 2012) stating:

*"I think the drive they have is about the community coming together as a whole. Basically it's one family, a very large family at that, but it's one family and they found a way to make a good living from something they have to offer."*

The tourism project employs around 20 persons on a part-time and rotational basis (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 58-59; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 173). This allows for the continuation of traditional practices such as farming, handicraft, fishing and hunting (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 58-59). An interviewee (Interview C4, 2012) also stated that this allows people to "...look after their homes and children" as well. Tourism roles include those directly involved (e.g. tour guides, boat operators, cooks) and indirectly involved (e.g. farmers, fishermen) who provide provisions for tourists (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 59; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 173).

Measurements of success for Surama includes increased employment options for residents, the revitalisation of Makushi culture and environmental conservation (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 62; CI, 2010: 15; Bynoe, 2006: 17). Success has been possible because of the community's strong leadership and understanding that resource conservation is important in the sustainable development of the community (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 60; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 172). Members of the community have realised, through constant education and awareness programmes, that their livelihoods are dependent on resource conservation and voluntarily have made an effort to reduce their "exploitation of the forests" (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 172,178). In addition, Funnell & Bynoe (2007: 179) argue that sustainability is more feasible for Surama's tourism enterprise because the governance structure is dedicated to community and works to ensure that tourism does not "...monopolize other livelihood activities". It is worth mentioning that although the project has been successful, Surama still struggles to attract significant tourist numbers (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 174). Informal conversations with community members about this during data collection revealed that while increased visitors would provide more income and opportunities for residents, the slow rise of tourism is allowing management to enhance their product and understanding of the industry (see also CI, 2010: 17). Nonetheless, Surama remains a role model for other communities as they move forward with community-based tourism development due to their ongoing success in creating a sustainable tourism model that is supported by the community (CI, 2010: 15).

#### **5.4.2.2 Rewa, Nappi and Yupukari**

The isolated village of Rewa, accessible only via boat, is located where two major rivers (Rewa and Rupununi) converge to create an area of rich biodiversity which provides an "off the beaten path" experience for visitors (Smock, 2008: 249; MRU, 1996: 39). There are approximately 210 residents, most of which are Makushi (CI, 2010: 17). Rewa's main tourism attractions lie in its natural surroundings which are starting to attract adventurous fishermen, birders, nature enthusiasts, conservation organisations and researchers alike who are keen to help protect the area's natural resources (CI, 2010: 17; Smock, 2008: 250). An interviewee from the industry (Interview I3, 2012) described some of the wildlife one can see at Rewa, including "...anacondas, the largest black caimans, jaguars, armadillos, anteaters... some of the rarer species..." because at this remote location "...wildlife is more visible". The village's tourism project started in 2005 and is now considered as "one of the rising stars within Guyana's ecotourism

industry” (Smock, 2011: 18). Tourism has assisted in generating awareness amongst villagers about the value of sustainability and protecting their natural resources and is discussed further in Chapters Six through Eight (Smock, 2008: 250; CI, 2010: 17). Ensuring that this awareness and subsequent valuing of the natural environment continues will depend on increasing visitor numbers through marketing, which CI (2010: 61) stresses is a “...key factor for Rewa since it could quickly be ready to host many more visitors than it is currently receiving”. However, the village has no marketing resources, or strategies, in place and most marketing is done by word-of-mouth aside from the promotion by a few tour operators in Georgetown (CI, 2010: 18). The area has also been targeted by companies from the extractive industry (oil exploration, mining, logging) which could potentially deter tourism development (CI, 2010: 17).

Nappi is a larger village (1,500 residents) and is located in central Rupununi (CI, 2010: 19). The community’s tourism business also started in 2005 and is considered to be a “top-notch” ecotourism destination (Smock, 2008: 261). There is a mixture of natural and cultural resources available for tourism development, but there is a distinctive need for a survey to collate this information and create interpretation (CI, 2010: 57). After this, marketing will also be vital for the project’s success and will need to be a focus for the managing committee who currently has no strategy in place (ibid).

Yupukari is an Amerindian village in north-central Rupununi and home to around 500 residents. Community members continue to live very traditional lifestyles and there are numerous artisans and crafters who make a variety of products (CI, 2010: 62; Smock, 2008: 257-258). The tourism product for Yupukari has developed alongside the Caiman House, a research project initiated (2005) by an American studying the Black Caiman which attracted the interest of several visitors (CI, 2010: 20). Management of the Caiman House serves as the governing committee for tourism and they conduct the marketing through their website ([www.rupununilearners.org](http://www.rupununilearners.org)) (CI, 2010: 20). CI (2010: 62) assert that a key tourism draw and source of revenue for community members could exist in the creation of a craft shop in the community, which could provide a venue for selling items to tourists.

### 5.4.3 Tier Two: Annai, Wowetta, Fair View and Aranaputa

Tier two communities have attractive and accessible heritage resources, but they require improved management and investment from residents (CI, 2010: 30). For example, the village of Annai (450 residents) in the northern savannas of the Rupununi has all the necessary resources (e.g. cultural presentations, architecture, craft, displays) for a successful cultural tourism product but these have not been fully developed and defined by community members (CI, 2010: 66). At present, tourists visit via Rock View Lodge for village tours but a more concentrated effort from the tourism committee could produce a tourism product that would be the most important in the Rupununi for showcasing local culture (CI, 2010: 65; Smock, 2008: 240). Personal observations noted that visits to the village are mostly informal and self-guided although a guided tour can be arranged. Whilst the village does possess a great opportunity for tourism development, there seems to be little visitation by tourists most likely due to poor marketing and the need to firmly identify the product. Whilst there are definitive cultural features/products, there is no consistency in their availability for visitors. Fair View is another community tourism product which is reportedly culturally-based although there is no tourism infrastructure or clear identification of the product by the governing committee in the village (CI, 2010: 25-26). Visitors to the village are all from the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre, who manages the village's marketing as well.

Aranaputa and Wowetta both have tourism products that are mostly nature-based. Aranaputa is centered around the Clarence Mountain Nature Trail which it has subsequently converted into a community conservation area (CI, 2010: 23). Wowetta's main tourism product is the nesting site for the Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola rupicola*), a key species sought by birders. Both communities possess distinct cultural features, including a vibrant cultural group in Aranaputa and the mythical-based Shock Pond in Wowetta, that could potentially be developed for tourism but remains un-utilised (CI, 2010: 25, 66). Neither community has any marketing resources available or strategies (CI, 2010: 25). The remaining two communities in Tier 3 (Rupunau and Kumu) are considering tourism, but very little, if any, tourism infrastructure exists at this point (CI, 2010: 30). The next sub-section now turns the focus from community tourism enterprises to a key local organisation which is integral in the region's heritage conservation and preservation efforts.



#### 5.4.4 *Iwokrama*

The Iwokrama reserve consists of nearly one million acres of rainforest in the northern Rupununi. This protected area is managed by the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, whose administration offices are located in Georgetown while the heart of its operations lie at the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre in the reserve itself. Iwokrama's mission is "...to provide models for how to conserve and sustainably use tropical rainforests to provide ecological, social and economic benefits to local, national and international communities" (Iwokrama, 2003: 1). The idea behind Iwokrama had existed since 1989 when the then current president of Guyana (Desmond Hoyt) offered this large tract of conservable rainforest to the international community (Fernandes & Ali, 2006: 101). It was then formalised with the passing of the *Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development Act* into law in 1996 (Smock, 2008: 214-215). Today, Iwokrama has become internationally renowned for its unique sustainable development approach that combines traditional and scientific resource-based knowledge (Smock, 2011: 18).

Iwokrama's approach to sustainable development is founded in its partnerships and collaborations with national and international institutions and most especially local communities (Iwokrama, 2003: 10). Today, Iwokrama is considered to be "...a world leader in collaborative natural resource management with indigenous communities" (Iwokrama, 2003: 8). Iwokrama's success has been possible due to this high level of stakeholder engagement where the local communities have played a central role in the decision-making processes of the organisation (Wihak, 2009: 20; Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 253). Iwokrama has developed a set of guiding principles that recognise:

- *the importance of seeking out appropriate partners for collaboration and cooperation;*
- *the adoption of a participatory approach that encourages active engagement with local communities and other stakeholder groups;*
- *the importance of developing as a self-sustaining enterprise, with environmentally friendly and socially responsible products;*
- *the value of indigenous knowledge and practices; the need for capacity building; the provision for education and training; and, the importance of being involved in national and international forestry policy development (Iwokrama, 2004).*

These principles ensure that the interests of local indigenous communities are considered and that they are empowered in decisions which affect their lifestyles. Much of Iwokrama's functioning relationship with Amerindian communities has principally been done through the North Rupununi District Development Board, which is discussed further in the following sub-section (5.4.5). Corsane and Bowers (2012: 255) assert that the working partnership between the two "...is more holistic in character and attempts to reduce the Western way of thinking". It must also be noted that Iwokrama has benefitted from its involvement with local communities as their local ecological knowledge has proven to be quite useful in creating management structures (Iwokrama, 2003: 8). Collaboration with communities is reflected consistently through Iwokrama's operations. For example, approximately 70% of Iwokrama's employees are members of indigenous communities (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 21) and all major decisions are reviewed with the NRDDDB before being carried out. Furthermore, the output of literature from Iwokrama constantly states that communities are their "...partners...[and] play a key role in Iwokrama's success" (Iwokrama, 2008: 5).

Through its educational outreach programmes and financial assistance, Iwokrama has encouraged many Rupununi communities to initiate tourism projects and influenced even more on the importance of sustainability (Iwokrama, 2009: 14; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 197; Wihak, 2009: 20; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 179; Iwokrama, 2003: 18). As Fernandes and Ali (2006: 101) assert, "The importance of Iwokrama is unquestionable, whether from the perspective of the smallest North Rupununi village or the larger, global community". Iwokrama has also provided opportunities for capacity building including tour guide training, flora and fauna identification and ecological issues and the management of ecotourism businesses (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 177). One key output from Iwokrama has been its role in facilitating the Junior Wildlife clubs which teach children (8-18 years of age) about natural resource management and the promotion of traditional Amerindian lifestyles (Iwokrama, 2003: 26). Junior Wildlife Clubs are found in 14 communities and have more than 300 members (Iwokrama, 2003: 26).

Iwokrama's own tourism product is found at the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre which has been hosting visitors for over a decade. It is one of the more popular tourist sites in the Rupununi with activities focusing on wildlife viewing, birding, nature-walks, cultural tours and ancient petroglyphs (Lynch, 2012: 51). The centre is also home to a wealth of cutting edge research projects based in the reserve itself which

encompass everything from hydrology to biodiversity monitoring and biomass mapping (Iwokrama, 2009: 8). Iwokrama also has several research partnerships with universities, institutions, the NRDDDB and numerous Rupununi communities centred on diverse topics in the savannas and forests alike.

#### **5.4.5 North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDDB)**

Formed in 1996 by communities of the northern Rupununi, the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDDB) is a non-governmental and non-profit, community-based organisation that plays a principal role in all development to the area (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 226-227; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 63). The NRDDDB has a governing board and representation from each of the 16 communities in the north Rupununi including: the elected village leaders (*toshaos*), another elected community member from each village, an elder, a youth group leader and a woman leader (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 63-64; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 226). It was initially created as a legal establishment to link the communities of the north Rupununi with Iwokrama, government agencies and all other institutions interested in community development in the region (Iwokrama, 2003: 25; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 63).

The board's mission is to represent its communities "...with stakeholders to secure the preservation of indigenous culture, the flow of economic benefits to the communities and the sustainable utilisation of community natural resources" (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 63-64). The NRDDDB exists as an instrument for community leaders to plan, identify and discuss socio-economic development projects, to provide funding where possible and review the benefits and roles for people of the north Rupununi (Smock, 2008: 240; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 63). The NRDDDB has been successful because of several key factors including "...strong leadership and cooperative approach; flexibility; commitment and support to volunteers...community consultation" (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 67). Watkins *et al.* (2010: 227) assert, "The NRDDDB and the village councils are the most important institutions for sustainable development and conservation in the northern Rupununi".

Iwokrama and the NRDDDB have shared a close relationship during their history together. Iwokrama has been involved from the NRDDDB's inception, offering advisory support in its initial stages and now the NRDDDB has a place on Iwokrama's International Board of Trustees (Smock, 2008: 240; Iwokrama, 2003: 25). Furthermore,

the NRDDDB monitor Iwokrama's activities to ensure they comply with the customs and lifestyles of Amerindian communities. The partnership between the two organisations was formalised with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2003 and a Collaborative Management Agreement in 2005. Specific key codes of practice listed in these agreements state that Iwokrama will "...respect community protocols, customs and traditions; work with the NRDDDB to minimize potential negative social or and cultural impacts from Iwokrama activities; and guarantee positive benefits and outcomes from business enterprises and other activities" (Iwokrama, 2004). The working relationship has also empowered host communities by letting them decide on the composition and method of development in the region (Bowers & Corsane, 2012: 206-207).

Several important groups have been created out of the activities of the NRDDDB. This includes the Bina Hill Institute, the Makushi Research Unit (MRU), and the Community Tourism Board (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 227). The Bina Hill Institute, aside from providing the head office for the NRDDDB, has started training programmes for post-secondary school children and adults (Wihak, 2009: 24; Iwokrama, 2003: 25; Smock, 2008: 240; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 227). The Bina Hill Institute is primarily concerned with the preservation of local culture (Figure 5.3), enhancing local capacity for economic development and natural resource management (Wihak, 2009: 24). The MRU is a research-based group driven by women from the communities who document and research Makushi language, culture, traditional skills and nature-culture relationships. The Community Tourism Board has become increasingly important as tourism becomes a targeted activity for several communities and serves to promote and assist with the development of their products (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 255). The next sub-section finishes this segment on *in-situ* stakeholders by reviewing the local businesses which are not community-owned but remain a vital part of the regional tourism industry.



**Figure 5.3: Local villager teaching basket weaving to youths at the Bina Hill Institute**

#### **5.4.6 Industry**

Other key stakeholders from the industry that are not community-run enterprises include Karanambu Lodge, Rock View Lodge and Dadanawa Ranch. Dadanawa serves as the primary tourism destination in the southern Rupununi and is considered to be one of Guyana's more isolated tourism attractions (Smock, 2008: 276). At 1,700 square miles, it is the largest ranch in South America and offers traditional ranch life and wildlife viewing as its main tourism products (Gimlette, 2012: 60; Smock, 2008: 275-276). Rock View Lodge is a privately owned operation that has traditionally served as the nucleus for north Rupununi tourism due to its central location in Annai (Smock, 2008: 237; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 175). The lodge has provided employment for several members of surrounding communities and has done much to build their capacity on tourism operations (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 175). Karanambu Lodge is arguably the oldest tourism establishment in the Rupununi and is today considered one of the top five destinations in all of South America according to *Outside Magazine (Explore Guyana,*

2012: 69; see also Gimlette, 2012: 58; Shackley, 1998: 208). Concerning its tourism product, Smock (2008: 253) asserts, “A visit to Karanambu largely revolves around nature”. In particular, tourism is focused on giant otters and the conservation project established by owner Diane McTurk for their protection (Smock, 2008: 252; Shackley, 1998: 208; Chan, 2012: 26; *Explore Guyana*, 2012: 69; CI, 2003: 12). All three establishments are primarily run by indigenous people and are actively involved in all issues regarding tourism development in the Rupununi.

## **5.5 *Ex-Situ Stakeholders***

This section describes the stakeholders that are located outside of the Rupununi but continue to have strong connections and interest in the region’s tourism development. The majority of these organisations are based in Georgetown while certain groups (e.g. tourists, media) have representation abroad. Apart from the obvious host community, each of Swarbrooke’s (1999) (Section 2.4) remaining five stakeholder sectors is represented off site. These sectors will be briefly explored to identify and analyse the role of their organisations in the sustainable development of tourism in the Rupununi.

### **5.5.1 *Public Sector***

Public sector stakeholders that are tied to Rupununi tourism development predominantly include three key government agencies: the Ministry for Tourism, Industry and Commerce, the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA). The Ministry for Tourism, Industry and Commerce plays a major role in the development of legislation which involves tourism development in the Rupununi and Guyana as a whole. The GTA is a constitutional, semi-autonomous organisation whose primary responsibility is to promote the sustainable development of tourism in Guyana including marketing (GTA, 2012). On the GTA’s role within the Rupununi specifically, a member from the organisation (Interview P1, 2012) commented, “We’ve always had this close relationship and continue at the tourist board to work and improve and develop the product there”. The MoAA serves to enhance the quality of Amerindian life and is concerned with all development in Guyana that involves indigenous communities (MoAA, 2012). There is also public sector representation from several foreign government agencies which have provided funding and support to the Rupununi, including the United States’ Agency for International

Development (US AID) which has been involved and funded numerous tourism projects in the region.

### **5.5.2 Industry**

Inbound tour operators in Georgetown are currently the most important business avenue for Rupununi tourism businesses (CI, 2010: 35). CI (2010: 35) report that the majority of businesses receive 45% or more of their visitors from inbound tour operators while six of them said the operators are responsible for 80% of their business. Currently, there are at least six inbound tour operators in Georgetown with Wilderness Explorers serving as the lead having developed several partnerships with Rupununi business including Surama, Rewa, Iwokrama, Rock View and more. These inbound operators have industry links with several international tour operators based in different countries worldwide who also send travellers to the region. Due to their high level of involvement in Rupununi tourism operations, inbound tour operators must be considered in all matters that relate to the local industry.

### **5.5.3 Voluntary Sector**

There are several organisations within the voluntary sector that have been heavily involved in tourism development in the Rupununi. This includes the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG), the WWF and CI. THAG was created in 1991 to represent all tourism related businesses in Guyana (*Explore Guyana*, 2006: 5). The organisation has established an alliance with the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and the GTA to develop and improve the Rupununi tourism product including the provision of marketing and hospitality training (*Explore Guyana*, 2006: 5). WWF and CI both serve as promoters and protectors of heritage resources in Guyana. In particular, CI (2003: 10) asserts that its main goal is the "...long term conservation of Guyana's natural and cultural resources". Both organisations have been involved in establishing conservation projects, pushing for the protection of key local habitats including the Kanuku Mountains and working with local communities on tourism development. CI's work on the Rupununi Community Tourism Blueprint has been the seminal report on all issues related to tourism development in the Rupununi and has done much to identify the benefits, challenges and products of businesses and communities.

#### 5.5.4 Media

Media interest in Rupununi tourism exists on local, national and international levels. Locally, Radio Paiwomak provides northern communities with news and events for four hours a day in Makushi and English (Wihak, 2009: 24). As approximately 85 - 90% of homes in the region have radios, the broadcasts can be an influential tool in the construction of social cohesion as well as language preservation (Wihak, 2009: 24). On a national level, there are several media outlets including various newspaper publishers (e.g. *Stabroek News*, *Guyana Chronicle*) and *NCN*, a multi-media organisation that publishes newspaper articles as well as radio and television programmes. Representatives from these organisations will occasionally contribute articles or broadcasts on issues affecting tourism development in the Rupununi. However, it must be noted that the researcher observed through multiple informal conversations during questionnaire distribution that there was a distinct lack of knowledge on the Rupununi, especially concerning tourism development. Most media stakeholders attributed this to the fact that many of them rarely travel to the region, if ever, due to the high costs and lack of transportation options and also the lack of information available on the Rupununi. International media stakeholders include an assortment of travel writers, media conglomerates and independent film makers. To date, there is only one printed travel guide book for Guyana, Smock's (2008) *Guyana*, which remains an important resource for tourists and marketing the Rupununi (CI, 2010: 74).

Attracting media stakeholders to the Rupununi remains a significant avenue for marketing the area and raising its profile (CI, 2010: 71-75). This understanding of media importance was also recognised in those interviewed. For example, a member of the public sector (Interview P1, 2012) commented:

*“The media, the value and coverage we’ve leveraged from publications and travel articles and from productions from the BBC, who recently completed a 10 part series in Guyana, a lot of that was done in the Rupununi. So that helps to create more awareness of the destination, of a place called the Rupununi...”*

CI (2010: 71-75) also partially attribute the recent rise in awareness on the region to the filming of the BBC's *Lost Land of the Jaguar* TV series which was viewed by millions of travellers. In the end, the media exists as a powerful instrument in creating awareness amongst local, national and international communities on the heritage resources of the Rupununi and in turn inspiring the growth of tourism.



### 5.5.5 Tourists

The importance of tourists is clearly recognised but it is their constantly shifting values and expectations that create challenges for local stakeholders trying to develop attractive products. Understanding the different backgrounds of tourists and their desires is vital to ensuring tourism development is sustainable. Rupununi tourists can be categorised into four main clusters: tour groups that come through tour operators such as Wilderness Explorers and internationally-based ones such as SAGA, independent wildlife enthusiasts, business travellers and backpackers (Lang *et al.*, 2009: 39). Furthermore, nearly all tourism business in the Rupununi (94% or 15) assert that the majority of their visitors are from "...leisure tour groups or leisure fully-independent travellers" (CI, 2010: 32). In the Rupununi, the majority of tourists are from the United Kingdom (half of businesses report that more than 50% of their visitors are British), most likely because the country's commonwealth history and concentrated marketing efforts by national stakeholders (CI, 2010: 28). The USA, Canada, and the Caribbean are also important markets for the Rupununi (CI, 2010: 31). According to the questionnaire data, most visitors to the Rupununi also seem to fit into a certain demographic: educated, nature enthusiast and above the age of 40. Watkins *et al.* (2010: 206-207) agree that most visitors are primarily nature lovers and bird watchers; a point reiterated during an interview with an industry member:

*"So far we have a good relationship with our tourists because the type of tourists we are dealing with are not coming to destroy the environment, they are nature lovers, want to see the rainforest and protect everything. So far we have had a good relationship because they left no marks when they leave. I'd say it's good up to now, until we have somebody throwing papers, breaking, cutting and peeling, that would be a different story."* (Interview I4, 2012)

According to CI (2010: 33), 75% (12/16) of businesses reported that the majority of visitors are over 36 years-old with the most important age group being 36 to 59 years old. This is supported by findings from this research project, which found that 69% (38/55) of tourist participants in the questionnaire were aged 40 and above. In addition, all tourists at least possessed a bachelor's degree which indicates a higher level of education than any other stakeholder group in this study. Understanding the profile of these tourists can dictate the development of tourism. For example, knowing that tourists tend to be older in age and nature enthusiasts can help communities in the

design of their products by potentially including more comfortable accommodation and attractions that promote the conservation of nature.

## 5.6 Conclusions

This chapter set out to identify and elaborate on the resources and actors involved in Rupununi tourism. Doing so contributes to understanding the tourism structure which is a necessary step in answering the research question. For example, revealing that host communities are highly empowered in tourism decisions enables the reader to start considering areas where ecomuseum principles already exist within the Rupununi tourism structure. However, also illuminating issues where ecomuseum principles might support its sustainable development have been highlighted in this chapter. This identification of issues prompted the researcher to explore different subjects and questions he had not previously considered. For example, the imbalanced placement and promotion of the regions cultural heritage resources versus natural resources spurred an inquiry into the reasoning behind this and contributed to theory generation in Chapters Seven and Eight. These and additional examples are presented in Chapter Six.

Ultimately, the questionnaire findings presented in this chapter have given an insider view into stakeholder opinions on the current and future state of the Rupununi tourism structure. In particular, several key features of Rupununi tourism were revealed in this chapter. The Rupununi remains a fairly isolated area which struggles with unemployment and economic diversification. However, the region possesses a wealth of world-class heritage resources, both natural and cultural, that have the potential for sustainable tourism development. As a result, tourism has quickly become the number one targeted economic activity in the Rupununi and there are now several communities and enterprises developing tourism products. These products have primarily focused on nature and wildlife despite the abundance of cultural heritage as well. Accurately and comprehensively identifying what product each community or business possesses remains a source of confusion for stakeholders. The researcher suggests that stakeholders adopt the term heritage tourism which would encompass all other products and avoid any confusion.

Many communities and businesses have also established market ready products but are still lacking the constant visitor flow. Indeed, major challenges limiting progression in the sector include a lack of marketing and appropriate branding for the Rupununi,

funding and high costs associated with transportation. Benefits from tourism could be substantial for the region including the provision of employment and the safeguarding of heritage resources. However, achieving these benefits will require adopting the right model for tourism development and incorporating sustainability into management frameworks. Chapter Six now expands on this idea and other areas of significance within the Rupununi tourism structure.

## **Chapter 6.**

## 6 Structural Areas of Significance.

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### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, the actors and current state of development of Rupununi tourism were identified – satisfying the goal of building a profile, or structure, of the region. The aim of this chapter is to critically analyse this structure, identifying and evaluating thematic areas of significance within its processes in which ecomuseology could provide support. To achieve this aim, all data sets are again utilised and include a mixture of field notes, literature, questionnaire data and interview responses. However, while the questionnaire data is important and provided the impetus for exploring the areas of significance, Chapter Six utilises more interview responses to provide depth and meaning to issues and ideas. This depth allows for increased understanding of stakeholder perceptions and motivations which are crucial to sustainable tourism development.

Areas of significance refer to any issues or ideas that were recognised from the questionnaire as being relevant to the research question and then explored in the semi-structured interviews. For example, it was found in the questionnaire data that the majority of stakeholders agreed that the intangible cultural heritage of the region is not being promoted adequately for tourism. This was pertinent, as ecomuseum philosophy endorses equal attention to both tangible and intangible heritage resources (Section 3.4). In turn, this equal promotion can assist with providing socio-cultural benefits to stakeholders, particularly host communities, and contributing to cultural sustainability in the sector. It should be noted that these areas of significance were selected because they were pertinent to the researcher's specific aims and objectives for this project and are not representative of all the potential issues relating to Rupununi tourism.

In this chapter, these areas of significance are explored by comparing stakeholder perceptions with literature and the reality of the situation on site. In addition, the data in this chapter is presented as a stand-alone feature and is not specifically analysed in relation to the principles of ecomuseology, which will be examined in Chapters Seven and Eight. Specific areas of significance that were identified from the questionnaire and are covered here in Chapter Six include: the provision of information and interpretation (Section 6.2); need for a holistic plan to link the region and its attractions (Section 6.3);

heritage resource management (Section 6.4); and, the relationship between cultural heritage resources and tourism (Section 6.5).

## **6.2 Information and Interpretation**

Information provides several functions for tourism stakeholders including advising visitors on logistical aspects of their trip (e.g. lodging, transportation, activities), providing instructions for appropriate behaviour on-site and educating all stakeholders on the meaning and importance of local heritage resources (Kuo, 2002: 93; Moscardo 1998: 2). Furthermore, information, and its use in the communication about, and interpretation of, heritage resources is an important tool in the sustainable development of tourism (CI, 2010: 38). CI (2010: 38) argues, “Both Guyanese and international visitors/tourists must be provided with accessible information to foster their understanding and appreciation of the resources”. Information is central in all aspects of the tourism experience from the initial planning stages, where it exists as the actual product’s substitute (Doolin *et al.*, 2002: 557), through to the on-site exploration of heritage resources. As a result, customer satisfaction is heavily dependent on timely and accurate information that is relevant to their experiences (Buhalis, 1998: 411; Kuo, 2002: 94; Moscardo, 1998: 4). Ultimately, tourism information must be used to enhance the visitor experience. This can be primarily done through the provision of factual and current information on key logistical features and also through interpretation platforms aimed at inspiring and educating.

The distribution of Rupununi tourism information is analysed in this section. In particular, this analysis includes stakeholder perceptions on the topic and identifying what information is absent (Sub-section 6.2.1). Sub-section 6.2.2 then reviews the impacts that this information shortage has on the interpretation of heritage resources. Finally, this section concludes (6.2.3) by examining which avenues would be best suited to deliver factual and beneficial information on the Rupununi and also enhance the educational interpretation of heritage resources.

### **6.2.1 Information Gap**

Based on stakeholder perceptions and direct observations, there is a distinct information gap for visitors to the Rupununi. Eighty eight (74%) questionnaire respondents agreed that there is not sufficient available information about the tourism sites in the region.

Furthermore, out of the 54 tourist respondents, only ten (19%) felt there was sufficient information available. This lack of information was described by stakeholders as being pertinent to both *in-situ* and *ex-situ* circumstances. In other words, information is not sufficiently available to those who are planning to visit the Rupununi and for those who are already on site. An interviewee from the voluntary sector simply argued, "...when [tourists] try to get the information, it's not available" (Interview V3, 2012; also stated during Interview M2, 2012). Similarly, an industry stakeholder (Interview I4, 2012) stressed, "There is still a need for much more information and accurate information". Two of the tourist interviewees themselves commented on the lack of information; remarking, for example, that there was "not very much" (Interview T2, 2012), and on site "there is nothing" (Interview T3, 2012). However, stakeholders appear to understand the importance of information in sustainability with 100% of questionnaire respondents agreeing that the addition of more information about the region's heritage resources would enhance the sustainable development of tourism. An industry professional (Interview I2, 2012) commented that although there is this understanding, there is "...an awful lot to be done yet, an awful lot. We're just skimming at the surface".

According to stakeholders, the information gap includes: logistical aspects about the tourism products such as lodging rates, activities, safety, transportation, geography (Interview I4, 2012; Interview T1, 2012; Interview M2, 2012); information on the natural and cultural heritage resources (Interview T1, 2012; Interview P2, 2012; Interview V3, 2012; CI, 2010: 38); and, background information on community management frameworks and events (Interview C2, 2012). Providing more information on the logistical aspects of Rupununi tourism would allow for easier coordination for visitors. Indeed, one tourist (Interview T3, 2012) commented that more information would be useful as "...it highlights" and makes "...a series of flagships for each place". Currently, tourists can find it difficult in organising their trip. Another tourist (Interview T4, 2012) described the "...hours researching and trying to put an itinerary together" and that she "...found it difficult when we were trying to plan things". If tourists had access to more information, they may include more options in their itinerary and potentially stay longer in the area which would generate more income for local stakeholders (Ortega & Rodriguez, 2007: 151). An industry member (Interview I4, 2012) described the importance of information as it pertains to Rupununi tourism by arguing that for many people, "...if they had known, they would have extended their stay". A media stakeholder (Interview M2, 2012) further asserted that

this also helps with “visitor expectations” where “...they have a better idea of what to expect based on research they are doing”.

As for the lack of information on local heritage resources, CI (2010: 38) argue that the Rupununi’s “culture and history... provide a strong basis for interpretive development”. On what information should be provided to visitors, a host community member (Interview C3, 2012) commented, “For me, I think what we want to share is to tell them what we have and how we intend to keep it”. Another community member (Interview C2, 2012) added, “...you need to document things that happen at the community level, in the community...an inventory of what you have”. This thought was shared with other stakeholders as well. A voluntary sector stakeholder (Interview V3, 2012) affirmed, “It depends on the site of course. I think the natural history is important obviously...but I think the real catch is the people. The information I think people would be interested in is the natural history and the interaction, or association, people have with nature”. On the amount of information on heritage resources, a media representative (Interview M2, 2012) described the little available information that is out there as being “more general”, lacking more specifics.

During interviews, stakeholders revealed various reasons for this shortage of available information for tourism. Principal reasons included a lack of resources (Interview P1, 2012) and capacity (Interview V3, 2012) and the need to effectively organise the information (Interview I2, 2012; Interview I5, 2012; Interview M1, 2012). For example, a member from the public sector (Interview P1, 2012) described how “...most of the communities, they have very limited resources and that’s financial resources, human resources”. This was further elaborated on by a member of the voluntary sector (Interview V3, 2012) who argued:

*“...I think the capacity isn’t there, and a lot of times for me also, the people who support them don’t have the capacity...And of course resources, technical, financial, so there is a big gap. It affects the business because one, people don’t know about the marketing but also when the people come here and experience the product, I think they leave not having this information to take with them.”*

Visits to communities revealed that most do not yet possess consistently available access to computers or the internet. This is most evident by their absence on the World Wide Web, which can serve as a “powerful marketing tool” by being “their window to the world” according to a public sector member (Interview P1, 2012). Tourists



(Interview T2, 2012; Interview T3, 2012) also remarked about the scarcity of websites for Rupununi attractions and the difficulty in finding information. A member from a host community (Interview C3, 2012) urged that this was slowly improving and that “...we are still trying to get things in place in terms of the website, sharing and receiving information”.

A basic, yet key, finding which emerged during data analysis was that stakeholders feel much of the information is known and ready for sharing, but lacks organisation. A member of the media (Interview M1, 2012) argued, “There is enough information, but what is needed now amongst us is to organise that information”. This feeling was shared by members of the industry as well. One interviewee (Interview I2, 2012) in particular stated, “The problem is that there is a need to correlate all of the available information and put it together, but there are many aspects which still need to be investigated and included in this work” (also stated during Interview I5, 2012). For example, information on local legends and folklore do exist but have not been organised for tourism use. Indeed, because this information is not organised, an industry member (Interview I5, 2012) asserted, “It’s not really accessible” for visitors and other stakeholders alike.

Although information sharing still needs improvement, stakeholders do feel that the situation is progressing. This has been accomplished largely in part through the many partnerships created between stakeholder groups. A member of the voluntary sector (Interview V2, 2012) stated, “It’s improving, I’ve seen the work that has been done by the ones that are more established and it comes from the partnerships that have been created to help with that, not just the local partners, but the international ones as well”. This type of collaboration was further explained by a senior member from the public sector (Interview P1, 2012) who described how his organisation has provided support in everything from brochures to website development and facilitating the participation of local tourism managers in international travel markets where information is distributed on the region. In the end, it is clear that improving information sharing will be crucial to the sustainable development of tourism in the Rupununi. In agreement, an industry professional (Interview I2, 2012) argued, “It has to happen. There must be some energy to coordinate it and there must be some funding behind it, and there must be a way that the stakeholders themselves can access this information and use it for the interpretation to their visitors”. Improving the distribution of information requires a more organised delivery of material both on and off site and should cover the above mentioned elements

which are vital to the Rupununi tourism structure. The following sub-sections describe the best methods for distributing information in the Rupununi, as well as the impact of an information gap on the interpretation of heritage resources.

### **6.2.2 *Impact on Interpretation***

As stated in the previous sub-section, providing factual information is important in sustainable tourism development and serves a central role in enhancing the tourist experience. However, visitors are unlikely to be affected by “bare factual” information that does not provide any form of connection with their experience (Kuo, 2002, 97). In comparison, the interpretation of that information is useful in motivating visitors’ interests and giving meaning to their experiences by demonstrating the link between them and the destination (Moscardo *et al.*, 2004: 231; Stewart *et al.*, 1998: 257). Interpretation, as defined by The Society for Interpreting Britain’s Heritage, is about “...communicating to people the significance of a place or object so that they enjoy it more, understand their heritage and environment better, and develop a positive attitude toward conservation” (cited in Moscardo 1998: 3; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006: 485). Freeman Tilden (1977: 8), considered by many to be the ‘father’ of interpretation, also argued that it is an educational activity which aims to reveal relationships and meaning as opposed to simply communicating factual information. Used in a variety of locations including protected areas and heritage sites (Stewart *et al.*, 1998: 257), interpretation often focuses on communicating the relationship between humanity and the natural environment (Kuo 2002: 95).

Interpretation has become a significant strategy in developing a more sustainable tourism industry (Moscardo, 1998: 11; Bramwell & Lane, 1993b: 22; Tubb 2003: 476; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006: 485). Bramwell & Lane (1993b: 21) argue, “Gradually the linkages between interpretation and sustainable tourism have grown and they have begun to be turned from being theoretical ideals into practical reality”. As visitors develop an increased awareness and interest in a place, a conservation ethic starts to emerge (Moscardo *et al.*, 2004: 231; Reisinger & Steiner 2006: 486). Thoroughly researched interpretation informs visitors about the local environment and communities, detailing why it can be significant and advocating appropriate behaviors to minimise negative impacts (Moscardo *et al.*, 2004: 231; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006: 485). For example, interpretation can support sustainability by directing visitor movement away from fragile habitats or empowering local communities in the creation of interpretation

strategies, thus contributing to a renewed sense of place and pride (Bramwell & Lane, 1993b: 21-23). Interpretation also improves economic sustainability by enhancing the quality of the experience which encourages continued visitation due to higher satisfaction (Moscardo, 1998: 4; Kuo, 2002: 95; Orams, 1996: 84). Consequently, interpretation has become a valuable tool in successful *in-situ* management processes (Kuo, 2002: 99; Millar, 1989: 13).

The information gap in the Rupununi has translated into a poor interpretation of heritage resources and the destination. CI (2010: 29) emphasises, “The interpretation activities currently offered by the communities are not geared fully to the needs of the general eco-tourist”. A member of the industry (Interview I5, 2012) specified, “I don’t think the interpretation is where it could be in Guyana...which means to me that no, the information is not there”. Other stakeholders also described the lack of sufficient knowledge by tour guides, the main instrument for interpretation in the Rupununi. For example, a member of the voluntary sector (Interview V4, 2012) asserted that she “...was not sure all the tour guides would be equipped with all the ecological information” necessary to provide adequate interpretation. Furthermore, a tourist (Interview T3, 2012) remarked, “The information you get from the local guides, it’s like pulling teeth to get some of the information. If you don’t ask the right questions, you don’t get the information”. As a result, an industry professional (Interview I5, 2012) argued, “There’s no really in-depth educational programs” and that “...a lot of the interpretation is very shallow”. Although many of the Rupununi’s tour guides specialise in bird-watching and wildlife, the experience they help to deliver would be greatly enhanced by the interpretation of more heritage resources. For instance, CI (2010: 49) asserts that “well-conceived and managed cultural interpretation” involving contact with local people often becomes the highlight of a visitor’s experience. In the end, the underlying factor is that there is an issue with appropriate and competent interpretation in Rupununi tourism (CI, 2010: 38).

Although visitor numbers remain quite low at present, improving interpretation in Rupununi tourism will be integral in its future sustainable development. CI (2003: 17) argues, “No aspect of product development is more fundamental than interpretation. Developing the capacity and the means for telling the stories of Guyana in a variety of forms increases the understanding of and appreciation for the resources and the quality of the visitor experience” (see also CI, 2010: 38). Interviewed stakeholders also understood the positive impact that improved interpretation would have on

sustainability. A key example they discussed was the influence interpretation would have on both visitors and community members alike. A member of the media (Interview M1, 2012) stated that having organised interpretation produces benefits (discussed further in Chapter 8) such as making “...people in their community more knowledgeable about what they have...It can also bring the benefit of income...Another benefit you can get out of it is the preservation of it”. An industry representative (Interview I3, 2012) also argued that locals hold the key to quality interpretation “...because they would be in a better position to disseminate that kind of information to attract tourists...And bringing tourists means getting more revenue”.

Other stakeholders described how improved interpretation would “...help us understand what we have” (Interview I4, 2012) and, “Information is key in terms of conservation. Because if people don’t know, and this at the community level as well... they don’t care” (Interview V4, 2012). The above mentioned industry member (Interview I3, 2012) commented on the need for improved interpretation and its benefits, stating, “There is an enormous amount of work to be done, and that has a benefit of not only creating pride and understanding of our past, but also interpreting a product which people go to museums just to see”. While the need for improved interpretation in the region has been outlined in this sub-section, the next sub-section (6.2.3) discusses and analyses the many interpretation tools and methods which can be utilised for delivering that interpretation.

### **6.2.3 Distribution Channels**

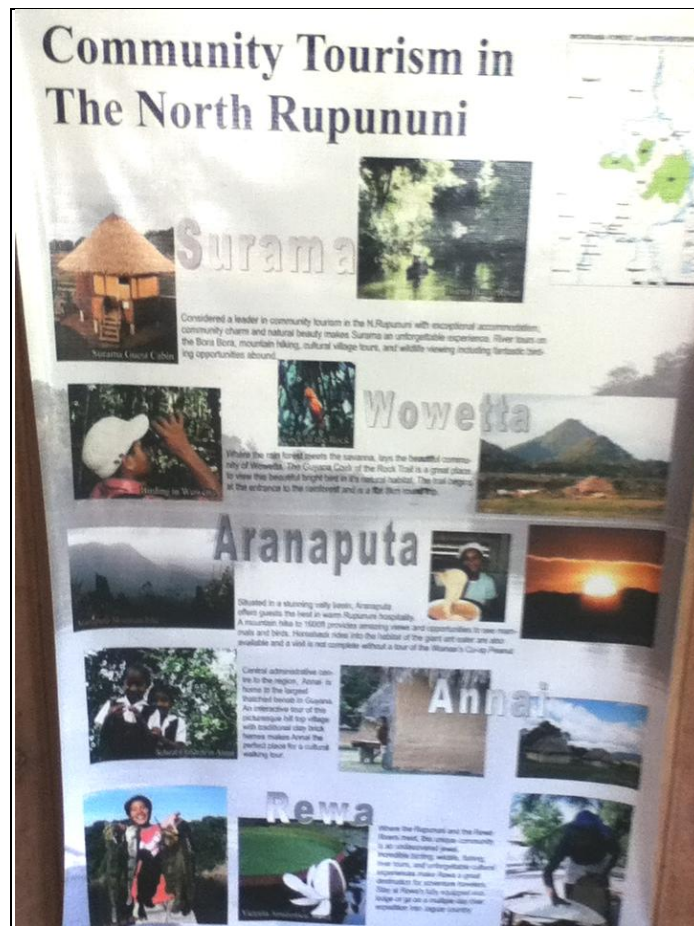
In the preceding sub-section, it was established that interpretation can be a useful tool in the sustainable development of tourism in the Rupununi. However, successfully doing so requires the use of interpretation that is high in quality and concentrated on visitors (Moscardo, 1998: 11). Information alone can be useful, but has much more potential to give meaning to an experience based on the selection of content and the manner in which it is shared (Kuo, 2002: 92). A member of the industry (Interview I5, 2012) agreed, stating:

*“Information for itself isn’t really what it’s about. It’s about using that information to enrich the experience. ...It’s how you present the information...you have to figure out what information people want...because its customer centric...the whole idea is that you connect with that person on an emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical or heart-to-heart level.”*

She (ibid) further argued that to generate this connection involves “...creating stories around the destination”. Indeed, interpretation revolves around telling a story about a place using a variety of instruments as effective communication channels (Moscardo, 1998: 8; Kuo, 2002: 92; CI, 2010: 38). Interpretation instruments can include a wide selection of formats including tour guides, information panels, brochures, published field guides, exhibits, films, the internet and digital media (Millar, 1989: 14; CI, 2010: 38; CI, 2003: 11). Selecting the correct format depends on the context in which they are delivered as different instruments should be used on and off site (Ortega & Rodriguez, 2007: 146).

Tour guides are a common form of interpretation and considered by many to be the most effective means for educating visitors (Moscardo *et al.*, 2004: 238). On site in the Rupununi, community-based tour guides currently act as the primary instrument for delivering the interpretation of heritage resources. One community member (Interview C1, 2012) even argued that in terms of communicating information to visitors, “...only the tour guides should tell it”. Other stakeholders, including a tourist (Interview T4, 2012), observed that “The guide is going to be a really imperative part of the success”, while a member of the media (Interview M2, 2012) commented that in Guyana “...guides play a big role because...there’s no barrier for English speakers” and they are able to communicate with a larger audience more effectively. The same media stakeholder (ibid) added that it’s important for guides to be knowledgeable because “...people would rather hear a story from a guide and have that personal touch on it than just walking down a trail and only reading signs”. An industry stakeholder (Interview I5, 2012) agreed, stating that visitors “...want to meet the local people, they want to know the local stories...creating something together”. Although many guides have undergone training programmes, many of these programmes were focused on birding and guides now need to “...develop their knowledge of other fauna, flora, culture and history of the area” (CI, 2010: 27-29).

Visiting several communities revealed that beyond tour guides, there was very little available information through alternative instruments. One of the few exceptions was a promotional poster for five of the key market-ready village communities in the North Rupununi (Figure 6.1), which are Surama, Wowetta, Annai, Aranaputa and Rewa. Some villages, such as Surama, possessed a small amount of printed information, but much more could still be done to improve the on-site interpretation. However, doing so requires funding, which many communities are struggling to acquire.



**Figure 6.1: Rupununi Community Tourism Promotional Poster**

There have been multiple conversations and plans regarding the permanent construction of visitor interpretation centres in the Rupununi. On having good on-site interpretation, a community member (Interview C2, 2012) contended, “I think here is where the distribution of information should be, apart from the internet and website, in terms of the heart of things”. He (ibid) further argued that having a permanent information centre would be a great opportunity to distribute flyers about the various communities to stimulate interest because at present, “...you’ve got a lot of people passing here but we don’t have any sort of information to give out to people”. As there are several attractions scattered throughout the region, having information centres could significantly improve the overall tourism experience by consolidating the information into a more easily accessible format. These interpretation centres include the in-development tourism information centre at Bina Hill in Annai where one stakeholder (Interview P2, 2012) asserted, “When tourists come to this tourism centre...we give them all the vital information, what they want to know”. Although the information centre remains under development and does not have on-site staff, there was still very little printed information available for visitors and all logistic information provided to them

varied from group to group. According to CI (2010: 35), there are also plans to develop an interpretation centre, the *Rupununi Wetlands Centre*, in which the NRDDDB has already secured financial assistance from the European Union.

The internet is an off-site tool that stakeholders believe has much potential in marketing the Rupununi and educating visitors. The internet is considered by many to be a model avenue for distributing information due to its "...global reach and multimedia capability" (Doolin *et al.*, 2002: 557; see also Ortega & Rodriguez, 2007: 147). Websites for a destination and its attractions create a sense of place about the location before tourists ever arrive so the information stakeholders share can be critical to guest expectations and satisfaction levels (Doolin *et al.*, 2002: 557). Currently, stakeholders admit that little information is available on the internet, but that improving this is more likely to increase visitor numbers, thus contributing to the economic sustainability of the region. Tourists explained that they "...didn't find much on the internet" (Interview T2, 2012) and ultimately there "...seemed to be relatively little" (Interview T3, 2012). In comparison, a community member (Interview C4, 2012) argued that "I think we need to have...a window somewhere to inform people who want to travel, tourists who want to see this area".

A public sector representative (Interview P1, 2012) argued that having a website is imperative "...because that's their window to the world, it's a very effective and powerful marketing tool as well". On using the internet as a way forward, a member of the voluntary sector (Interview V2, 2012) commented, "... it's cheap. Social networking is dirt cheap, and I try to look at the ways in which communities can utilize this but not all of them have internet in the communities" (also stated during Interview P1, 2012). Although limited access to the internet and funding are critical issues, having a website to promote their attraction will be crucial to future development. In the end, information distribution about Rupununi tourism could be improved through the development of more on- and off-site tools. Other on-site formats such as brochures and information panels within the proposed interpretation centres would be ideal, but require more funding. The successful distribution of information and interpretation of heritage resources will depend on establishing a diverse network of communication channels that promote quality and accurate content.

### 6.3 Developing a Plan

The Rupununi is the setting for a multitude of activities including various tourism products, research projects, educational programmes and community initiatives spread throughout multiple sites. Although the development and continuation of these activities is certainly encouraged and celebrated, to an outsider they can appear to be disjointed and lack adequate identification and connection between them. Individual efforts to improve local livelihoods and protect the region's heritage resources have included: the research projects initiated by Iwokrama and many other national and international research institutions; the work of the Bina Hill Institute and Makushi Research Unit; the Wildlife Clubs; community conservation initiatives; and, the diverse tourism products found in communities and private lodges. However, the unification of these projects under a single 'plan' has significant potential for improving operations in the region and in turn increasing visitor numbers and contributing more benefits for stakeholders (CI, 2010: 48).

It is worth clarifying that in using the term 'plan', the researcher is referring to a systematic arrangement, or network, of components that are part of a holistic design or objective. The arrangement could include different formats incorporating printed material or a website or through presentations by tour guides and site managers. For this context, the purpose of a plan would be to use the various Rupununi tourism components to create a holistic design; link the various sites and attractions; and, present a more cohesive destination. However, there is also the objective of sustainable development. As a result, developing a plan has implications for different management structures for Rupununi tourism including marketing and safeguarding heritage. For example, mapping and connecting the different Rupununi tourism sites under a single plan allows for increased exposure for each site and its endemic activities. Subsequently, tourists, researchers and the general public can become more aware of the place's significance and contribute to its future sustainable development. This can occur, for examples, either through increased visitor numbers which improves the local economy or studies into environmental issues relating to conservation. During the distribution of surveys and interviews, participant inquiries about the meaning of the term 'plan' for this study were answered based on the above mentioned criteria. However, the idea of developing a plan often seemed confusing to several stakeholders which made it difficult in acquiring relevant responses and is considered a limitation in the data findings.



This section analyses, through literature and stakeholder perceptions, how the creation of a plan would impact and connect the different tourism communities, initiatives and attractions in the Rupununi. This section also explores previous and current formal and informal attempts at creating a universally linked Rupununi including CI's *Community Tourism Blueprint* (6.3.1). In addition, future potential avenues for manifesting this plan, including a Rupununi website, are also discussed. Concluding the section (6.3.2) will be an examination of the challenges of creating a plan.

### **6.3.1 *Connecting the Sites***

Although the Rupununi is comprised of numerous tourism sites and heritage resources, stakeholders do not feel they are effectively connected. Out of the 119 questionnaire participants in this study, 83 (70%) felt that there does not appear to be an overall plan that links the different tourism sites in the Rupununi, particularly between the south and north Rupununi (Interview V4, 2012). CI (2010: 48) states that this absence of interconnection between the sites is a detriment to development and "...it is to the advantage of all for the region to be marketed and perceived as a single destination, with various distinct products". Furthermore, CI (2003: 16; 2010: 39) claims that the different sites need to be organised and that there should be a concentrated effort on identifying and mapping all heritage resources. Interviewees agreed with a member of the voluntary sector (Interview V3, 2012) asserting, "...having a plan is important on...how to coordinate between these sites". A media stakeholder (Interview M2, 2012) commented on the importance of having a plan for the Rupununi and how stakeholders should be "...creating a story out of that and linking it together" which would "...take away some of the fragmentation of it".

While 70% (83/119) of all questionnaire participants agreed there was not a plan linking Rupununi tourism, only 50% (60/119) of the industry participants agreed. Presumably, this is most likely because industry interviewees included several tour operators who are consistently organising tours for visitors amongst the many Rupununi sites. As a result, they are more likely to see the Rupununi as already connected within an informal plan. On promoting the Rupununi as a single destination product, an industry stakeholder (Interview I1, 2012) remarked, "Absolutely, that's what we are currently selling at the moment" and "...because of [that] everything is linked together". A voluntary sector interviewee (Interview V4, 2012) stated she also felt that the sites are "...linked already, informally linked" and that creating a plan would "...just be to make it more formal".

This ‘formality’ in creating a plan is likely to share the informal link understood by actively involved stakeholders with potential visitors and creating a destination which is more holistic in appearance and functionality.

One possible manifestation for this plan could be a Rupununi website which promotes each community and attraction under the Rupununi brand. As many communities do not have access to the internet, this would allow for each of them to promote their individual tourism products with detailed information while still maintaining a holistic Rupununi image. This has positive implications for attracting more tourists and boosting the local economy, particularly since there is currently not sufficient information on the internet to “...encourage potential visitors to the Rupununi” (CI 2010: 48). CI (ibid) asserts that there should be a designated organisation responsible for producing and maintaining this website and work closely with local representatives and tour operators.

Another method for connecting the sites could be through the on-site interpretation by tour guides. Once a formal plan is created and the information is organised, it should be shared with all tourism stakeholders, particularly local tour guides and those who interact directly with tourists. A member of the media (Interview M2, 2012) stressed the importance for tour guides in telling the story of the entire Rupununi. He (ibid) stated:

*“I think it definitely would be greatly beneficial to have the Rupununi story that allows [guides] to link up and tell [tourists], so when people are going around they always feel like they are always in the Rupununi ... teaching [guides] how to interpret their surroundings through a story, thinking about the bigger picture”.*

One of the few existing examples of a Rupununi tourism plan that is aimed more at fulfilling the objective of sustainable development than design is the aforementioned *Community Tourism Enterprise Development Blueprint* (2010) by CI. A member of the voluntary sector (Interview V1, 2012) commented on this lack of formalised plans. He (ibid) stated, “I think the only agency who has attempted to come up with a blueprint for the Rupununi is Conservation International”. The blueprint details all of the indigenous communities in the Rupununi, showcasing their operational strengths and weaknesses and revealing links between each entity and is designed for stakeholders involved directly with development. The document presents the Rupununi as a whole, with

individual parts that have unique properties and stresses that resources need only to be organised and presented as such.

CI (2010: 35) also advocates networking in the Rupununi with the overall objective being to “...create a consortium or product club of export market-ready businesses, organisations and communities engaged in tourism to support and push the development of a range of sustainable tourism experiences in the Rupununi region”. A deliverable from doing this could be a *Rupununi Tourism Experiences Guide* (CI, 2010: 35) which would assist in converting a document such as the blueprint into a version targeted at tourists. In fact, an industry member (Interview I1, 2012) revealed that in recent tour guide training programmes (2011) facilitated by the US Agency for International Development (US AID), the instructors were asking each community or lodge to “produce a booklet” that would provide “...information on the actual lodge, the actual product”. She (ibid) added that the book would then be sent back to US AID for review and where it will eventually “...be a sharing tool amongst all people”. The booklets from each community can be combined to form a comprehensive text promoting the entire Rupununi and made available for visitors. Although each of these tools can be useful for connecting sites in the Rupununi, they are limited by certain challenges which are covered in the following sub-section.

### **6.3.2 Challenges**

Stakeholders revealed a few key challenges to creating a plan for Rupununi tourism. One community member (Interview C2, 2012) stated that although he believed a plan would be a positive action, “It requires a lot of planning and effort from us the leaders” and “We don’t have a good understanding...as to how we could closely link...the communication needs to be strengthened”. Another community member (Interview C3, 2012) agreed that one of the challenges for stakeholders is “...getting them to understand what it is all about...once people fully understand...you would have the support”. These comments indicate that there would be a need to explain to local stakeholders the basic principles behind creating a single tourism destination, where each community is promoted and linked together.

Other stakeholders emphasised the administrative challenges for creating a plan. An industry professional (Interview I2, 2012) asserted, “It’s funding and management, the organizational aspect”. He (ibid) also reiterated, however, that in creating a plan it is

important “...to make sure it is not irrelevant but that it continues and is understood by all concerned of its value”. The lack of finances is a challenge that was mentioned by stakeholders from the public sector (Interview P2, 2012) and voluntary sector (Interview V2, 2012). For example, one interviewee argued that although there has been a tentative plan for Rupununi tourism before, “The problem was that there was no funding” (ibid). Another voluntary sector stakeholder (Interview V3, 2012) commented that to develop a plan, “You need a lot of coordination because you have a lot of people involved already”. He (ibid) advocated for a well-resourced team who act as a “...hub that can coordinate these things”. In summary, there are several benefits to developing a plan for Rupununi tourism but to do so requires training stakeholders on its importance, as well as having funding and the right leadership to carry out the operation.

#### **6.4 Heritage Resource Management**

The Rupununi presents a unique situation regarding the management of its heritage resources. It is an area which has primarily avoided detrimental impacts on its resources due to a lack of development activity and the early employment of sustainable practices (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 221). Although negative impacts have not been prolific, heritage resource management remains imperative in the sustainable development of the region. This will remain particularly true with the improvement of the Georgetown to Lethem road and also with increased interests in mining, forestry, oil exploration and commercial fishing (ibid). In addition, the inseparable link sustainable tourism shares with heritage resources means having effective management frameworks in place will determine future impacts from the industry on local communities and the natural environment (CI, 2010: 51-52).

In their questionnaire responses, Rupununi tourism stakeholders clearly indicated that heritage resource management is vital for sustainable tourism. Participants were asked to rank certain aspects of sustainable tourism in order of their importance, including: protecting local cultures, environmental conservation, providing benefits to the community, overall tourist satisfaction and providing benefits to the local industry. One hundred and fourteen respondents (96%) stated that all of the above options were equally important, clearly demonstrating that stakeholders do not value heritage resource management any less than other aspects of sustainable tourism development. Indeed, it appears that questionnaire participants understand that heritage resources (e.g.

local culture, physical environment) are interconnected with the economic benefits for the industry and overall tourist satisfaction.

A key aspect of heritage resource management which features frequently throughout this section is the importance of community involvement. Management plans should be inclusive of local community viewpoints and daily needs for survival in addition to minimising well-known negative social and environmental impacts (see Chapter 2) (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 221-222). Fortunately, under the new Amerindian Act, “Local communities governed by village councils own and have full management responsibility” for their lands and are therefore integral in its fate (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 224; see also CI, 2010: 10). CI (2010: 3) asserts that having communities involved in heritage resource management can be highly beneficial as communities become the stewards of the resources and are more likely to have continued participation.

Stakeholder perceptions on heritage resource management are explored in this section, along with a brief outline of the current management practices in the Rupununi. Analysing these perceptions is important in revealing strengths and weaknesses in the heritage management framework in the Rupununi – an area where ecomuseological principles could provide support. The first sub-section (6.4.1) examines heritage management plans concerning natural heritage including the guidance provided by local and international NGO’s and the role tourism has played in safeguarding natural resources. This section is then concluded by looking at management plans for cultural heritage resources, with a particularly reference to local archaeology (6.4.2).

#### **6.4.1 Natural Heritage**

There is a strong pro-environment ethos amongst Rupununi stakeholders. For example, 113 (95%) questionnaire participants disagreed that a community’s economic strength is more important than environmental conservation. This can be partly attributed to the fact that local communities consider themselves “...as part of the natural world”, where there is a distinct “...oneness of people and the forests, savannas, and wetlands” (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 172). Indeed, indigenous Rupununi communities have shared a sustainable relationship with the natural world for thousands of years (see sub-section 1.3.2). However, as the concept of sustainability became more integrated into heritage resource management and the world learned how important tropical rainforests and biodiversity were to the earth’s survival, attention has shifted to implementing

sustainable management frameworks for these regions, requiring indigenous communities to adapt their lifestyles.

Another factor relating to the raised environmental consciousness can be traced to the work of a few key organisations. As seen in Sections 5.5 and 5.6, there are several local, national and international conservation-based NGO's and public sector organisations involved in natural resource management in the Rupununi. This includes Iwokrama, CI, the WWF and the NRDDDB. For example, Iwokrama has been involved in training several communities about natural resource management skills, including the completion of community resource maps and how to use them for conservation (Iwokrama, 2003: 29; see also Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 226). Furthermore, to raise conservation awareness and natural resource management practices, several outreach programmes have been initiated by Iwokrama, CI, the WWF and numerous other organisations (Mulder *et al.*, 2009: 880; Bynoe, 2006: 16). In turn, this has led to multiple communities (e.g. Surama, Aranaputa) setting up their own zoning initiatives for hunting, fishing, tourism or other activities, which are important for communities seeking sustainability (CI, 2010: 45).

Stakeholders are also aware of the importance these organisations have had on natural resource management. An industry member (Interview I5, 2012) commented that through "...the presence of Iwokrama and the work that is being done there...I think the level of environmental awareness and stewardship is higher than most places and I think that has a lot to do with it". A media stakeholder (Interview M2, 2012) recalled how Rewa had a tendency to over-exploit their natural resources (e.g. fish, wild game) which then "...changed slowly with Conservation International coming in". An industry interviewee (Interview I3, 2012) argued that after seeing the success of the regions only two conservation areas, Iwokrama and the Kanuku Mountains, "...some of the communities themselves are establishing conservation areas". Another industry member (Interview I4, 2012) who lives locally detailed one community's conservation plan which covers "...basic restrictions to a guest coming in... so that [they] can't just go and take things away. Basic stuff that would protect whatever is in the area".

As the above-mentioned organisations educated local communities on the importance of natural resource management, tourism quickly became a key targeted activity, which also had conservation initiatives. This has been particularly true due to the emphasis on natural heritage as the main tourism product in the Rupununi. A host community

member (Interview C4, 2012) described one example of the effect tourism has had on managing natural resources:

*“We banned trapping 20 years ago, we banned the trapping of birds in here...My son said ‘we used to see six macaws here and you trap them, you get GY\$3,000 each...and you spend it...and then there is no more macaw, they have to go.’ But if you have one macaw on that island there, do you know how many tourists would come and pay to see that single one, do you know how much money you would make to see that single one?”*

A member of the media (Interview M1, 2012) also discussed the trapping of birds, adding:

*“Probably they [trappers] did that before because of the unawareness of the villagers and for them to have ... their income, they started trapping these birds and selling them....Now since tourism has brought a new meaning for us and bird trapping has stopped. Already you are seeing the difference. Birds are there and tourists can come see them”.*

In addition to these statements, all 119 (100%) questionnaire participants agreed that tourism and environmental conservation are compatible and can promote responsible use of the area’s natural heritage. Although there is a raised awareness amongst Rupununi stakeholders on the importance of protecting natural heritage and the benefits tourism can provide in this manner, there remains a lot to be done regarding the implementation of natural resource management plans. Only 60 questionnaire participants (50%) feel that host communities are knowledgeable on the environmental impacts from tourism, which indicates more education and management plans may be needed in the future. In addition, CI (2010: 39) feels that there should be more effort “...to identify and map all natural resources within the region with a potential for interpretive development”. This could be especially relevant for places like the Kanuku Mountains where tourism could play a vital role in both firmly establishing the protected area and also as an economic development plan for local communities (CI, 2003: 12-13).

#### **6.4.2 Cultural Heritage**

Although the natural heritage of the Rupununi has yet to witness any significant impacts and communities still live traditional lifestyles, the cultural heritage of the region has started to experience significant changes and losses. These changes started initially with the arrival of Europeans to the region, where though Westernisation, aspects of

Amerindian culture such as traditional lifestyles (e.g. hunting), communal ceremonies and dances have faded away (MRU, 1996: 14; Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 169-170; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 165). Although the area has remained largely isolated for centuries, the culture of Amerindian communities has recently seen increased permeation from “outside influences”, as transportation in and out of the region improves (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 169-170; Wihak, 2009: 25). As a result, their culture is constantly transforming and runs the risks of losing more of its defining characteristics. Indigenous communities are some of the last remaining guardians of a “...vital part of our human heritage” in the midst of an increasingly globalised and developed planet, and therefore require effective management plans for cultural heritage resources (Wihak, 2009: 18). Wihak (2009: 25) argues, “The loss of Makushi culture, and their ability to act as stewards for an ecosystem precious to the whole planet would be a loss for us all, as is the loss of any indigenous culture”.

The on-going loss of Amerindian culture and lack of effective management structures was also reflected in the questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaire responses revealed that only 54 participants (45%) felt that cultural heritage resources were protected on site, with the remaining participants disagreeing or were unsure if there were any management frameworks in place. During the interviews, participants repeatedly described various cultural features that were disappearing. On the protection of local culture, one community member (Interview C3, 2012) stated, “It’s not like how we would like it to be, because everybody is going to the western side of it now....So you have changes, big changes”. Another community member (Interview C1, 2012) described how “...language is going away” along with traditional stories, because older community members “...don’t tell many stories” to younger generations. On the issue of cultural heritage fading away, another community member (Interview C2, 2012) added:

*“The young people are not very keen on it. Let’s say for example, how many of the young girls could now ‘spin a cotton’ and make these threads out of cotton. Just a few...where is it? It’s dying. ...If you do an assessment in these communities, how many of the young people could actually make the bow and arrow, or even craft the simple craft we have...it’s not there anymore.”*

This feeling was shared with other stakeholders as well including a tourist (Interview T4, 2012) who commented, “That was the impression that we got from the elders...they were very concerned with the language being lost and the traditional ways of life”.



Language appears an especially fragile heritage feature that stakeholders mentioned was fading and this has also been highlighted in various publications (for examples see *Stabroek News*, 2012; Wihak, 2009: 18). A voluntary sector member (Interview V4, 2012) noted, “People are worried about the language” while a community member (Interview C3, 2012) confirmed, “...what is really not there is the language, like the Makushi, Wapishana, the Arawak”. She (ibid) also stated that this is “...because it’s not being passed on and the young people are not interested in taking up these things and learning it from their parents”. On why cultural heritage is fading, another community member (Interview C4, 2012) mentioned, “They [communities] do not know how valuable it is to maintain and nurture that culture...today they are ashamed...it’s a lack of the true sense of their identity, how valuable it is”. As for the future of cultural heritage in the Rupununi, a local industry member (Interview I2, 2012) commented, “We are at a crossroads. We’re about to have a cell [phone] tower constructed here in Annai. People are moving on, the youths aren’t speaking their language anymore. It’s a race against time now”. He (ibid) also added that whether or not much of the culture is lost “...depends on a lot of guidance ...because if there is not guidance, we’re lost. My concern is that change may be too quick, and our young people may grasp things at the expense of maintaining their cultural heritage”.

Despite the ongoing deterioration of cultural heritage in the Rupununi, the local way-of-life remains distinctive and “...foreign to the ‘developed’ world” as people continue to straddle the balance between traditional lifestyles and Western life (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: xv,168; see also Sinclair, 2003: 143). One community elder (Interview C4, 2012) argued, “We have not changed to another culture, the evidence is still there”. Indeed, cultural traditions remain important and practiced in the Rupununi due to a few cultural heritage management platforms which are discussed further below.

The wildlife clubs, found in 18 communities and with a membership of around 280, originally started as an opportunity for youth members to learn about natural resource management first-hand (James, 2012; Wihak, 2009: 23-24). For example, club members have visited the Iwokrama Research Centre to participate in environmental education programmes and training workshops in environmental monitoring (Wihak, 2009: 23-24). These clubs have since included elements of promoting Amerindian culture at events like the annual wildlife festival and encouraging youths to be proud and celebrate their cultural heritage (James, 2012). Activities at the wildlife festival include traditional skills such as cotton spinning, archery, cassava grating, basket

weaving and fire lighting. An industry stakeholder (Interview I5, 2012) remarked that although cultural heritage management is "...definitely more difficult" than natural heritage, "...there are things in place that are helping like the wildlife clubs". Another industry member (Interview I1, 2012) added, "...the wildlife clubs are not just learning about the habitat of animals but the culture and everything else. And you see that in an excellent display when they do the annual wildlife club festival where they showcase the various cultures". Wihak (2009: 23) contends that the wildlife clubs are able to inspire learning in the area's youth through "culturally-appropriate" educational techniques, which focus on naturally occurring situations as opposed to formal education.

As mentioned in sub-section 5.4.5, The Makushi Research Unit (MRU), established in 1996, is a research-based group driven by women from the communities who document and research Makushi language, culture, traditional skills and nature-culture relationships (Wihak, 2009: 21; Iwokrama, 2003: 26; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 70). The group has travelled around to various schools in the north Rupununi, teaching and promoting Makushi language skills (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 221). One industry member (Interview I3, 2012) indicated, "They are actually a school within itself where people can come work with them for a while...They are reproducing, blending historical [knowledge] with the present to develop younger generations to continue with the process". Concerning the MRU, Watkins *et al.* (2010: 221) argues:

*"... the Makushi Research Unit has, over the past decade, led the way in addressing social development, gender equality, and human rights issues, using their role as 'keepers of culture' to challenge certain negative aspects of their way of life while affirming and promoting the positive foundations of Makushi heritage...The Makushi researchers themselves play an increasingly important role in community development and ensuring the welfare of their people."*

A voluntary sector member (Interview V1, 2012) stated that for the MRU, "...the emphasis has been documenting the language" through which they produced a "Makushi dictionary". This publication, entitled *Makusipe Komanto Iseru: Sustaining Makushi Way of Life*, contains information on Makushi orthography, flora and fauna descriptions including medicinal and edible uses, family celebrations, religious beliefs and traditional practices and knowledge (Bowers & Corsane, 2012: 208; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 221; Wihak, 2009: 21; Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 70). This work is regarded as the first of its kind in Guyana and has been an inspiration for other Amerindian

communities in revitalising their heritage (Bowers & Corsane, 2012: 208; MRU, 1996: vii). In addition, the female researchers in the MRU have reported that because of their involvement in the MRU and contribution to sustaining Makushi culture, they feel more comfortable contributing at village meetings and feel a sense of pride and “delight” at being involved in the project (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 70; Wihak, 2009: 21).

Although not the only means of safeguarding cultural heritage resources, these two *in-situ* projects stand out as the two most important and successful. Also important to the promotion of Amerindian cultural heritage is the Bina Hill Institute, which was established with assistance from the NRDDDB and conducts training programmes for post-secondary school children and adults (Wihak, 2009: 24; Iwokrama, 2003: 25; Smock, 2008: 240; Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 227). As mentioned in Chapter Five (Sub-section 5.4.5), training programmes at the Bina Hill Institute revolve around the preservation of local culture (e.g. traditional skills workshops) and improving local capacity for economic development (e.g. tourism courses) (Wihak, 2009: 24). These programmes have proven to be popular with local youth and continue to promote the local indigenous cultural heritage.

An important *ex-situ* cultural heritage management project is the national Amerindian Heritage Month. This is a government supported month-long (every September) celebration of Amerindian culture that features performances (e.g. cultural presentations, competitions, dances, crafts, food) in Amerindian communities across the country (Smock, 2008: 23; MRU, 1996: 47). An industry professional from Surama (Interview I4, 2012) commented that heritage month is one of the primary and few stages for celebrating Amerindian heritage. On whether or not heritage is celebrated enough in the Rupununi, he (*ibid*) stated:

*“No, I don’t think so. Yes, between ourselves we are trying on our own. We have our month of celebration and we would try to do our songs and dance and so on. So it is there but I don’t think it is enough. Actually we have a culture group that really is not preparing for the tourists but for our own indigenous celebration. When the tourists come, we share with them but this is not for sharing with them. But if they come when the culture group is present, they will perform for them.”*

Smock (2008: 23-24) describes heritage month as an event that focuses on the “...development of the Amerindian people” and celebrates their contributions to society. He (*ibid*) also states that “...in Georgetown the month passes highly unrecognized”. Interestingly, a brief visit during data collection (Jan. 2012) to the

National Trust in Georgetown, the organisation responsible for documenting cultural heritage on a national scale, revealed that no material had been collected on the Rupununi region at that time. Tourism has also been beneficial as a tool for protecting cultural heritage resources, especially in the village of Surama. However, this has been less efficient than natural heritage and is covered in more detail in the next section (6.5). Although cultural heritage appears to be fading with little management structures in place, communities still understand its importance with all 119 (100%) questionnaire respondents agreeing that cultural heritage resources are important for community well-being. One hundred and fourteen (96%) questionnaire respondents also felt that protecting cultural heritage resources is equally important to a community's economic strength. This enthusiasm for culture will most likely be an important factor for the future management of cultural resources, including archaeological resources which are discussed further in the next sub-section.

#### **6.4.2.1 Archaeology**

A key aspect of cultural heritage in the Rupununi that remains unexplored and subsequently un-managed is the archaeological record. According to Plew (2004: 7), an archaeologist who has done research in the Rupununi, the archaeology of "...Iwokrama and the North Rupununi is relatively unknown but has great potential for addressing important research questions in north-eastern South America" (see also Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 165). He (*ibid*) further adds that additional archaeological research could provide information on the long-term environmental changes within the region, based on the chronological changes in settlement patterns (e.g. food procurement, early hunting groups) for indigenous communities. Through previous, small archaeological surveys, researchers have found a variety of objects including petroglyphs (see Figure 6.2) throughout the Rupununi (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 165; MRU, 1996: 15). Plew (2004: 12-13) adds that cemetery sites, commonly found in either caves or rock-shelters, are common in the Rupununi and could hold additional artifacts that could reveal more of the human history of the region.



**Figure 6.2: Petroglyphs in the Rupununi**

Stakeholders expressed an urgent need to conduct further archaeological surveys in an attempt to learn more about the region's history. An industry member (Interview I2, 2012) argued:

*"...the fact that we have a terrific history, indigenous history of our past, requires there should be an archaeological survey. All over the north Rupununi, we've heard about burial urns being desecrated in Aranaputa, we've heard of locations where they used to make Kurari, we've heard of healing centers ... we have been able to identify a location where the Patamomas would come to be healed by the people of Annai, ... There are, for example, rocks close to the Karanambu airstrip which they call the Carib rocks, which are there, placed by man but nobody has bothered to analyse the distribution, significance and interpretation of that. But there are a thousand different things, ... sheer rock in the South, petroglyphs in the Burro Burro river, Rupununi River, the Quintarro, for example the village of Crashwater have what they call a sacred site, where you have these 30 inch diameter clay pots, there has not been any attempt to study these, date them, link them together, understand the movement of people in the past, the migrations, the development of agriculture, how cassava became a staple....there is an enormous amount of work to be done, and that has a benefit of not only creating pride and understanding of our past, but also interpreting a product which people go to museums just to see... The problem is that there is a need to correlate all of the available information and put it together. But there are many aspects which still need to be investigated and included in this work."*

Another industry stakeholder (Interview I3, 2012) also stressed that there was a significant amount of knowledge on archaeology that has yet to be discovered. He

(ibid) emphasised, “If you dig deeply and question the older folks, they have legends about the culture, they have histories of sites that tribal wars would have taken place...You will find there are shell mounds that have a legend behind it, petroglyphs, people finding shards of pots and sometimes whole pots which could also become museum pieces”. A voluntary sector member (Interview V1, 2012) added that these archaeological findings could be significant for tourism, but currently are not used at any attraction. He (ibid) stated, “A lot of things in tourism that people don’t pay a great deal of attention to, or are not trying to generate any interest in at all, is archaeology...And I think that can generate some interests if we understand how to present it. That is another area that can generate some interest for tourism”. Further archaeological surveys may reveal a substantial amount of artifacts and data which may be used for tourism in time, but the creation of a management structure to protect and interpret these findings will need to be fully and carefully established before it is used for commercial use.

## **6.5 Tourism and Cultural Heritage**

Previous experience gained by working and living in the Rupununi gave the researcher insight into the tourism structure. In particular, the researcher noticed fewer activities related to intangible cultural heritage in tourism attractions than nature-based activities and also tangible cultural heritage. As a consequence, the survey questionnaire included a question on the sufficient use of intangible cultural resources in tourism, and, whether or not there was room for improvement. The results did in fact demonstrate that nearly half of the participants (43%) felt that intangible cultural resources are not being promoted adequately for tourism. Interestingly, there was a distinct difference between host communities where the majority (82%) felt that intangible heritage is being promoted adequately and tourists where the majority (60%) felt that they were not. However, upon further research from more personal observation and stakeholder interviews, it was found that there were many facets of both intangible and tangible cultural heritage that were not fully represented in tourism attractions. Consequently, attention was then shifted for this research from the lack of intangible cultural heritage in tourism to the lack of the presentation of cultural heritage in general.

It should be noted that although cultural heritage is not as well represented as natural heritage in tourism attractions in the Rupununi, it is not completely absent and in the case of some communities like Surama or Annai, it remains the primary feature.

Furthermore, tourism has helped to revitalise cultural heritage, particularly intangibles, in several communities (e.g. Surama) (Bowers & Corsane, 2012). Cultural heritage is inevitably found in every tourism location in the Rupununi. However, upon closer examination there appears to be significantly more cultural heritage resources that could be utilised for tourism which would also help to address issues of cultural deterioration and economic hardship. For example, commonly found tourism products designed around cultural heritage in the Rupununi include the sharing of traditional knowledge and practices on hunting, fishing, ethno botanical and medicinal use of the rainforest and savannah and cassava harvesting (Bowers & Corsane, 2012: 209-210). However, Amerindian communities also have a rich history of performing arts, dance, music, food and storytelling which feature less in tourism activities (MRU, 1996). Regardless of the proportional use of cultural heritage in tourism, it must remain clear that any use of these resources should be decided through the communities themselves. This will assist with ensuring that their cultural heritage is not translated into meaningless commodities where its true value and significance is lost (Bowers & Corsane, 2012: 211).

This section explores stakeholder perceptions on the inclusion of cultural heritage in Rupununi tourism. The first sub-section (6.5.1) analyses the lack of promotion of cultural heritage resources in tourism as well as the reasons behind this limited use. Furthermore, Surama, a best-practice case study in the region on cultural tourism, is examined to evaluate their approach to community-based cultural tourism. This is followed by a sub-section (6.5.2) on the issue of authenticity and how it relates to the cultural tourism products in the Rupununi.

### ***6.5.1 Adequate Promotion?***

Stakeholder responses further demonstrated that cultural heritage resources, particularly intangibles, are not promoted enough in tourism. One community member (Interview C1, 2012) asserted that she did not feel cultural heritage was being used adequately in tourism. She (ibid) added, "...I think they should. I think they will have to work on it, make it used more for our communities...so it doesn't go away...when they do research on it, they find that it is very important in what Amerindians used to do before". Another host community member (Interview C3, 2012) argued:

*"No, I don't think it's being promoted enough. And it's because I don't think we have enough support from anywhere. It's just during heritage time [Amerindian Heritage Month] you would find everybody having something*

*to celebrate just for that one month, and when heritage month finished, you don't have no other activity to bring these individuals together again to see what they have and see the difference."*

Representatives from other stakeholder groups, including a member of the voluntary sector (Interview V1, 2012), also weighed in on the issue of whether or not cultural heritage is used enough in tourism:

*"I don't think so. I think when Guyana started tourism, everybody labeled what they did as ecotourism because that was the in-term at that time so the focus has continued to be nature. You're seeing a slight devolving because people are starting to realise that they would not have had that amount of nature retained if there was not some community involvement. So from that aspect, you're starting to see some of that being promoted. The more intangible things, like food for example...the traditional things, the bows and arrows, the implements for work, the whole necessities of modern invention which the Amerindians have embraced for a long time...that sort of thing is not adequately captured or promoted."*

An industry professional (Interview I5, 2012) shared these same viewpoints. As for the reasons behind it, she (ibid) argued:

*"I think there has just been too little product development and focus on it. Who is promoting their cultural heritage, really? ...Very few people wear their regalia, people don't see the regalia, the traditional dishes, maybe you get a bit of it, but there's not an emphasis on it. And I think it would be helpful to be an increased emphasis on it... It would be great for the communities for one thing, for them to keep their culture and also because it's definitely of interest for the tourism market too."*

A voluntary sector member (Interview V4, 2012) agreed and discussed one village (Fair View) in particular where it has several cultural resources available but have yet to utilise them for tourism. She (ibid) emphasised how she does not "...think they understand the product or the potential of the product for them. Because I'm sure no one has really sat down with them yet and talked about it...I would like to talk with them more about that". A local industry stakeholder (Interview I2, 2012) added that he also did not "...think everybody is fully aware of the need and potential....you've got the Makushi Research Unit which is probably an ideal means of working, but they need guidance and they need people who can vibrate and work to a checklist and a program that will get the desired results". A member of the media (Interview M2, 2012) spoke of a recent tour guide training session and how the instructors were trying to encourage mentioning their lifestyles while interacting with tourists. He (ibid) specified:



*“Teaching them how to interpret their surroundings through a story...think about the bigger picture because when we first started, it was birding and so a lot of people focused on birding, so it’s getting people to think outside that box. Just getting them aware that to them their normal life is normal, the daily grind of Surama village or wherever it is, but for visitors, think about pointing out the story of your normal lives.”*

A separate media stakeholder (Interview M2, 2012) shared similar thoughts on how the daily aspects of Rupununi life are important for tourism, but not always used. He (ibid) recalled:

*“One of the reasons why I think they are not promoted enough...before tourism became such a great awareness among the folks of the North Rupununi, language, customs, culture, art were on the decline. Because it had no meaning for anyone...yeah, you had a few persons who would come around and we understood that they were tourists, but tourists is those people with big money who have no interests in people like us, that was the thought. So why would I be interested in tourists? ...For that reason, I feel the culture and artwork and everything was going. Not until we recognized we need to sell some of our cultural skills in the tourism market. ‘But we don’t have it, it’s not available on the shelf’ so we have to make it available, to make it available is to bring it back alive.”*

This viewpoint indicates that similar to the natural resources (e.g. trapping of birds), tourism can provide a value for cultural resources. However, the notion that culture must be ‘sold’ can be contradictory. Instead, it may be better for this, and other, stakeholders to use cultural resources in tourism as both a safeguarding measure and economic driver. Additional stakeholder viewpoints were diverse but followed similar themes. A tourist (Interview T4, 2012) described the scarcity of cultural heritage resources, listing “...the music, or dance, none of that, or rituals, art”. A voluntary sector member (Interview V3, 2012) argued, “I think that’s a problem actually. I think the problem is that we are in the process of erosion of a lot of those things and tourism could be one of many ways to be an incentive to retain some of that stuff”. Interestingly, a public sector stakeholder (Interview P1, 2012) remarked, “It is being promoted, not really in the Rupununi but mainly to tourists...it happens in the communities but I do not think it is so widespread”. This comment suggests that cultural heritage may not regularly be celebrated amongst Rupununi communities, but rather mostly used for tourism.

One central reason why cultural heritage is not shared with tourists could simply be because not all Amerindian communities wish to “...commercialize their cultural practices” (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 15). Indeed, interviewees stated that

communities may not want to share certain aspects of their cultural heritage simply because it's not an activity they wish to take part in. For example, a public sector stakeholder (Interview P2, 2012) commented:

*“...you would find now that [cultural heritage] is not promoted so much in the Rupununi... The culture is there but it's not an everyday something...it's not every day you find people that want to get into the business of dancing. If we have a set of tourists coming, we're not going to tell [name #1] or [name #2] that you have to grate cassava, because that's the everyday life of people...it's not that they do it for the tourists to see. That's their living.”*

Other stakeholders agreed that attempting public displays of performing art is something they do not typically associate with Amerindian communities in the Rupununi. A voluntary sector member (Interview V2, 2012) commented that she “...found that [communities] are not very open about their lives... found that the villagers to still be very shy...but those who are being involved in [cultural heritage tourism], they are trying to ensure that they do understand who they are, what their culture is about”. This thought was echoed by a public sector member (Interview P3, 2012) who noted, “Traditionally Amerindians are very shy people, they're very private people, and you can't expect them to adopt something they are not comfortable with... so doing dances and so on, they're not really comfortable”.

One community that has been a so-called ‘exception to the rule’ has been Surama (Figure 6.3). As mentioned in Chapter Five (Sub-section 5.4.2.1), Surama is the flagship of community-based cultural tourism in the Rupununi. The main cultural heritage attractions in Surama include cultural tours of the village and performances by their cultural group involving traditional songs, dance and stories (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007: 172; Smock, 2008: 236; Chan, 2012: 26; CI, 2010: 15). A community member from Surama (Interview C4, 2012) described the cultural group, stating:

*“They compose their own songs, they write them, put the tune to them. And they travel, they went out of the country, to China and so on, portraying their culture. We normally go to Brazil and things. Our culture is our identity, so we want to maintain it and let others know, it is your culture, you should not be ashamed of it.”*



**Figure 6.3: Surama Ecolodge**

Culture has been an “invaluable asset” for Surama as the use of poems, songs and crafts have brought further income to the community (Bynoe, 2006: 15). Bynoe (2006: 15), a Guyanese academic, has stated, “It may be recalled that artisans within the community was a major group that benefited from the ecotourism business. The view, however, contradicts those expressed by the representative of the Amerindian Peoples Association that culture is intrinsic and should not be commercialized”. This last sentence is possibly the shared opinion of other communities in the Rupununi who have yet to pursue more cultural tourism activities. Nonetheless, cultural heritage tourism has become celebrated in Surama and CI (2010: 64) has declared that “...the richness of the cultural aspects of the Rupununi, and of Surama in particular, is so special that it can be one of the most important attractions in the region”. Recent findings by Bynoe (2006: 14-15) have found that over 80% of households in Surama believe that tourism has led to the preservation and revitalisation of their culture. She (ibid) further states:

*“One community elder who noted that people were once ashamed to talk about their way of life, however, currently ‘they are thrilled to share their culture and still do not fully understand why people from across the world would travel great distances and at great expense to visit a community that*

*was so ordinary'. Thus ecotourism helped to foster a sense of pride within the community and greater self-esteem of individuals."*

When asked about cultural heritage tourism in the Rupununi, respondents often pointed to Surama. A host community member (Interview C2, 2012) concurred, adding that there is "...not very much, besides Surama. They have their culture group". A community member from Surama (Interview C3, 2012) noted that although she was pleased with their cultural programmes, she was "...not sure about the rest of the communities because they are not fully involved in tourism...but for us, it helps us because we are still practicing the dances, the shows and things like that". She (ibid) also added that regarding the impacts on cultural heritage, she feels tourism "...has more positive impacts than negative impacts". A local industry professional (Interview I4, 2012) argued that because of the success of cultural tourism in Surama, "...people are now seeing that having a cultural part of tourism is a good idea and so people are going to keep practicing". Relating to the success of Surama's cultural programme, another community member (Interview C3, 2012) acknowledged that it "...has to start from the community level. And then from there you move on and people would see what you are trying to do...and be there to help you in some way". Starting from the community level is a key solution to the issue of authenticity, the topic for the following sub-section.

### **6.5.2 Authenticity**

One central issue with the presentation of cultural heritage in tourism today is the tourist expectation of an authentic experience (CI, 2010: 7). It is important to note that 'authenticity' is a complex and elusive concept (Timothy, 2011: 115; Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 237). Authenticity within tourism represents more than a historically accurate product, which many authors deem to be impossible (Timothy, 2011: 117). Instead, authenticity is about portraying the past, or present, in an accurate manner (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 237). It has become one of the most "pressing debates" recently in the fields of heritage and tourism (ibid). Furthermore, a key idea within this debate is that of a 'staged authenticity', or the process of staging local circumstances for tourist consumption (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 240). Timothy and Boyd (2003: 240-242) argue that there is a front stage where the interaction with tourists occurs and there is a back stage where the heritage performances remain "authentic and true". Timothy (2011:

110-111) adds to this by arguing that if a heritage performance is still carried out in the back stage, “then it must be legitimate”.

Some would argue that staged authenticity does not truly matter for tourists, either because they simply just want to have an “enjoyable experience” (Timothy, 2011: 103), or they cannot make a distinction between “authentic and inauthentic” (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 242). Urry (2002: 9-10; also see Wang, 1999) elaborates on this debate and argues that culture is not static and continually shifts and is remade so the process of “inauthentic staging” is no different from the processes of “cultural remaking” that happens naturally. A tourist’s sense of authenticity is in fact constructed by their beliefs, interpretations, past experiences and perspectives. Subsequently, tourism should not necessarily be about the “search for authenticity” (ibid). Ultimately, the researcher agrees with Urry and feels that authenticity should not be a key ‘attraction’ in tourism as everything is in fact *authentic* as it already is. However, authenticity can be a central issue in valuing tourism products and experiences so the notion of authenticity is comparatively measured against tourism offerings in the Rupununi.

Interviewees were quickly to point out that the Rupununi tourism product remains ‘authentic’ in the eyes of tourists, primarily because local people are still living traditional lifestyles on a daily basis. These traditional lifestyles include, for example, the production of cassava, basket weaving, and hunting. On demonstrating traditional practices for tourism, a community member (Interview C2, 2012) stressed, “We do it just because, not because we like it, but because you have to do it. It’s part of the routine in the village”. On whether or not the cultural tourism product was authentic in the Rupununi, an industry stakeholder (Interview I1, 2012) asserted, “Absolutely, because it’s not a lot of places you can go and still experience that”. Another industry member (Interview I3, 2012) added, “It will not be classified as staged authenticity because that’s their daily livelihood, that’s their sustainable livelihood. They’re not going to put it on because they hear you coming. You will come and meet them doing it”. The researcher learned that performance art is a much less practiced aspect of cultural heritage amongst the communities. In relation to this, a local industry stakeholder (Interview I4, 2012) stated that demonstrating cultural dances and songs will only be done by communities “...because they want to show how it used to be, but it’s not really an everyday thing, just trying to reflect history...they usually do it for the sake of culture”.

Tourist interviewees also took notice of the authenticity of Rupununi tourism. One tourist (Interview T1, 2012) stated that he thought the experience “...was quite authentic” because “...it was that they didn’t do these dances in the evening. You could get that if you want...” but communities chose to carry on with their normal routine instead of specially performing for tourists. Another tourist (Interview T2, 2012) argued that performance aspects of cultural heritage tourism can often feel forced and so he personally did not favour them. He (ibid) stated, “Some places it can look natural, other places, you see the guys are working up there and in the evening they go down and find their feathers and make a tribal dance and to me that feels phony...I think the important thing is if it means something to them”. Based on these statements, the lack of performance arts in Rupununi tourism can be favourable to both host communities and tourists alike. It would appear that there must be ‘meaning’ behind the cultural resources displayed for tourism. This meaning is best achieved with the host community selecting the heritage resources which they are most comfortable sharing.

This notion of presenting a fabricated show through performances was also discussed amongst many stakeholders and is considered to be one of the most “...often cited cultural forms” which deals with authenticity (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 242). An industry member (Interview I2, 2012) stressed that “put-on shows” are of no interest to him. He (ibid) added, “We definitely don’t want that. It has to come through the management and direction of the people themselves who feel it in their bones and do what they feel is right, instead of being stage-managed by outsiders”. A voluntary sector stakeholder (Interview V2, 2012) described the situation as “a very thin line” where communities need to avoid adapting “to a visitor’s needs”. This point was also mentioned by another voluntary sector member (Interview V3, 2012) who elaborated on its relevance to safeguarding cultural heritage. He (ibid) argued, “...having a show put on for tourists, like basket weaving or something, that wouldn’t work. I think it has to be integrated as a larger part of the understanding of the importance of culture and these practices...They have to be part of the everyday life”. A community member (Interview C3, 2012) emphasised that putting on a show and demonstrating aspects of their culture that are not part of the daily routine is a special event. She (ibid) stated:

*“We have some people who want to come see the culture, want to see how we live here, they want to be with us. And we would do, other than going to the homes and farms, we would put on a show for them just to see how it used to be in the olden days...That’s why I was saying only [during*

Amerindian Heritage Month] *you would see these kind of dances and performances*".

Ultimately, drawing from this input, the researcher argues that authenticity is indeed an elusive concept which is difficult to capture. However, the researcher also argues that communities should only share those cultural heritage resources which they are comfortable demonstrating and that have 'meaning' to them. This will help to ensure that both the possessors of the resource and the visitors are satisfied with an authentic tourism experience. Currently, 'performances' of the daily practices of communities (e.g. cassava grating) are authentic and have meaning because most Amerindian livelihoods depend on it. However, the support of performing 'arts' (e.g. dances, songs) appears to vary based on individual communities and therefore should always be contextually considered by each one.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

The aim of this chapter was to expand on the regional tourism profile constructed in Chapter Five. In particular, specific areas of significance within the Rupununi structure have been examined to analyse their relevance to the research question. In comparison to Chapter Five, Chapter Six used data from the semi-structured interviews as its primary source for evaluating stakeholder motivations and perceptions on these particular issues. For example, Chapter Five identified that cultural heritage tourism was not as common as nature-based tourism in the Rupununi while Chapter Six further explored stakeholder viewpoints on why this has occurred and issues relating to cultural heritage tourism.

Within this chapter, a number of themes were explored that included: the distribution of information; the need for a cohesive plan to link the region together; heritage resource management; the use of cultural heritage in tourism; and, additional factors relating to the successful development of sustainable tourism. With the analysis of the data from each of these themes, it became apparent that they all shared a connection. For example, the development of a plan to identify and connect the various heritage resources in the Rupununi benefits several other areas. On the one hand, the creation of this plan and its circulation via a unified Rupununi website would improve the distribution of information to visitors and locals alike. On the other hand, it would enhance marketing efforts and provide equal promotion for cultural heritage resources. In addition, an increase in available information on these resources improves

interpretive strategies at educating local communities and guests on the importance of the Rupununi's indigenous people and natural environment. All of these actions maintain an element of sustainability, whether it is stimulating local economies through increased visitor numbers or improving the protection of heritage resources by allocating value to them through education.

Each theme of Chapter Six has also started to identify ways in which the principles of ecomuseology could benefit sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi. For instance, ecomuseology emphasises the equal recognition and safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage resources. As the Rupununi and its indigenous culture continue to evolve and progress, this will have direct implications in monitoring all heritage resources. Furthermore, it allows for all heritage resources, as approved by communities, to be considered for tourism development. As a result, this may allow new 'value' to be placed on resources, including financial, social and environmental. This and other specific examples are outlined in Chapters Seven and Eight.

In summary, this chapter outlined many concerns for future heritage and tourism management groups and individuals to consider in the Rupununi. Tourism is one of the main economic activities in the region; however, several sustainability matters, such as heritage resource management structures and effective leadership need to be addressed before the area witnesses a sharp increase in visitors. Chapters Seven and Eight explore the applicability of ecomuseology in supporting these issues and others. Chapter Seven analyses areas in which ecomuseological principles can already be found in the Rupununi tourism framework while Chapter Eight considers areas where ecomuseum philosophy is noticeably absent, yet could be used to support sustainability.



## **Chapter 7.**

## 7 Current Ecomuseological Practices.

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### 7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters (Five & Six) critically examined the Rupununi tourism structure. In particular, they identified: the current state of tourism development; key stakeholders and their roles; and, benefits and challenges of tourism development in the region. The researcher then analysed specific and important themes including: information and interpretation; developing a cohesive plan; heritage management; and, the use of cultural heritage in tourism. This examination of the Rupununi tourism framework was necessary to ascertain potential answers to the research question: “how could ecomuseology principles be used to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi?” Chapters Seven and Eight now critically analyse and compare the findings from Chapters Five and Six with the literature on ecomuseology and sustainable tourism development. Chapter Seven first evaluates areas within the Rupununi where ecomuseological-like practices already exist and analyses their impact on sustainable tourism development. This analysis is completed by comparing processes in the Rupununi tourism framework against the 21 principles of the ecomuseum ideal.

Chapter Three introduced the 21 principles, or indicators, which were developed by Corsane *et al.* (2004), based on an on-going review of literature and practice. These principles (refer back to Table 3.1) offer a broad directory of what an ecomuseum would ideally represent and hope to achieve. The principles can be categorised into three subsets: 1 to 6 focus on the democratic and participatory nature of ecomuseums; 7 to 12 demonstrate what an ecomuseum includes and covers; and, 13 to 21 describe an ecomuseum’s actions and methods (Corsane, 2006a: 109). Davis (2011: 285) has suggested that the 21 principles can be considered as a “...toolkit from which key items of ‘equipment’ may be selected”. Corsane (2006b: 404) asserts that whilst the list provides a useful checklist for ecomuseums, “...no two ecomuseums will display all of the same principles...each will show a different configuration of the principles in different proportions”. Although these principles have been used to identify and evaluate ecomuseums (Section 3.4), little literature has yet been published that critique the principles themselves.

Subsequently, this chapter and Chapter Eight will briefly analyse the meaning of each indicator and its relevance to the ecomuseum ideal. Analysing these principles was a necessary process to answer the research question and produced some interesting and useful results.

Evaluating the relationship between the principles of ecomuseology and the Rupununi tourism structure revealed few situations where ecomuseum philosophy both did and did not exist in the region. For example, after examining the field data, it became apparent that several ecomuseological principles are currently being practiced amongst the activities of Rupununi stakeholders. However, further analysis revealed that despite the fact that these principles were already being followed, there were many areas which had the potential for additional and enhanced implementation of ecomuseum philosophy into the tourism framework. For instance, it was discovered that although the Rupununi has a defined geographical border (Principle 8), there exists the possibility of using additional cultural characteristics to define the Rupununi's external and internal borders. This trend is explored further in both this and the following chapters.

This chapter reviews the ecomuseological principles which are currently being followed in the Rupununi while Chapter Eight assesses those principles which are not commonly found. However, and as mentioned above, there are instances in nearly every comparison where one can find both the existence and further potential usage of ecomuseological approaches. To rectify this issue, the chapters were divided with Chapter Seven featuring those principles which are clearly and predominantly present in the Rupununi and Chapter Eight covering those principles which are noticeably absent or considerably less-featured. Additionally, it should be noted that although examples of ecomuseum philosophy can be found in the Rupununi, the term itself is not used anywhere by stakeholders or in promotional literature. Instead, this chapter emphasises the ecomuseological-like principles which are found in the actions of stakeholders in the region.

This chapter aims to demonstrate the relationship between current ecomuseological practices in the Rupununi and sustainable tourism development. This aim is achieved by correlating ecomuseological principles with the heritage management processes and actions in the Rupununi and then considering the link with sustainable tourism literature. In particular, this chapter elaborates on the field data and literature presented in Chapters Five and Six. It also further analyses the work and importance of the

NRDDB, Iwokrama and other stakeholders and explores how their processes and outputs align with ecomuseology. Before the comparison between individual principles and the Rupununi tourism framework, Section 7.2 will first examine the role of ecomuseology in the developing world and the often difficult relationship between heritage management and community development. Afterward, there are three sections which correspond to the three main subsets of the 21 principles. Section 7.3 reviews specific principles which concern democratic and participatory processes while Sections 7.4 and 7.5 deal with coverage and usage respectively. Each section presents a comparison between the principles and Rupununi processes, their connection to sustainable tourism and similar examples from ecomuseums worldwide.

## **7.2 Ecomuseology in the Developing World: Balancing Heritage Management and Development**

It is important to note at the beginning of this chapter that this research project was initiated with the view that ecomuseology is not a model created specifically for the development of tourism. More specifically, it was understood, based on the literature (Section 3.3), that ecomuseums are created with the notion that local people value and protect their heritage first and that development exists as a secondary effect. In other words, ecomuseums recognise the needs of society (e.g. economic development), but they are intended to act more as a supporting mechanism for development instead of the main instrument in and of itself. As the researcher engaged more with the data and literature, it became obvious that depending on the context, this does not appear to always be the case. Indeed, the complex relationship between heritage management and development has been a long and well-known cause for debate in the developing world (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009) and ecomuseology continues this deliberation.

Heritage resources and tourism development share a linked and ambiguous relationship. Du Cros (2001: 166) has stated, “It is impossible to discuss cultural heritage tourism planning without mentioning cultural heritage management”. Is it possible that in some instances, it may be equally difficult to mention heritage management without heritage tourism? Of course the researcher understands that heritage management is conceivable without tourism, but for areas such as the Rupununi that depend on tourism as a primary source of income, there exists enormous potential for tourism development to act as the primary heritage management strategy. However, and as commonly seen in tourism development globally, it is crucial to ensure that the economic benefits from tourism do

not become more important than safeguarding the heritage resources, or the relationship becomes compromised (Section 3.5).

Heritage management is typically more difficult in developing regions due to several key factors including: the dominant funding deficiency; a lack of social and political will; urbanisation; and, modernisation (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 20-21, 33). In their book on cultural heritage and tourism in the developing world, Timothy and Nyaupane (2009: 35) assert, “For developing countries, where the majority of the population is struggling to feed itself, heritage preservation is often not a high priority. There is a budget scarcity for policing and maintaining valuable heritage and cultural assets”. Poverty can be a major issue in the preservation of heritage, especially “...where low per capita incomes and other development indices tend to correspond with low levels of tourism and a lack of conservation efforts” (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 248). As the poorest and least developed country within the Caribbean in terms of per capita income (Jordan & Duval, 2009: 197), Guyana, and the Rupununi in particular, represent a difficult situation in the relationship between heritage management and development.

Often in these situations, “economics” becomes the principal motivation for heritage conservation and preservation (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 20). As a result, it is possible to understand how tourism and heritage management can share an inseparable bond in these localities. Tourism in itself becomes a primary tool in the safeguarding of heritage resources by encouraging an appreciation of the resources (Henderson, 2009: 73). Heritage tourism can assist with the empowerment of local communities, bring income for local people and improve local infrastructure; all of which encourage the protection of heritage resources to sustain livelihoods (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 33-34). Furthermore, heritage preservation can combine with modernisation to improve local economies and promote regional and local identities if properly managed (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 29, 36). Despite the common cynicism of using tourism as a heritage management strategy, tourism can in fact present a beneficial and efficient structure in the long-term protection of heritage resources (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 250). In this regard, there is a direct synergy between tourism development and ecomuseology which is discussed further below.

Due to their specific nature and focus on heritage, ecomuseums possess considerable potential for transforming heritage resources into tourism activities (Maure, 2006: 71;

Davis, 2011: 283). In fact, ecomuseums are considered to be one of the first campaigners of eco-, heritage and sustainable tourism (Babic, 2009: 243). Ecotourism and ecomuseums share similar characteristics in that they combine interpretation, education, ethics, conservation and community benefits (Davis, 2011: 284). Davis (2011: 281) states, “Interestingly, ecomuseums have often been created in places with a low tourist profile but which have aspirations to develop income by attracting more visitors while at the same time trying to assert their cultural identity”. Despite the opportunities for tourism development through ecomuseology, tourism is not always considered the main priority of many ecomuseums in the world and should be part of a balanced and long-term approach involving both the protection of heritage resources and economic development for the community (Cogo, 2009: 99; Maure, 2006: 71). Indeed, tourism can be viewed as an added value for many ecomuseums which are seeking both to safeguard heritage and improve the local economy, as seen in the Ecomusée du Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines (Sub-section 3.2.2).

Tourism can contribute towards many of the aforementioned goals of ecomuseum philosophy such as sustainability, protection of heritage resources and community participation. Graybeal (2010: 16) argues that ecomuseums and ecotourism are examples of alternative tourism, where tourists seek intimate and shared experiences with local culture and environments (see also Davis, 2011:282). In turn, this is mutually reinforcing in achieving sustainable outcomes by keeping tourism small scale and culturally responsible (Murtas & Davis, 2009: 160; Graybeal, 2010: 16). Tourism development and the commoditisation of culture often conflict with conservation agendas amongst a multitude of stakeholders (Lloyd & Morgan, 2008: 2-3). In these instances, the philosophical foundation of ecomuseums, with their focus on mediation and democratisation, can support a mutual structure through dialogue for all parties (Bergdahl, 2006: 107; Davis, 2011: 285). From the viewpoint of all stakeholder groups, sustainable tourism can be an advantageous objective for ecomuseums due to their ability to support its development.

Although the ecomuseum title has not been widely used, its philosophy has been adopted by heritage management organisations in a few developing countries in Latin America, e.g. Brazil and Mexico (Davis, 2004: 97). In these contexts, ecomuseums have often been created to assist marginalised communities and present local culture as active and vibrant in response to their colonial histories (Delgado, 1995: 12; Davis

2011: 268; Graybeal, 2010: 15). Heritage management projects in these contexts that follow ecomuseum philosophy represent more than the traditional western, Euro-centric model and need to both promote and protect heritage resources. De Blavia (1985: 229) had confirmed this notion nearly 30 years ago, stating, “There can be no question today in Latin America of a museum that is devoted only to the heritage; it must also be devoted to development”. Ecomuseology provides an opportunity to bring sustainable development to host communities in these contexts and other relevant stakeholders through the implementation of the 21 principles.

The Rupununi presents a unique case that fits into the debate on heritage management and development in the developing world. The region has a wealth of world-class natural and cultural heritage resources, but struggles with economic development and opportunities for local communities. On the relationship between heritage management and development, a voluntary sector member (Interview V1, 2012) argued that for host communities, “Once [they] see the value for [safeguarding heritage], they’re going to do it. They’ve got to see something tangible for doing it”. This again demonstrates that heritage management and development share a link in localities like the Rupununi.

Although some of the heritage management practices in the region are independent of tourism development (Section 6.4), there remains a large majority which have direct links to the industry. Throughout the analysis of data, the researcher repeatedly asked ‘if tourism were not here, would these heritage management initiatives be taking place’? In some cases, the answers was ‘yes’. However, the question still lingers due to tourism being the main form of economic development for many communities in the region, with direct links to the protection of heritage resources. Therefore, it is the opinion of the researcher that most heritage management strategies in the region will need to be directly linked to development. This understanding guides the train of thought through the next two chapters. Moreover, evaluating the potential of ecomuseology to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi has involved giving equal consideration to ecomuseology, both as a heritage management model and as an economic generator. With this understanding, attention will now be focused on the principles of the ecomuseum ideal which are currently being practiced in the Rupununi.

### 7.3 Democratic Processes

Due to their emphasis on local community empowerment and integration of multiple stakeholders into heritage management frameworks (see Sub-section 3.3.1), ecomuseums are widely considered to be democratic institutions (Corsane, 2006a: 112; Graybeal, 2010: 16; Bergdahl, 2006: 106; Davis, 2011: 277; Maggi, 2006: 65; Fuller, 1992: 328). Ecomuseum philosophy is derived around the recognition of local communities as the main stakeholders and also stresses the importance of democratic partnerships, which encourage shared management (Davis, 2011: 279). As presented in Sub-section 3.3.1, within the ecomuseum paradigm, Corsane (2006: 115) has suggested that there is an ‘in-reach’ strategy where communities and other stakeholders manage their heritage resources from within and not as outsiders. It is this central involvement that instigates joint management and public participation in the protection and development of heritage resources.

The first three principles of the ecomuseum ideal stress the importance of direct community involvement and the democratic participation and collaboration amongst all stakeholders. Communities are especially important as their involvement in heritage management allows for: a reduction in the likelihood of conflict; improved quality of planning; the conservation of time and costs; ensuring sustainability of plans; and, increases the community’s ownership of its heritage which enhances a general sense of community (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 57-58). In her book, *Uses of Heritage*, Smith (2006: 29) discusses different forms of heritage discourse. In particular, she (2006: 29-30) elaborates on the notion of an “authorized heritage discourse” (AHD) in which the “proper” management of heritage lies with experts (e.g. historians, archaeologists) due to their ability to accurately identify the value and knowledge of heritage for future generations. Although the collaboration and input of experts is encouraged in ecomuseology, they would not solely guide the process. Smith (2006: 29-31) acknowledges heritage as a complex idea that exists beyond the confines of materiality and one that is rooted in the present meaning for communities. In this regard, she (2006: 35) suggests that heritage management that seeks to directly involve communities is part of an alternative heritage discourse. In this discourse, the processes and innate meaning of heritage for communities are equally considered amongst the general heritage management processes. It is this alternative heritage discourse that aligns more perfectly with the ecomuseum ideal and is demonstrated through the following principles.



This section analyses the democratic processes being used by Rupununi stakeholders in managing local heritage resources and tourism development. In particular, it addresses the level of community participation in management decisions and activities, whilst evaluating the collaborative approach used by other stakeholders in the region. The section also includes some international examples of democratic ecomuseum processes before reaching conclusions on the importance of community empowerment and stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism development.

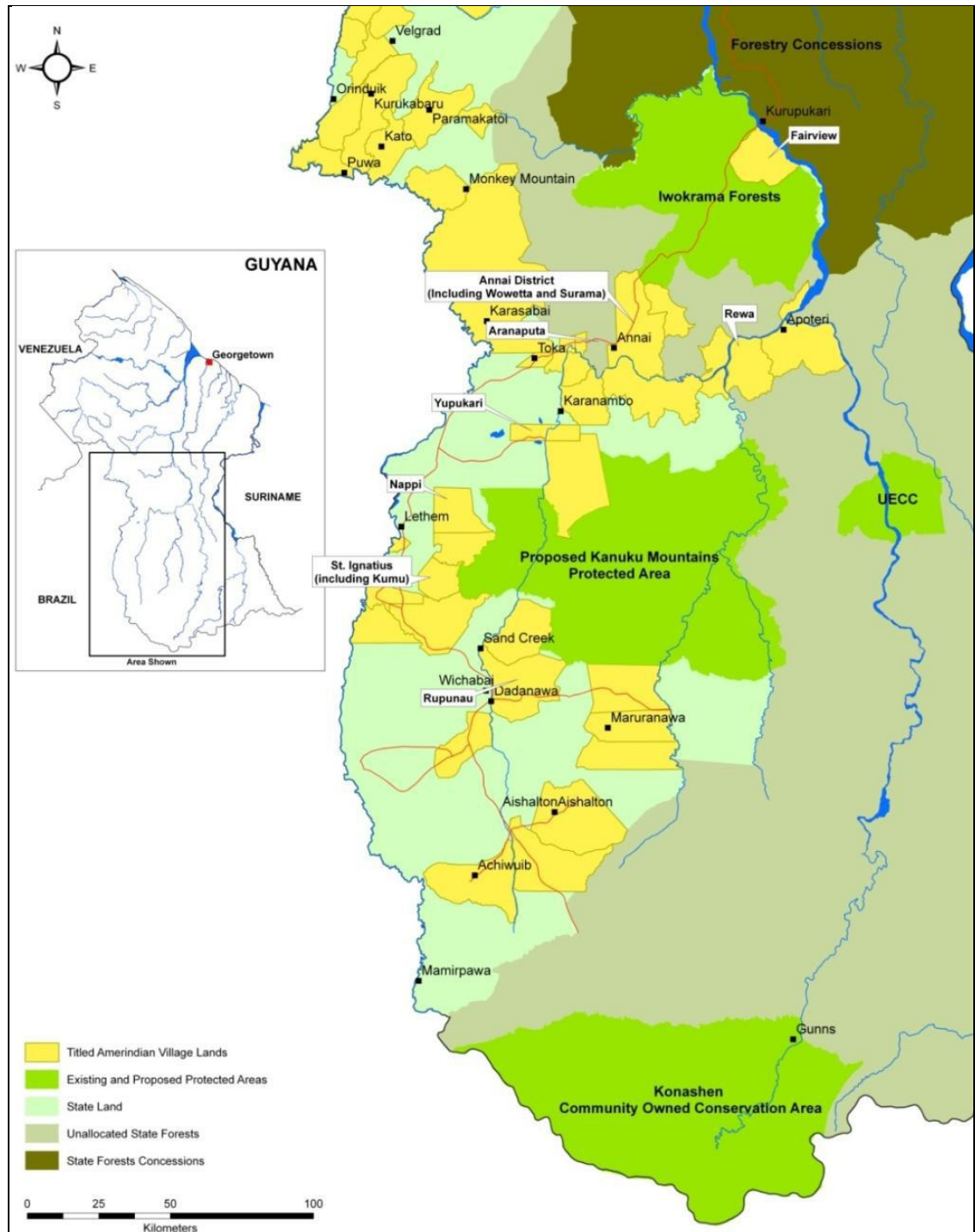
### 7.3.1 *Principle 1*

➤ *Be steered by local communities;*

The first principle of the ecomuseum ideal seeks to establish from the outset that communities form the core of ecomuseological operations and philosophy. Communities are not involved only as a stakeholder group to be consulted in the management of heritage, but instead are essential in the process of participation and negotiation. In other words, communities are not the providers of consultation for outside stakeholders but instead are the recipients of these reports with final decision making powers. Communities maintain the direction of heritage management and as Principles 2 and 3 further detail, collaboration and joint input become a guiding support for the community's direction for its heritage management efforts. Principle 1 posits community involvement beyond the act of participation and into one of direct control of making decisions. In their book on *Integrated Heritage Management*, Hall and McArthur (1998: 58) assert that consulting communities is a sharing form of involvement and differs from participation. They (ibid) state, "Consultation will allow people some influence on the assumptions and decisions to be made but is not as comprehensive as true participation, where people are involved from so early on that they fully understand how assumptions were identified and decisions reached". Indeed, decision-making strategies which are participatory and guided by communities are the "...purest form of community involvement" because of its ability to produce "...understanding, support and input" (ibid).

Through the various heritage management structures in the Rupununi, communities have direct input and control over the majority of the region's heritage. Firstly, large tracts of community land in the Rupununi (see Figure 7.1), and its associated heritage

resources, are owned directly by Amerindian communities with the remainder owned by the State, including protected areas (CI, 2010: 13).



**Figure 7.1: Map of Land Tenure of the Rupununi**  
(CI, 2010: 14)

Under the *Amerindian Act* of 2006, village lands are communally owned by residents who have permanent tenure and sole management rights over these areas (ibid). Furthermore, the NRDDDB, comprised of members from 16 communities in the North

Rupununi, are tasked with overseeing nearly all development and heritage management initiatives in the Rupununi. The NRDDDB (2012; see also Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 64) mission statement reads:

*“The NRDDDB is a well-managed, transparent development organization representing and negotiating on behalf of its communities with stakeholders to secure the preservation of indigenous culture, the flow of economic benefits to the communities and the sustainable utilization of community natural resources.”*

Negotiating with stakeholders to ensure benefits for host communities and the sustainability of heritage resources characterises a system, which confirms that the local voice is dictating local action. Concerning their partnership with Iwokrama, the NRDDDB states, “One of the key functions of the NRDDDB is to serve as the formal consultative and decision-making body on behalf of the district stakeholder communities in the implementation of the Iwokrama International Rain Forest Programme” (NRDDDB, 2012). This statement emphasises that the NRDDDB has a ‘steering’ role in the joint management of the Iwokrama reserve as the “...consultative and decision-making body” representing North Rupununi communities.

Specifically regarding tourism, and as featured in Chapter Five, Rupununi communities also are highly involved in the management of tourism. Half of the tourism businesses are Amerindian-owned and all businesses indicated that 60% or more of their employees are Amerindians (CI, 2010: 30). This fact runs parallel to the 75% (89/119) of questionnaire participants who agreed that host communities are empowered in making tourism decisions in the Rupununi. This was made further evident through stakeholder opinions who added that communities “...have a lot of control” over tourism development (Interview I5, 2012) and the “communal spirit” can be felt when travelling through the region (Interview T2, 2012). Specific examples include the work of Surama (Sub-section 5.4.2), which also clearly demonstrate the power communities have over heritage management.

These features reflect an organisation and its representative communities which have a voice in the direction and management of their heritage. Communities have taken on a decisive role in both the negotiation of, and participation in, heritage management and development strategies. Although they maintain this direction, the NRDDDB and resident communities still maintain that this is done through numerous joint

management and collaboration schemes with stakeholders, which is covered in the next sub-section.

### 7.3.2 *Principle 2*

- *Allow for public participation from all the stakeholder and interest groups in all the decision-making processes and activities in a democratic manner*

As the abovementioned text suggests, one of the central features of ecomuseology is democracy. Principle 2 states that this democratic approach is founded in the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes. As a result, ecomuseums often propose to provide a forum for public interaction in which every individual or group has an opportunity to be heard (Corsane, 2006a: 112; Graybeal, 2010: 16; Bergdahl, 2006: 106; Davis, 2011: 277; Maggi, 2006: 65; Fuller, 1992: 328). For example, the The Him Dak Ecomuseum, which is the only identified ecomuseum in the United States (Ecomuseum Observatory, 2011), has been a “democratic educational resource” for both the community and visitors and continues to be successful (Fuller, 1992: 362). Likewise, the Ha Long Ecomuseum in Vietnam adopted the ecomuseum framework (1999) with the aim to “...enhance collaboration and stakeholder involvement in the development process while recognizing the relationship between heritage management and sustainable tourism. It seeks to establish channels of communication in a fragmented stakeholder community” (Lloyd & Morgan, 2008: 11). The ecomuseum has since gone on to be recognised as a national museum and World Heritage Site and is the only ecomuseum in the world with these designations (Davis, 2011: 236). Amareswar Galla, who has been one of the main advisers to the Ha Long project has stated (2002: 69) that this ecomuseum could be a model for similar projects elsewhere and “The Ecomuseum development has shown that, by engaging interest groups in dialogue and partnership, it is possible to bring issues of conservation to the forefront of public consciousness and to have a substantial positive impact on irresponsible patterns of behaviour”.

In the Rupununi, the forum for public participation from stakeholders can be found within the monthly meetings of the NRDDDB. According to the Guyana Tourism Authority (2011; see also Iwokrama, 2012), the NRDDDB:

*“... provides a mechanism for community leaders to meet, discuss and make decisions relating to the NRDDDB operation for their respective*

*communities... The NRDDDB meetings are open to Government, NGOs and other agencies and relevant organizations would usually be invited to attend the monthly meetings based upon the specific issues to be addressed. Membership representation of the Board has been changed to 16 community leaders, one elected community member from each village, a youth group leader, Toshao for Annai District, an elder and one woman leader. This type of decision-making structure is new and innovative for communities in the North Rupununi. This model allows for the sharing of ideas and experiences, problem-solving, decision-making, highlighting problems and issues to find solutions relating to their respective communities. The NRDDDB is recognized locally, nationally and internationally as a legitimate body that serves the purpose of consultation and collaboration for social and economic development in the North Rupununi” (researcher’s emphasis).*

This unique platform for multi-stakeholder participation and collaboration can be considered a democratic paradigm due to the inclusive nature for all stakeholder groups. Figure 7.2 further outlines the structure for stakeholder involvement in the North Rupununi. As one can see, the community members themselves are at the top of the organisational chart with representation coming from a variety of internal and external partners.

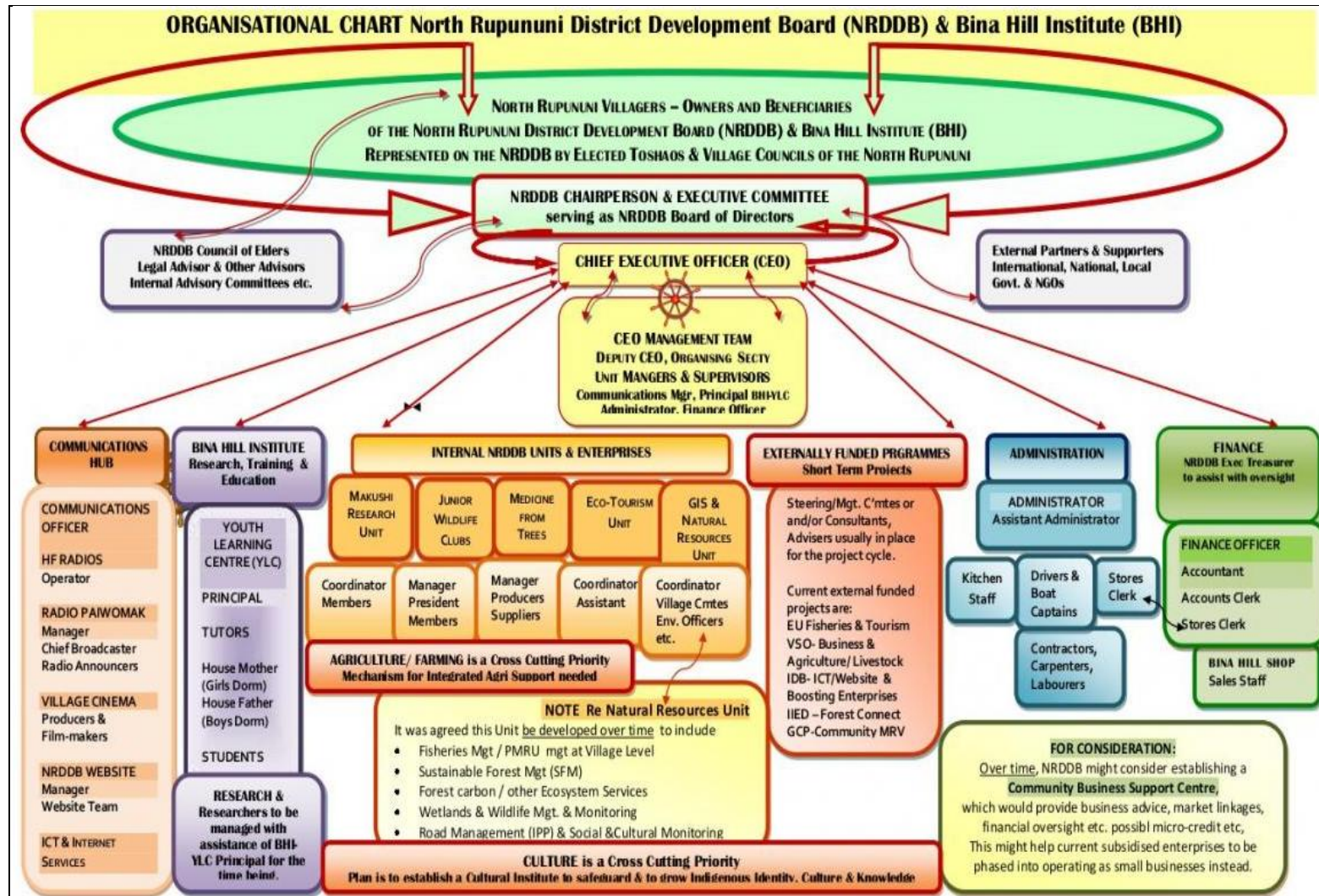


Figure 7.2: NRDDB Organisational Chart (NRDDB, 2012)

The inclusion of legally elected officials, female and elderly representatives, as well as youths, ensure that the different voices in each community have an opportunity of being heard. The NRDDDB consider themselves to serve and function “...as the community stakeholder forum with representation from other key leaders from community-based organisations, local civil society groups and institutions” (NRDDDB, 2012). Their (ibid) specific objectives regarding public participation and stakeholder engagement include:

- *To bring together its constituent communities so as to:
 
  - *facilitate community development planning;*
  - *assist in implementing policy;*
  - *encourage co-operation and coordination of activities of its constituent communities.**
- *To encourage and facilitate a process of consultation, collaboration, collective planning and general networking amongst Regional and District authorities, local government bodies, NGOs and other organizations involved in the management and development of its constituent communities.*
- *To create communication links among its membership and its constituent communities, and between these and all other relevant local and international organizations, and to network and establish relations with such organizations where possible.*
- *To serve as a forum where its constituent communities can express concerns, find resolutions and implement actions.*
- *To mobilize resources and generate income so as to facilitate and support community development initiatives as well as for the other objectives and activities of the NRDDDB.*
- *To promote and encourage the involvement of women in decision-making and participation in all community plans and projects.*
- *To encourage the development of youths within its constituent communities, and to secure and support opportunities for their advancement.*
- *To monitor the impact and effects of all regional, national and international programmes and/ or initiatives upon its constituent communities, including the Iwokrama programme, in order to offset any adverse effects of these and to formulate plans and partnership arrangements within the stakeholder framework of the Iwokrama Programme and other such agencies in the interest of the communities and to lobby for the implementation of such plans.*

In a similar fashion, Iwokrama has provided leadership in the area of stakeholder collaboration and democratic participation. Although, it is worth noting that the Iwokrama project started out in a drastically un-democratic manner resonant of an ‘authorised heritage discourse’ where the one-million acre reserve was established in a top-down manner with no consultation of the local communities or the Guyanese people in general (Allicock, 2003: 2). However, since then it has adopted significantly different management techniques and become a world leader in collaborative management (Iwokrama, 2012). They describe their work as the bringing together “...in a unique alliance” 16 local communities who are shareholders and participants in the Iwokrama project, scientists and other stakeholders involved in their operations (Iwokrama, 2012; Iwokrama, 2003: 10). Iwokrama is dedicated to a “participatory approach” in the management of its heritage resources and has worked closely with the NRDDDB, the Bina Hill Institute, Rupununi communities and external stakeholders in the management of the North Rupununi Wetlands (ibid).

### 7.3.3 *Principle 3*

- *Stimulate joint ownership and management, with input from local communities, academic advisors, local businesses, local authorities and government structures*

The third principle of the ecomuseum ideal closely follows the fundamental meaning of the first two principles. Like Principle 1, Principle 3 strives to include communities in management decisions and have them jointly manage the protection and development of heritage resources. Joint ownership and management indicates that local communities work closely with other stakeholders in the managing of heritage resources and development. This principle recognises that heritage has individual and communal meaning for all stakeholders and therefore decision-making power should be shared between each of the stakeholder groups, most especially by the host communities who depend on the area for their livelihoods. A good example of this includes Ekomuseum Bergslagen in Sweden. The ecomuseum is a good representation of a complex partnership arrangement and “...takes the form of a collaboration that includes seven local authorities (municipalities)” (Stiftelsen Ekomuseum Bergslagen, 2012; Davis, 2011: 285-286). Principle 3 aligns strongly with Principle 2, except it moves beyond the notion of participation to one of joint ownership and management, signalling a higher level of acknowledgement and partnership amongst stakeholder groups.



Although stakeholder relationships are dynamic and often difficult to manage, they are nonetheless vastly important in heritage management (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 41-43). The inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making, relative to their involvement, involves several central elements (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 48). This includes (ibid):

- *Acknowledging the ‘ownership’ of heritage by various stakeholder groups within the community;*
- *Recognising that different stakeholder groups may have very different perceptions of the value of heritage and means of communicating those values;*
- *Identifying key stakeholders and acknowledging that there is a range of reasons for stakeholder involvement, including a desire to assist constructively in heritage conservation, to express a value position or self-interest, or be kept informed;*
- *Specifically identifying what is required from stakeholders, and what managers can be provided in return;*
- *Recognising continuous stakeholder involvement throughout the implementation of strategies.*

The approaches, values and interests of stakeholders in heritage management should be recognised by both internal and external stakeholders to improve the way they “...define, interpret and manage heritage” (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 42).

As examples from the first two principles have shown, and by the very nature of management in the region, the Rupununi progresses through the stimulation and use of joint ownership and management. To begin with, due to the fact that the Rupununi is comprised of approximately 60 indigenous communities and covers many political and geographical boundaries, the idea of joint-management and ownership between these groups is a top priority for the NRDDDB. Although each community owns and manages their own lands (NRDDDB, 2012), each North Rupununi community is still involved and has a voice in the joint-management of the region’s heritage resources; this is most evident during the monthly NRDDDB meetings. Furthermore, host communities regularly seek out and collaborate with the government; national and international NGO’s such as Iwokrama, CI and the WWF; businesses; and, several others.

In his paper on the partnerships between the NRDDDB and Iwokrama, local Amerindian leader, Sydney Allicock (2003:4) describes a partnership approach that includes input from different stakeholder groups. Labelled by Allicock (ibid) as the “three-legged

stool”, it is a symbol which has been adopted by the NRDDDB and includes one leg representing the public sector, another representing the local communities and the third one representing the non-government sector (including the private sector). Allicock states (ibid):

*“These legs together support the seat of sustainable development. If one is weak the system is compromised. ...This is rooted in the comparative advantage its people [communities] hold through their wealth of traditional ecological knowledge and their sense of communal ownership over resources and rights. Through the NRDDDB, the communities of the North Rupununi have lobbied for and are slowly but surely gaining a seat at the table of major planning and decision-making.”*

In addition to representing communities in the North Rupununi, the NRDDDB serves as the “umbrella organisation” for several local groups and institutions (see Figure 7.3) that it has helped create (Allicock, 2003: 4). Allicock (ibid) notes that this “...allows for internal power-sharing mechanisms and division of roles and responsibilities which in turn provides for leadership development and broad-based ownership of the process”. The NRDDDB promotes collaboration between stakeholders to maximise benefits for host communities, while also considering the values of its partners (Allicock, 2003: 8). For example, representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and Guyana Forestry Commission participate in NRDDDB meetings and serve as technical advisors on projects between the NRDDDB and national government (Allicock, 2003: 8-9). Furthermore, Iwokrama is considered a modern “...world leader in collaborative natural resource management with indigenous communities” (Iwokrama, 2003: 8), due to a high level of stakeholder engagement from appropriate partners (Wihak, 2009: 20; Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 253; also see sub-section 5.4.4). The collaborative nature of the NRDDDB and Iwokrama reflects heritage management strategies that have direct synergy with Principles 1-3. Now, attention will be shifted towards the relationship these principles have with sustainable tourism.

#### **7.3.4 Link with Sustainable Tourism**

The principles described above reflect a democratic approach to heritage management which encourages stakeholder collaboration and emphasises the importance of community involvement. Through the literature presented in Chapter Two, it is often revealed how vital these elements are to the sustainable development of tourism. In Section 2.3, Bramwell *et al.* (1996) describe sustainable tourism principles which state,

“All stakeholders need to be consulted and empowered in tourism decision-making, and they also need to be informed about sustainable development issues... The approach emphasises the importance of satisfying human needs and aspirations, which entails a prominent concern for equity and fairness”. This sub-section elaborates more on the importance of stakeholder collaboration and community participation in sustainable tourism development.

Each stakeholder group in sustainable tourism development has diverse values, attitudes, agendas and action plans. Although these differences remain, their respective motivations must all be considered in sustainable tourism operations (Swarbrooke, 1999: 69). While some stakeholder groups hold more power over decision-making (e.g. public and private sectors) in tourism, the other groups remain a powerful and influential force that can influence planning and management processes. In particular, the inclusion of local communities in management and development plans is a key factor for sustainability. As seen in Sub-sections 2.4.4 and 5.4.1, community empowerment and participation improves the benefits local people receive from tourism development as the “...local stewards of the resources”, which subsequently encourages their long-term commitment to the protection of these resources (CI, 2010: 3; see also Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 226; Davis, 2011: 285).

In order for tourism development to be sustainable and successful, it requires an integrated effort from all six of Swarbrooke’s (Section 2.4) stakeholder groups (see also Timothy, 2002: 162; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 30-31; Byrd *et al.*, 2008: 693; Berno & Bricker, 2001: 12). Williams and Shaw (1998: 57-58) confirm, “A successful approach to sustainable tourism requires a holistic approach in which the actions and interests of all major stakeholders are combined”. Stakeholder collaboration allows for increased dialogue and cooperation in creating sustainable policies and frameworks and maintains several principles of sustainability (Sub-section 2.3.2) including “...efficiency, equity, cultural and ecological integrity, community ownership, integration, holism, balance and harmony” (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 30-31; Bramwell & Lane, 2000: 1-2; Timothy, 2002: 155). For example, Wearing and Neil (1999: 134) have argued that partnerships between the government and tourism industry have “...allowed the private sector to manage operations and run concessions in places where the government lacked the resources, capacity and investment”. Furthermore, Oriade and Evans (2011: 80) have outlined the following potential benefits from stakeholder collaboration:

- *Introduction of changes and improvements as a result of the contributions of a range of stakeholders;*
- *Likely increase in the social acceptance of policies;*
- *Working together may improve cooperation, understanding and mutual respect;*
- *Innovation and effectiveness may increase through the sharing of ideas and benchmarking;*
- *Likely increase in commitment;*
- *Development of skills;*
- *Pooling of resources to achieve economies of scale and efficiency;*
- *Sensitivity of policy to local values and residents' expectations;*
- *Broadening of the local economic and social base.*

Tourism networks amongst stakeholder groups are arguably a manifestation of this collaboration. Hall (2000: 145) states, "Networks refer to the development of linkages between actors (organizations and individuals) where linkages become more formalized towards maintaining mutual interests". Network structures improve the balance of "hierarchical control" and allow for the stakeholder groups with less power (e.g. host community, tourists, media, voluntary sector) in decision-making processes to play a larger role, thus further contributing towards sustainable development (Hall, 2000: 144; see also Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010: 113). These structures allow for the increased probability that negative economic, environmental and social impacts will be mitigated and that benefits will be equally distributed amongst all stakeholder groups.

In the end, the adoption of techniques similar to ecomuseum philosophy has contributed to the sustainable development of Rupununi tourism. When asked to rank the importance of the six different stakeholder groups, 96% (114/119) of questionnaire participants stated that all groups were equally important in the development of tourism. This agreement hints at a stakeholder base that understands the importance of each group's contribution to the sustainable development of the industry and their collaboration. Indeed, 99% (118/119) of participants feel that tourism stakeholders should work together and 100% (119) of participants felt that more collaboration amongst stakeholders would improve the sustainable development of tourism in the Rupununi. CI (2003: 20) also agrees, stating that the sustainable development of tourism "...will only be achieved with the involvement and support of numerous organizations and individuals".

Although stakeholders agree that more collaboration between groups would be beneficial, cooperation between them thus far has been considered a successful endeavour. For example, several stakeholders describe an atmosphere of cooperation between groups. A member from the voluntary sector (Interview V1, 2012) commented, "...fortunately, we've seen a lot of cooperation over the years", while a member of the industry asserted "...we do not call other tour operators a competitor; we call them collaborators...we don't see ourselves as competing against each other, but supporting each other" (Interview I3, 2012). Multiple partnerships have been formed between the public, private and voluntary sectors in the Rupununi. This includes initiatives between national and foreign governments, several NGOs, local tour operators, the Guyana Tourism Authority and the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (CI, 2010: 35, 73). The continuation of these partnerships will remain vital to the protection of heritage resources and stimulation of economic development in the Rupununi.

#### **7.4 Coverage and Inclusion**

Principles 7-12 move beyond the democratic atmosphere of ecomuseums and identify the specific features ecomuseology covers and includes. More specifically, these principles represent the surface identity, or appearance, of ecomuseums. Referring back to Rivard's equation (1988) in Chapter Three (Figure 7.3; also seen in Section 3.3), the concept of 'territory' is an important element for Principles 7-12. The inclusion of territory signifies the *in-situ* focus and importance of including a designated geographical area (Davis, 2004: 96; Corsane & Holleman, 1993). It is within this geographical area where ecomuseums place special meaning on the diachronic interrelationships between host communities and the natural environment, which form their identity and 'sense of place' (Parkes, 2001: 68; Fuller, 1992: 330). Furthermore, the *in-situ* interpretation and protection of all heritage resources, intangible and tangible, movable and immovable, creates a 'fragmented' network of sites which is linked through their shared identity.

*Traditional Museum = building + collections + experts + public*

*Ecomuseum = territory + heritage + memory + population*

**Figure 7.3: Rivard's Equation (1988)**

This section analyses two principles (7 & 11) amongst this group which are common features in the Rupununi tourism structure. Information presented in Chapters Five and Six will be critically compared with these principles to illustrate their equivalence with the ecomuseum ideal. Lastly, these findings will again be equated with their value to sustainable tourism development.

#### **7.4.1 Principles 7**

➤ *Focus on local identity and a 'sense of place'*

Again using the significance of the aforementioned notion of territory, it is important to discuss how ecomuseology contributes to the development of an identity or 'sense of place' of a specific geographical location (Parkes, 2001: 68). Place is a polyvocal, complex human construct that needs to be experienced within its actual environment and can be manifested in both tangible and intangible heritage (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 249-250; Davis, 2011: 286-287; Relph, 1976). Individuals and communities develop their own notions of sense of place as they process their relationship with environmental factors associated with these spaces or sites, often drawing on their past experiences. Through the associations that individuals or communities link to these factors, they invest meanings in these spaces or sites (Kyle *et al.*, 2004; Relph 1976; Scannell & Gifford 2010). It should also be considered that these environmental factors are not solely physical or geographical, but also include those of economic (Cross *et al* 2011), social (Uzzell *et al.*, 2002; Woldoff 2002), cultural (Mazumdar & Mazumdar 2004) and political aspects (Staeheli & Mitchell 2004).

Davis (2011: 22) refers to place as a "chameleon" concept that changes "colour" through individual perceptions over time. The ability of ecomuseums to capture this elusive essence of a location is enhanced by its *in-situ* location and emphasis on the day- to-day details which define its identity (Davis, 2011: 287). Communities themselves contribute enormously to the identity of a place through their interactions with the space and their empowerment in defining its identity is crucial (Davis, 2011:

22-25; Parkes, 2001:68). Parkes (2001: 68) argues, "...an area must be as defined by the people who feel some common association between themselves and the landscape they inhabit" (see also Corsane *et al.*, 2009: 11; Zerrudo, 2006: 167).

In the Rupununi, local Amerindian communities have created their sense of place based on a world view limited to a specific geographical region and strong reciprocal associations with the natural environment (Sub-section 1.4.3) which defined their cultural ideologies and practices (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 250-251; MRU, 1996; Read *et al.*, 2010: 216). Their cultural systems are based around traditional livelihood practices and also heavily influence their local sense of place (*ibid.*). This locally created Rupununi identity has become the foundation for many tourism projects in the region and translated into a shared sense of place amongst all stakeholders (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 250-251). In other words, a sense of place will vary according to the different stakeholders or individuals in general, but there exists certain features which universally define the Rupununi for all stakeholders. Whether it is specific natural landscapes, traditional cultural attributes (e.g. thatched benabs, balata carvings) or intangible processes (e.g. fishing, stories, cassava harvesting), the Rupununi is most often associated with these identities. A local community member (Interview C4, 2012) confirmed, "Our culture is our identity, so we want to maintain it".

Host communities, Iwokrama, the NRDDDB, and several other organisations are working together to maintain these heritage features which provide the Rupununi with a distinctive identity and sense of place (Corsane & Bowers, 2012: 258). These efforts exist under both the authorised and alternative heritage discourses. For example, Iwokrama, host communities and the NRDDDB jointly-manage the Wildlife Clubs programme (Sub-section 6.4.3), a bottom-up approach which promotes environmental education and the preservation of traditional cultural skills (James, 2012; Wihak, 2009: 23-24). Similarly, programmes initiated through the assistance of Iwokrama and the NRDDDB, such as the Makushi Research Unit (Sub-section 6.4.3) and Bina Hill Institute (Sub-section 5.4.5), have each contributed to preserving the special characteristics of the Rupununi. Additional ongoing work by stakeholders, such as CI (2010: 71) and private industry businesses with their focus on tourism development, which showcases local heritage resources and sense of place, also contributes to the presentation and preservation of the Rupununi identity (Sections 5.4 & 5.5). Other activities which preserve the identity of the Rupununi include elements of the authorised heritage discourse, such as the protected areas of Iwokrama and Kanuku Mountains. Although

following a different management approach, they still contribute to the Rupununi identity.

Through these initiatives, and combined with the collaborative and community centred approach mentioned above (Davis *et al.*, 2010: 87; Davis, 2011: 24), heritage management and development in the Rupununi is prominently focused on local identity and sense of place. By supporting community empowerment, Iwokrama and the NRDDDB are assisting communities in promoting their traditional knowledge, which stimulates pride and maintains a local sense of place. However, there remains significant potential for showcasing the local identity, relative to cultural heritage resources, through tourism and this is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

#### 7.4.2 Principle 11

- *Promotes preservation, conservation and safeguarding of heritage resources in-situ*

According to Corsane (2006a: 109), Principle 11 falls under the ‘coverage and inclusion’ grouping from the list of 21. However, it is this principle which arguably promotes one of the most important uses or outputs (Section 7.5) from ecomuseology, the *in-situ* protection of heritage resources. In reference again to Rivard’s equation (Figure 7.4), the importance of protecting heritage resources *in-situ* resonates with each of the four elements: heritage, territory, population and memory. Heritage is an important symbol of individual, communal, regional and national identities (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 35). Furthermore, identities are sourced through the daily interaction between the population and heritage resources. This interaction evokes memory and aids the formulation of a sense of place. Subsequently, the protection of these resources becomes an important initiative in the protection of the local way of life and individual identity.

In Chapter Six (Section 6.4), many of the methods used in the preservation and conservation of heritage resources in the Rupununi were discussed. Section 6.4 revealed that the Rupununi is in a state of change and heritage management strategies are becoming increasingly important. Also demonstrated were several examples of heritage management structures that are illustrative of a population which values a strong conservation ethic, particularly concerning natural resources (Sub-section 6.4.1). The use of tourism, one of the main economic industries in the region, also has



importance as a heritage management tool due to the value it places on heritage resources (Sub-section 7.5.3). Tourism then becomes a key *in-situ* management tool for heritage resources, with its focus of using the destination and its resources as the main ‘product’ for customers. As suggested in Section 7.2, techniques for safeguarding heritage should be established equally alongside development initiatives that consider a local community’s well-being and provides them with tangible benefits for conserving and preserving heritage resources.

Table 7.1 below outlines many of the heritage conservation and preservation initiatives that have been conducted in the Rupununi. It should be noted that this list is not comprehensive, but rather meant to demonstrate that there are on-going heritage management techniques being utilised in the Rupununi.

**Table 7.1: Rupununi *in-situ* Heritage Management Techniques / Strategies**

<i>Natural Heritage Resources</i>	<i>Cultural Heritage Resources</i>
Educational Outreach from Iwokrama, CI, WWF, etc.	Makushi Research Unit
Wildlife Clubs	Wildlife Clubs
Tourism	Cultural Groups (Surama)
Establishment of Protected Areas (Iwokrama and Kanuku)	Tourism
Community conservation zones	Bina Hill Institute courses
Arapaima farming project	Community mapping of archaeological sites
Training / workshops in natural resource management	
Community mapping of natural resources	
Conservation Contracts	
Community based research initiatives	
Using indigenous knowledge for conservation management strategies	

As reflected by Table 7.1, and also mentioned in Sub-section 6.4.1, there is a concentrated effort on natural resource management in the Rupununi that is partially due to the strong conservation outreach conducted by Iwokrama, CI and other stakeholders (Mulder *et al.*, 2009: 880; Bynoe, 2006: 16). In addition to the strategies and techniques listed in Sub-section 6.4.1, additional natural resource management

efforts can be found in various projects including sustainable Arapaima (local fish) farming, training programmes, community mapping, research projects and conservation contracts (NRDDB, 2012). The latter includes specific measures such as reforestation projects and resource surveys (Allcock, 2003: 7). Each of these management techniques takes place within Rupununi communities, verifying the *in-situ* protection of heritage resources.

These conservation and preservation programmes follow similar ecomuseum practices across the globe. For example, the Ecomuseo della Canapa in Italy was initiated by a local historical association to revive pride in the local rope-making industry (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 226). Local people have donated objects while volunteers manage the site and run educational programmes (*ibid.*). The project was initiated as a way to both capture local identity and aid tourism development (*ibid.*). Another example is the Ekomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike (Sweden) which is located in a wetland where visitors walk on wooden footbridges over numerous sites to view unique birds and vegetation (Bergdahl, 2006: 106). This ecomuseum is funded by the local authority, and is essential in local conservation frameworks (Davis, 2011: 145). Additional examples can be found in the ‘greenways’ in Polish ecomuseums and the Parc Culturel de la Haute Beauce in Canada, a heritage project which originally held the title of ecomuseum (Davis, 2011: 162, 188). Each of these examples showcases heritage management frameworks which center on protecting heritage resources within the destination.

As mentioned above, activities and projects such as this follow ecomuseum philosophy and in particular Rivard’s equation. The utilisation of heritage within a defined territory evokes the interests and memories of local populations, which is an important element in the formation of local identities (Smith, 2006: 60). Furthermore, Smith (*ibid.*) suggests that these memories become especially influential when they “take root” in the concrete. Indeed, using tangible and intangible heritage in local contexts provides the representation that memories require. As a result, communities become more engaged with their heritage and involved in its protection and use. Overall, there is a definitive presence of heritage preservation and conservation strategies within the Rupununi. Whether or not it is the natural landscapes protected within community conservation zones or the preservation of intangibles such as language through the MRU, these initiatives are aimed at preserving the identity of the territory and also serve

as the main products for tourism. The next Sub-section (7.4.3) will now outline how the use of Principles 7 and 11 are related to sustainable tourism development.

### ***7.4.3 Link with Sustainable Tourism***

Principle 7 primarily incorporates the concept of territory from ecomuseum philosophy. More specifically, it promotes the endemic uniqueness of a destination and emphasise the heritage resources which define it. This principle links with sustainable tourism development through several avenues. Firstly, for local culture to benefit from tourism, Davis (2011: 284) argues that local communities must have a strong sense of identity. Having a strong sense of identity contributes to the development of socio-cultural benefits, such as a sense of pride, and results from the promotion of elements which define a destination. For instance, one of the better known award schemes for sustainable tourism is the ‘Tourism for Tomorrow’ awards held by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (Sharpley, 2009: 43). In 2010, the ‘Community Benefit Award’ went to a company called Tourindia (WTTC, 2011). The WTTC (ibid) stated that Tourindia had won because they had shown direct benefits to the community by bringing “...back to life” traditional practices which characterise the region. This demonstrates that sustainable tourism is tied to the social characteristics that define a population and provide a sense of place.

In the Rupununi the actions, which promote a sense of place and the inimitable identity of the region, create pride amongst residents. For example, showcasing indigenous Makushi language through tourism has the ability to inspire its revitalisation by demonstrating its exclusive identity and people’s relationship to it. One stakeholder (Interview M1, 2012) spoke of instances where local people speak in Makushi as opposed to English. He (ibid) asserted, “...but someone say the same thing in Makushi, the native language, and they smile...using the Makushi language they are acquainted with and they smile”. In this way, ecomuseum philosophy aligns with social sustainability (Sub-section 2.3.2) and enables communities to promote those resources which improve their well-being. In addition, focusing on the local identity has also meant preserving local landscapes (e.g. conservation areas) which are symbolic of the Rupununi and fall under the environmental realm of sustainability (Sub-section 2.3.1)

Utilising the identity and special territorial features of the Rupununi can also be crucial to economic sustainability, particularly with marketing. Identifying the shared

characteristics that make up a territory and its associated identity are the basis of marketing strategies. Showcasing and linking the small features of individual communities enables a marketer to create a larger attraction, which has more potential for appealing to visitors and earning more revenue for stakeholders. In addition, as a business, tourism supports the maintenance of local heritage and traditions by communities due to its value in the industry (Hashimoto, 2002: 216). In their book chapter on using sense of place as a component of sustainable tourism, Walsh *et al.* (2001: 212) argue that the “local sense of place” is a vital ingredient in marketing. They (ibid) assert that including the local community’s sense of place in marketing tactics promotes increased local involvement that aids social equity and presents a more authentic image of the destination. They (ibid) also add, “Allowing local stakeholders to develop cooperatively the marketing image of the destination encourages the host community to determine how to utilize, conserve and preserve the resources of that community”. In turn, this provides tourists with a more accurate sense of place before they arrive and one which will not deter their experience with the reality on-site (ibid).

It is easier to identify how principle 11 aligns with sustainable tourism philosophy. As seen in Section 2.3, sustainable tourism theory strongly advocates the responsible use of, and reduction of impacts on, heritage and economic resources. This includes a multitude of preservation and conservation strategies and techniques aimed at safeguarding resources for present and future generations. The sustainable tourism principles (Table 2.1) created by Bramwell *et al.* (1996), and featured in Chapter Two, endorse similar concepts, stating:

*“The approach sees policy, planning and management as appropriate, and, indeed essential to the problems of natural and human resource misuse...the approach...emphasises that there are limitations to growth...long term rather short term thinking is necessary...”*

These principles demonstrate fundamental tenets of conservation and preservation, including using appropriate policy and management to curb the misuse of heritage resources within certain limits of growth (see also Millar, 1989: 9-13). The conservation and preservation of heritage resources creates benefits for host communities in the form of awareness and pride, opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 34-35) and the long-term prospect of using their heritage resources as a source of income and communal development.

## 7.5 Output and Uses

Having now reviewed the democratic philosophy and features of ecomuseology, attention now shifts to the output and uses of an ecomuseum (Corsane, 2006a: 109). Principles 13-21 describe these uses, as well as the approaches and methods often used in ecomuseology. Generally, these principles recognise approaches that directly and indirectly lead to the safeguarding of heritage resources while also proposing that these resources be sustainably utilised to create better futures. More precisely, they recognise the benefits, both tangible and intangible, for ecomuseum stakeholders, especially host communities. This section critically evaluates the philosophy and actions of Rupununi stakeholders in comparison with six specific principles (13, 14, 16, 17, 20, and 21) from this group. Particular focus will be placed on the need for ecomuseology to equally consider heritage management and economic development in developing world contexts. Lastly, and as done in the previous sections, links with sustainable tourism will be evaluated.

### 7.5.1 Principles 13 & 14

- *Stimulates sustainable development and use of resources*
- *Allows for change and development for a better future*

Principles 13 and 14 align closely with the argument presented in Section 7.2. This proposes that heritage conservation and preservation cannot be considered in exclusion but, depending on the context, must often include the sustainable development of heritage resources in equal measure. The stimulation of sustainable development and use of heritage resources in the Rupununi is a wide-shared philosophy amongst stakeholders, especially within the tourism sector. Rupununi stakeholders are highly conscious of the local economic situation and make no attempt to suggest that heritage resources should be protected disregarding the needs of local communities. In this way, Principle 13 may be better phrased to include ‘integrates’ with sustainable development and use of resources instead of ‘stimulates’ to align more closely with the local situation. Presently, tourism development is the primary user of heritage resources and it is through this industry that this sub-section focuses its attention. However, it should be noted that the researcher does not support the existence of only one industry in the Rupununi. Rather, the sustainable development of heritage resources in the

region should be as diversified as possible to incorporate new economic possibilities for local communities.

At the heart of tourism development in the Rupununi is the sustainable enhancement of local livelihoods. When asked during interviews about the overarching goal of tourism development, creating sustainable livelihoods was a common response from stakeholders. Although the term itself may have not always been used, the connotation was implied through various statements which are presented below. A sustainable livelihood refers to the long term improvement of people's lifestyles with a particular focus on supporting a living through a combination of capabilities, activities and assets (Chambers & Conway, 1991: 5; Bynoe, 2006: 4). Sustainable livelihood approaches follow a 'people first' strategy, something that various stakeholders argued was essential in attempting to protect resources. A representative of the voluntary sector (Interview V4, 2012) argued:

*"...For me, it's about providing a sustainable livelihood for people because at the end of the day, the ultimate thing is conservation as well. And when I say conservation, I'm not talking about protection; I'm talking about using your resources in a sustainable way that future generations can benefit. But again, for me, it's people first. Because if you don't put people first and people's needs aren't being taken care of, then conservation is just conversation."*

Further stakeholder responses on the goal of tourism development resonated similar views of a sustainable livelihoods approach. A local community member (Interview C2, 2012) asserted:

*"I think we are doing it simply to promote the development of these villages, create more employment opportunities while at the same time protecting and safeguarding the environment and resources that are there....I think that is basically the core of the tourism and also linking culture with the environment and at the same time increasing revenues for the villages."*

In addition, a member of the public sector (Interview P1, 2012) specified:

*"The goal for the Rupununi is to help with rural development, to create jobs, to empower communities, to create opportunities for them, to attract investments so their quality of life, their standard of living can improve...to improve their livelihood as well. We feel that the Rupununi and many of these remote communities, that tourism provides such tremendous opportunities for them in terms of employment and livelihood."*

An industry professional (Interview I3, 2012) similarly agreed, declaring that the goal was also to ensure self-reliance within the communities:

*“For me, people want to become self-sufficient, self-sufficient in their own way; they want to become independent. ...The overall thing is that people want to enjoy a better way of life and bring benefits to every household in the community. That for me is, through their own efforts, the ultimate goal of sustainability, improving livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods, whatever you want to call it...will be a part of their own doing.”*

These comments demonstrate an aspiration to move beyond the universally desired benefit of revenue from tourism development and encompass the protection of heritage resources as well. Indeed, the inclusion of heritage conservation and preservation in addition to generating income was the most common response amongst stakeholders. These comments exhibit awareness by stakeholders of the importance of sustainability and the potential of tourism to contribute to its realisation. Stakeholder comments were also reflections of various group’s mission statements as seen in Table 7.2. As the table demonstrates, organisational motivations are often based around safeguarding heritage and sustainably using heritage resources to improve the livelihoods of local communities. Respondents seem to fully grasp the link between revenue generation and safeguarding heritage resources; understanding that the two are not disjointed but mutually reinforcing.

**Table 7.2: Mission Statements (researcher's emphasis)**

Organization	Mission
<b>Iwokrama</b>	“IIC’s mission is to <b>promote conservation and the sustainable and equitable use of tropical rainforests in a manner that will lead to lasting ecological, economic and social benefits to the people of Guyana</b> and to the world in general by undertaking research, training and the development and dissemination of technologies.” (Iwokrama, 2012).
<b>NRDDB</b>	“The NRDDB is a well managed, transparent development organization representing and negotiating on behalf of its communities with stakeholders to secure the preservation of indigenous culture, the flow of economic benefits to the communities and the <b>sustainable utilization of community natural resources.</b> ” NRDDB mission (Ousman <i>et al.</i> , 2006: 64; NRDDB, 2012).
<b>Wild Ex</b>	“Wilderness Explorers promises to <b>promote ecologically sensitive tourism through a responsible and concerned attitude towards the environment.</b> We provide the maximum benefit to the local communities by operating in a honest, thoughtful and concerned manner towards their customs and involving the communities so as to afford them the greatest financial benefit possible. At the same time we offer professional tourism services of an international standard to our clientele.” (Wilderness Explorers, 2012).
<b>Karanambu</b>	“We are <b>dedicated to conservation of the Rupununi savannah and wetlands ecosystem and preservation of the traditional way of life of the indigenous Amerindians</b> who make the area their home. Karanambu is a nature lovers paradise and <b>we welcome our guests</b> to this remote corner of South America to experience its untouched natural beauty.” (Karanambu, 2012).
<b>CATS</b>	“The CATS partnership is a model of ecotourism that proves the tourism sector, a conservation NGO, and an indigenous community can find joint economic success while providing local opportunity and an excellent experience for visitors from around the world.” (CATS, 2012).
<b>Surama</b>	<p>“<b>Mission Statement</b></p> <p>We are the premiere community-based eco-tourism experience in the Guianan Shield. We are committed to providing safe, comfortable and hospitable services to all our guests.</p> <p><b>Vision Statement</b></p> <p>We will develop, own and manage a community-based eco-tourism business by <b>constructively using the natural resources</b> and our traditional culture in a socially appropriate manner. We will provide opportunities for our people through research, training and employment. We will work with our partners for mutual respect and benefits.” (Surama, 2012).</p>



The current changes in the Rupununi include shifts in cultural traditions, development opportunities and improvements to infrastructure. While stakeholders hold some negative views on the changes that are eroding cultural traditions (Sub-section 6.4.3) and other heritage resources, overall they see the changes as conduits of positive reformation that bring better prospects for the future. Indeed, improving the lifestyle and conditions of host communities is something that stakeholders feel is in the best interests for them. A host community member (Interview C3, 2012) commented that development is a balancing act and must allow for the improvement of lifestyles and also the retaining of culture. She (ibid) stated, “Because working now and having more money than some, some people have a stove and a little better house and some still got...the real old time. But we still have the life, the culture is there”. A member of the media (Interview M2, 2012) argued that Amerindian communities are “...very much tied to their traditional ways and are proud of it, but at the same time...they do have their touches of modern life and they should”. A host community member (Interview C4, 2012) asserted, “Some things had to be changed because of circumstances” in reference to the practice of trapping birds’ impact on tourism (Sub-section 6.4.1). In essence, there is the understanding that development should work to improve communities and their inhabitants.

Other stakeholders discussed specific issues, such as what materials houses should be built from in the future. A host community member (Interview C4, 2012) highlighted that homes in his community are now being built with more modern material instead of the traditional palm trees because, “It’s more hygienic to build proper houses...you have floors and you have tables...and you’ve got to be environmentally friendly”. On the use of new versus old materials for building a house, a member of the media (Interview M1, 2012) added that he thought “...they should use both...for the simple reason that we do not want our culture to die...and...as a tourist comes by, we can show that we still have the skill and tradition”. These remarks again submit to a philosophy which is supportive of change and improvements for a better future but also understands the importance of safeguarding heritage.

The combination of mission statements and stakeholder comments emphasise that the sustainable development of heritage resources, inclusive of change, for a better future for host communities is at the centre of most development/heritage management efforts in the Rupununi. This also shows that heritage protection does not take a back-seat to development, but is considered to be a foremost priority alongside the sustainable

development of heritage resources. Indeed, these features reveal motivations and actions which align with ecomuseological philosophy. Future consideration will need to be placed on keeping these ideologies intact, because tipping the balance in either's favour runs the risk of negative impacts. As resource-use continues to grow, especially gold-mining and petroleum extraction (Sub-section 1.3.3), sustainability will need to be a primary motivation amongst the plurality of values. Watkins *et al.* (2010: 227) asserts that this ultimately will fall on the NRDDDB and village councils who are the "...most important institutions for sustainable development and conservation in the northern Rupununi". Sustainable development, especially involving tourism, will only be successful if the democratic approach and inclusion of local community identities and heritage values listed above are considered.

### 7.5.2 Principles 16 & 17

- *Promotes research at a number of levels – from the research and understanding of local 'specialists' to research by academics*
- *Promotes multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to research*

The Rupununi is an active location for research (for example, see sub-sections 1.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.4, 6.4.2.1). The biologically diverse region and its historically and culturally significant indigenous communities present a plethora of research opportunities, which have attracted national and international researchers for many years (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 47). Research has found support from many local communities and stakeholders, especially the NRDDDB and Iwokrama. For example, Iwokrama places research as one of the primary functions needed for achieving its mandate (Table 7.2) and has formed several research partnerships with national and international universities and institutions, the NRDDDB and numerous Rupununi communities (Iwokrama, 2012). Iwokrama has recently developed (2009) an International Science Committee (ISC), with members from Guyana, the Caribbean, Europe and the United States, to advise on Iwokrama's research framework. On its website, Iwokrama (2012) states that it "...brings together in a unique alliance...scientists engaged in ground breaking research into the impacts of climate change on the forest and measuring the scope and value of its eco-system services". Although Iwokrama's research has focused on these key areas within the protected area, they have been involved in many other Rupununi projects that "...fit well within the [Iworkama's] continuing research agenda goals" and include large

projects funded by the European Commission and United Nations Development Programme.

One of these projects, ‘Community Monitoring, Reporting and Verification’ (MRV), is a joint research initiative funded by the Norwegian government with a mixture of international, national and local partners (including Iwokrama and the NRDDDB). The goal of the project is to “...create a toolkit for forest communities to monitor the state of their forests and their own wellbeing” (Community MRV, 2012). The project has seen international partners working with 16 local communities in the North Rupununi to create a Community Monitoring scheme that will assist national-level monitoring schemes on reducing deforestation and forest degradation emissions (REDD). Furthermore, local people are highly involved in the research, having received training to do the monitoring and share the information with their communities themselves (Community MRV, 2012). Another project is COBRA, a research initiative looking at the funds supplied to indigenous communities for dealing with challenges like climate change and involving partners from five separate countries including local communities, universities and conservation trusts (NRDDDB, 2012).

These projects demonstrate that research in the Rupununi has occurred on a number of levels, involving a range of researchers from academics at international institutions to local specialists. As a result, these efforts demonstrate a research framework that is representative of ecomuseology, in particular Principles 16 and 17. Furthermore, research that is executed in this manner is more likely to be endorsed and understood by host communities, giving it more impact. Aside from the larger, international research projects, local schemes such as the Makushi Research Unit and Iwokrama’s extensive involvement of local communities, and their encyclopaedic knowledge of local habitats, is further proof of the various levels of research in the Rupununi.

Based on the diversity of the projects, it is possible to see that research approaches are multidisciplinary as well. Research projects have included a wide variety of topics from climate change to archaeology and carbon sequestration to ethnographic studies. Interdisciplinary approaches have also been a central tenet of research in the region. Several research projects look at nature and culture relationships, itself an ecomuseological principle (18) which is covered more in the next chapter. For example, in its book, the Makushi Research Unit (Sub-section 6.4.2) discusses interrelated topics such as religious and traditional practices and medicinal and edible

plants. Similarly, the Community MRV project seeks to connect resource use with changes in forest and savannah ecosystems. These characteristics provide further evidence of compliance with ecomuseum philosophy in the Rupununi, although stakeholders feel there is still room for improvement.

The need for additional research in the Rupununi has already been presented in Sections 1.4.1 and 6.4.2.1 which argued that there are “...substantial gaps in our knowledge” about heritage resources in the Rupununi, especially biodiversity (Watkins *et al.*, 2010: 35; see also Smock, 2008: 230) and archaeology (Plew, 2004: 7). Watkins *et al.* (2010: 48) stress this fact, adding:

*“To take full advantage of the potential value of the Rupununi, we need to know more about the area...Researchers have begun baseline studies in Iwokrama and the Kanuku Mountains, but there is a need for much deeper understanding of the ecology and social ecology of the area. Developing this understanding, communicating the knowledge acquired, and building capacity are vital to the future sustainable development of the Rupununi.”*

With its equal value for all forms of heritage resources and promotion of democratic stakeholder participation, ecomuseology presents a framework which is supportive for conducting research that is multi/inter disciplinary and occurs on many levels. Moreover, the inclusion of local communities at the centre of heritage management efforts ensures that they would be involved in research projects. Subsequently, this could translate to a wider understanding of the value of heritage resources which has implications for their protection as well as identity formation and their potential development for tourism.

### **7.5.3 Principles 20 & 21**

- *Provide for an intersection between heritage and responsible tourism*
- *Brings benefits to local communities, for example, a sense of pride, regeneration and/or economic income*

Section 5.2 identified tourism as highly targeted economic activity in the Rupununi. Possessing world-class heritage resources and limited economic opportunities, tourism has been treated as an expected and logical option by stakeholders. Indeed, tourism has become a primary source of income for many local communities and provides benefits to several individuals and villages. Principle 20 suggests that ecomuseums are a point

where heritage and responsible tourism intersect, or where the two elements cross over one another. Given the enthusiasm and the common, on-going development of tourism in the region, it is possible to see how these efforts and opinions once again align with ecomuseum philosophy. However, the idea of an ‘intersection’ suggests the presence of forces that do not share the same end goal. Instead, and as suggested in Section 7.2, perhaps the local context favours an approach in which heritage management is not intersecting with tourism development, but rather moving forward in an equivocal, parallel partnership. Adopting this idea is potentially more fitting in developing world contexts where heritage management and development are seen as inseparable objectives.

Tourism has the potential to both support and weaken heritage resource management in the Rupununi. On the one hand, tourism can create value for heritage resources. This is evident in the monetary gains received by those who own or manage resources and the emphasis on their protection, but is also found in the elevated sense of pride about the resource - a higher opinion which possesses intrinsic worth. On the other hand, tourism can be responsible for a slew of negative impacts, which can damage heritage resources as well as communal lifestyles. Currently, tourism in the Rupununi is in the early stages and heritage resources have not yet felt the impacts from an established and busy industry. As a result, tourism is regarded as a favourable economic activity since it has generated awareness for local community members on the importance of their heritage resources and their protection. However, it is worth briefly mentioning that those responsible for tourism development in the Rupununi also need to be cautious about increased growth in the sector and set limitations or heritage resources will suffer (discussed more in Chapter Eight).

As stated above (Sub-section 7.4.2; see also sub-section 6.4.1), tourism in itself has been a primary motivator for heritage management in the Rupununi. In fact, tourism has been one of the few tools used for heritage resource management in the region. The income received by communities has provided an impetus for implementing sustainable practices and safeguarding local cultural and natural resources. In agreement, Smock (2008: 24; see also CI, 2010: 17) argues:

*“The community tourism efforts not only provide villages with much needed income, it also teaches them the importance of conservation and sustainable land-use issues... With tourism moving into the villages, people’s mindsets are changing. ...Amerindian communities are beginning to see new value in*

*their surroundings and are now starting to realize the importance of protecting what they have.”*

Stakeholder perceptions on the topic were found to be similar amongst each of the groups. A member of the host community (Interview C2, 2012) asserted that tourism has played a significant role in “...making people aware of the importance [of heritage resources] and putting a value to their resources”. He (ibid) also indicated that this awareness had “...really impacted the communities” and contributed to “...conservation and achieving sustainable development”. A media stakeholder (Interview M1, 2012) agreed, stating that “...the growth of tourism in the communities has brought some awareness to the villagers”. For example, he (ibid) described how demonstrating the process of making baskets to tourists has provided income for local individuals. However, previously “...within the community...people thought, well that meant nothing, but they are now aware that those are great stories for the tourists” and he added that “...those kind of awarenesses have grown tremendously in the folks in the North Rupununi” (ibid). A public sector stakeholder (Interview P2, 2012) argued a similar example on the discovery of ceremonial caves and traditional pots found inside. He (ibid) commented that because of tourism, “If someone goes and finds a new cave that nobody has ever saw before with pots inside, it’s going to be very remarkable and nobody is going to touch this...but before it wasn’t like that, it was like ‘oh this is nothing’”. This is likely because tourism provides those benefits that are linked to a community’s “well-being” (Interview P1, 2012).

Responsible tourism concerns the betterment of destinations for host communities and visitors alike. Destinations are improved through the provision of benefits for host communities and also with the protection of heritage resources that attract visitors. Based on the factors listed above, it would appear that at present there is a definite intersection between heritage resources and responsible tourism in the Rupununi. In particular, stakeholders realise the importance and value of heritage resources for tourism, but they also understand that this relationship is reciprocal and, therefore, safeguarding these resources is important to both their communities and the destination as a whole. Consequently, there exists congruence with ecomuseology. However, stakeholders need to be conscience of the balance between tourism and heritage management in order to avoid the complete commoditisation of heritage resources, a key limitation of the ecomuseum ideal (Sub-section 3.5.1). The perpetuation of the

principles listed above, combined with those mentioned in the next chapter, will help to achieve this balance and continue to provide benefits to local communities.

The heritage management processes employed by stakeholders in the Rupununi have brought both tangible and intangible benefits to local communities. Their efforts have worked to showcase the value and importance of heritage resources that has promoted local pride, aided economic development through tourism and supported the conservation and preservation of the resources which define their identity. These benefits are a direct result of the abovementioned activities adopted by stakeholders that align with ecomuseum philosophy. For example, stakeholders have strongly advocated the sustainable development of heritage resources (Principle 13) in the region, especially through tourism. They have also recognised local communities as the primary stakeholder and commonly undertake a democratic approach to stakeholder participation. Consequently, tourism has brought several benefits to local communities, which were identified from the stakeholder opinions and literature presented in Sub-section 5.3.1. These include the revitalisation of local traditions, employment opportunities, social benefits such as healthcare and the development of human and cultural capital. However, tourism is not the only activity similar to ecomuseology which has contributed benefits. Section 6.4.2 revealed the sense of pride and “delight” that the female researchers of the Makushi Research Unit feel while being involved in the project (Ousman *et al.*, 2006: 70; Wihak, 2009: 21). In addition, previous and current research initiatives have placed value on natural resources attracting funding from national and international organisations.

These examples illustrate how a territory and its local communities have benefitted from following ecomuseum philosophy. However, adoption of the additional ecomuseum principles presented in Chapter Eight has the potential to bring significantly more benefits. These principles further promote the distinctive resources of the Rupununi and identify ways in which ecomuseology can contribute to sustainable tourism development, as well as have stakeholders become more involved in the safeguarding of the qualities that comprise their local identity. To conclude this section, 7.5.4 will now evaluate the connection these six principles share with sustainable tourism development.

#### 7.5.4 *Link with Sustainable Tourism*

There are obvious synergies between Principles 13 & 14, 16 & 17, 20 & 21 and sustainable tourism development. Sustainable tourism has direct links to sustainable development theory (Sections 2.2.1-2.2.2) that does not seek to prohibit development, but instead understands that in many cases it is necessary and advocates that resources be used wisely. Often in the Rupununi context, and for the purposes of this study, this development refers to tourism. Again referring back to the sustainable tourism principles (Section 2.3) created by Bramwell *et al.* (1996) who state that in sustainable tourism, "...the approach emphasises the importance of satisfying human needs and aspirations". These principles align with ecomuseological principles which advocate the sustainable use of resources and development for a better future. They also recognise that sustainable tourism should bring benefits to stakeholders, meeting their 'needs'. Therefore, it is possible to see how stakeholder actions which follow ecomuseum principles are also following sustainable tourism philosophy (discussed further in sub-section 8.6.3).

Research shares a unique relationship with sustainable tourism. The progression of scientific and local knowledge on heritage resources contributes to stakeholders' awareness of the value and sustainability of the resource. Consequently, as stakeholders are directly responsible for the management of heritage resources, research then becomes directly linked to sustainable tourism. For example, research can identify areas which may be sensitive to human use but are already being used for tourism purposes. In this instance, stakeholders can then make a decision on the future use of that particular site. CI (2003: 11; 2010: 28) argues:

*"Research, as a component of the tourism development programme, plays an important role by expanding knowledge of the resources – providing the content for interpretation to visitors, and informing better management and monitoring of the resources themselves... It is also important to host more researchers and open up the Rupununi to far greater and deeper research. Scientific research publications serve as independent validations of the value of the area...Rupununi tourism development should encourage and support scientific research and education tourism in particular".*

Furthermore, the ability for research to prescribe a value for destinations can be useful in attracting more visitors to the region, thus being making tourism more economically sustainable. In the end, research becomes a very powerful tool in the sustainable development of tourism.



## 7.6 Conclusions

Using the 21 principles as a reference guide, this chapter has evaluated the relationship between current ecomuseological practices in the Rupununi and sustainable tourism development. In particular, it has identified several ways in which ecomuseum philosophy is already supporting sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi despite the term not currently being used by any of the stakeholders. In doing so, this chapter has started directly answering the research question guiding this thesis. To accomplish this, field data from interviews and questionnaires were critically analysed and compared with grey and academic literature on the study site and key subjects. This included text from Chapters Two, Three, Five and Six. This analysis showcased a heritage management and development framework that equally values resource conservation and preservation and sustainable use. Section 7.2 first described the delicate balancing act between heritage management and development in developing-world contexts. This was then followed by specific examples throughout the chapter on how this applied to the Rupununi and within ecomuseum philosophy.

Based on the researcher's knowledge on ecomuseum practice worldwide, the activities and goals of Rupununi stakeholders more closely follow the ecomuseum ideal than many ecomuseums that carry the name (Corsane, 2009). Section 7.3 has shown that heritage management processes in the Rupununi are grounded in democratic processes that place the host community as the primary stakeholder. The section also revealed that there are a multitude of stakeholders involved in heritage management and development in the Rupununi and that this is mediated by the managerial frameworks from the key local partners the NRDDDB and Iwokrama. These two organisations value joint ownership and management and recognise its importance in negotiating amongst a diversity of partners. Section 7.4 then showcased how the heritage management efforts of these stakeholders focus on maintaining the unique qualities that define the Rupununi identity. Lastly, Section 7.5 highlighted how the mandates and actions of stakeholders acknowledged the importance of the sustainable use of resources in addition to their safeguarding. In particular, the section analysed the role of tourism as the primary form of economic development in the region and its relationship with heritage management.

In summary, this chapter outlined how ecomuseological principles are already supporting sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi. It has shown that community participation, protection and promotion of local identities, continuation of

research and the sustainable development of resources to benefit local communities are all areas recognised and currently being addressed by Rupununi stakeholders, especially the NRDDB and Iwokrama. The actions and outputs from these organisations align closely with ecomuseum philosophy in which heritage management is rooted in community values. In Chapter Eight, attention shifts to areas within the Rupununi tourism framework in which ecomuseology is not as common and has potential to support its sustainable development.

## **Chapter 8.**

## **8 Supporting Sustainable Rupununi Tourism through Ecomuseology.**

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### **8.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, field-data and literature were compared and analysed to evaluate the current presence of ecomuseological-like principles in the Rupununi. After these principles were showcased within current Rupununi management frameworks, their link and influence with sustainable tourism development in the region was assessed. These findings present several key discoveries in determining how ecomuseological principles can support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi. This chapter also critically compares and analyses the data findings presented in Chapters Five and Six with literature on ecomuseology and sustainable tourism development (Chapters Three & Four). However, while Chapter Seven identified management areas where ecomuseological principles can already be found in the Rupununi, Chapter Eight analyses those tourism areas where the tenets of ecomuseology are noticeably underused and examines their potential to support sustainable development.

Chapter Six identified several management areas of significance within the Rupununi tourism framework. These areas were first identified through the questionnaires and then further explored during the semi-structured interviews. These areas refer to any issues or ideas that were recognised from the data as being relevant to the research question and are considered to be vitally important in the sustainable development of Rupununi tourism. The first two were the interrelated areas of information and interpretation and developing a formal tourism plan to network the various local sites. The remaining two areas involved the management of heritage resources in the Rupununi and the use of cultural resources for tourism. For this chapter, data on each of these topics has been analysed in conjunction with its relevance to sustainable tourism development to reveal the potential for ecomuseology to provide support.

Investigating the potential for ecomuseology to enhance sustainable tourism development in the region required another comparison between the processes in the Rupununi tourism framework against the 21 principles of the ecomuseum ideal.

Chapter Seven presented the 21 principles as a subset of three groups which categorised the principles based on their function or values. This chapter instead compares ecomuseological principles against the above mentioned areas of significance identified in Chapter Six. It should be noted that the implications towards sustainable tourism for each of these areas of significance was identified in Chapter Six (Sections 6.2 - 6.5) and therefore are only briefly reviewed in this chapter. Instead, the focus now shifts to ascertain how ecomuseology could support each of these key tourism issues in an attempt to make the industry more sustainable. As mentioned in Chapter Seven, there are instances where these principles can be found in Rupununi tourism frameworks, but they are considered by the researcher to be considerably underused, leaving significant potential for their implementation.

The overall aim of Chapter Eight is to critically evaluate the key areas where ecomuseological principles are relevant to Rupununi tourism and how their implementation can support the sustainable development of the industry. The researcher recognises that there are several ecomuseological principles that are relevant to each section but specific ones were chosen that deal directly with the subject area. For example, each area identified in the following sections could benefit from the more general tenets of ecomuseology such as centered community control, the allocation of benefits to local communities and the encouragement of stakeholder collaboration. As a result, principles were selected and analysed based on their specific appeal to the identified issues. These key issues include: a holistic approach to interpretation and information sharing (Section 8.2); devising a tourism network structure by further defining the territory (Section 8.3); heritage resource management (Section 8.4); and, finding the balance in utilising cultural resources for tourism (Section 8.5). After these sections, the chapter then finishes by exploring the potential of creating a Rupununi ecomuseum (Section 8.6). This chapter represents the culmination of this thesis and submits a final examination into the potential of using ecomuseological principles to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi.

## **8.2 Holistic Interpretation and Information Distribution**

As demonstrated in Section 6.2, information is a central and important aspect for sustainable tourism and the interpretation of heritage resources. In that section it was also revealed through the questionnaires that tourism stakeholders consider there to be an 'information gap' in the Rupununi. They then elaborated on this issue during the

interviews, detailing the dearth of information about various local tourism features (e.g. lodging, transport) and sites (e.g. places, heritage resources). Also highlighted in this section was how this information gap has often translated into a defective interpretation of heritage resources and the destination. Stakeholders discussed the particular impacts from interpretation, including the negative (e.g. meeting the needs of tourists) when interpretation is poor and the positive (e.g. economic sustainability and improved understanding of heritage resources) when interpretation is executed accurately.

This section presents a comparative analysis between these key issues and the relevance of three ecomuseological principles in resolving them to support sustainable tourism development. In particular, this section includes Principle 10 (Sub-section 8.2.1) and the applicability and implications of a ‘fragmented approach’ towards information sharing and interpretation. Afterward, attention shifts to Principles 18 and 19 (Sub-section 8.2.2) and the significance of a holistic approach to interpretation with specific emphasis on nature and culture relationships. These three principles were selected by the researcher because they bore the most direct significance to the subject area and had potential for improving their functionality.

### **8.2.1 Principle 10**

- *Takes the form of a ‘fragmented museum’, consisting of a network with a hub and antennae of different buildings and sites.*

Chapters Five and Six presented the Rupununi as a diverse region with different habitats, communities and heritage resources that are spread out over a large geographical area (Figures 1.1 & 1.2). Stakeholders in the region have varied financial and human resources which have made certain sites more popular than others due to their ability to market more and invest in infrastructure. Chapter Six (Section 6.2) also presented the importance that information distribution and interpretation has for these sites. Information and interpretation are valuable to sustainable tourism because they provide several functions for tourism stakeholders including advising visitors on logistical aspects of their trip (e.g. lodging, transportation, activities), providing instructions for correct behaviour on-site and educating all stakeholders on the meaning and importance of local heritage resources (Kuo, 2002: 93; Moscardo, 1998: 2; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 33-34 ). This sub-section examines the potential of Principle 10 in supporting the distribution of information and holistic interpretation in and about the

Rupununi. This sub-section is also directly linked with the following section (8.3) on defining and networking a territory. Indeed, the product of this process, a fragmented model, can be a useful tool in improving information sharing and interpretation.

Fragmentation is an important element in the concept of territory and the selection of features to define its identity (Sub-section 3.3.1). A fragmented approach emphasises the selection of multiple sites to holistically represent a territory; most often with a designated centre of operations and ‘antennae’ sites which branch out (Lloyd & Morgan, 2008: 11; Tremaine, 1989: 10). Through the fragmented approach, interpretation focuses on information on each individual site while showcasing the various links they share within a designated territory. By highlighting the links between each of the sites and their own respective features, the interpretation holistically represents the territory as a whole. The fragmented approach is a common indicator of ecomuseology (Sections 3.3.1 & 3.4) and is linked to the holistic and *in-situ* conservation and interpretation of living cultures (ibid; see also Corsane *et al.*, 2007a: 102). For example, several ecomuseums worldwide have used the fragmented approach for these very purposes. The Ecomusée de la Cevenne in France employs a fragmented approach through its network of museums, sites and footpaths (Davis, 2011: 120) while others, such as ecomuseums in Sweden (e.g. Ekomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike), have applied the concept to much larger landscapes for interpretation and conservation purposes (Davis, 2011: 146; Bergdahl, 2006: 106). The fragmented approach allows each site to have its own individual identity while also being seen as part of the greater whole; thus contributing to a defined sense of place for the region.

Although there are a multitude of heritage resources and sites in the Rupununi, there has been little success in distributing information about each of these on and off site to visitors. As presented in Sub-section 6.2.1, the information gap for visitors to the Rupununi was identified by stakeholders as the result of a lack of resources and capacity and the absence of an organisational framework for the information. Indeed, an industry stakeholder gave specific details about the need to “...correlate all of the available information and put it together” (Interview I2, 2012). One of the interviewed tourists (Interview T3, 2012) supported this, discussing the need to make “...a series of flagships for each place”. Howie (2003: 141) argues that unless tourists “...know what [a destination] has to offer and believe...it will remain a place with merely the potential to become a tourist destination”.

It can be argued that the recent *Community Tourism Blueprint* created by CI (2010) is a substantial start on organising this information, but the report's aims were centred on the assessment of community tourism initiatives in the Rupununi and the provision of technical assistance for further development. Although certainly useful, this report is not holistic of all Rupununi sites and resources and does not finalise a network between these sites. Based on this information, it is apparent that organising this information is a favourable exercise for Rupununi stakeholders and possesses many benefits for the sustainable development of tourism (see Sub-section 6.2.1 for effects on sustainability). However, there are limited resources available to implement this action, which means that finding the right venue for organising this information is also important.

Ecomuseum philosophy, more specifically the fragmented approach, possesses considerable potential for organising information concerning these sites and heritage resources. One visitor (Interview T4, 2012) noted that having an organised structure would allow them to "...see some of the diversity of Guyana" and it "...even gives you a culturally different experience too". Stakeholders also feel that a fragmented approach, or the creation of an organised 'plan' (Section 6.3), would make planning logistics for visitors much easier. An industry member (Interview I4, 2012) remarked that a plan would provide the information tourists are seeking regarding the logistical aspects of their trip. He (ibid) contended, "...when a guest comes, they want to know, for example, exactly the distance between the lodges and how [transportation] works...probably they don't know because they don't have enough information". A plan, according to a host community member (Interview C4, 2012), would benefit the tourism operators in the region because "...more people would see the hospitality services are good and the information flow is okay and they would want to visit". The issue of delivering key logistical information (e.g. prices, transport, and lodging) about each site could be rectified through a holistic diagram of the Rupununi with details on each site. This would assist tourists with the oft-repeated problem (Sub-section 6.2.1) of not knowing what resources are available which in turn could provide them with new options in their itinerary. Subsequently, they are more likely to stay longer in the area and engage in more activities which would generate more income for local stakeholders (Ortega & Rodriguez, 2007: 151).

In addition to listing the logistical information about Rupununi sites, use of a fragmented approach could also benefit interpretation efforts in the region. Davis (2011: 271) has argued that the fragmented approach used by ecomuseums holds



“tremendous potential” in promoting “holistic interpretation”. Information relating to heritage resources and the meaning and connection behind them could also be displayed using the same distribution avenue for logistical information (discussed further below). In turn this would have direct impact on generating awareness amongst both visitors and locals alike on the importance of these heritage resources and their safeguarding. A media stakeholder (Interview M1, 2012) described the benefits for tour guides in being more aware on how the Rupununi links together. He (ibid) remarked:

*“...you are visiting my community to see an ancient burial site, but because I know of that plan, that Surama has this, Rewa has that, in my conversation with my tours at that burial site, I would make certain reference to say that Surama also has something that if you go across there, will bring out some more of what you are seeing here, because Surama have that open experience that you can go down the river, and as you traverse down the river, they will show you why the Indians use these sites... It’s because I know of that plan, I’m selling Surama on my site at the same time. ...Instead of going away, the person might say, ‘ok, I will go over to Surama to further understand your burial site’. And in Surama, they might have said yes, we have this, but to really crown this off, if you go to Rewa, Rewa have by the river a set of fish. But because of this plan that is designed by all, we talk, then we mention, and by mentioning, people get to know more.”*

Concerning the importance of telling the Rupununi story, an industry member (Interview I2, 2012) stated, “...there are benefits to the people as it helps to create pride and address the inherited unhappiness of the past. To give them pride to be first nation people”. He (ibid) also added that there would be “academic benefits” for doing research and it would add “...to the interpretation for visitors”. Yet, with limited resources, what would be the best method or distribution channel to display this information?

Sub-section 6.2.3 discussed the various instruments which can be used as communication channels for distributing information and telling the ‘Rupununi story’. Although many of the communities and sites in the Rupununi lack the financial and human resources to produce information panels, exhibits, brochures or other cost-intensive forms of interpretation, the concept of fragmentation can be expressed via two key formats that cover both on and off site situations. The first of these is the internet and the development of a Rupununi Tourism website, which CI (2010: 48) argues should be “...created and put online as soon as possible”. The development of a fragmented strategy in the Rupununi would establish a defined hub, or headquarters for tourism, with gateways and antennae sites. This strategy is perfectly suited to the

Rupununi and its different localities and can be depicted in a unified website which centred on a geographical map within a defined boundary. This website would likely be an introduction platform for potential tourists to the Rupununi as they search for information about the destination and would satisfy the off-site deprivation of information. A Rupununi Tourism website would allow the communities which have fewer resources to have a voice in marketing the region and each of its sites, which would encourage increased visitation and generated revenue for those communities. Developing a Rupununi website could be a cost-effective method to improving the delivery of information off-site. Recently (2012), the national government and international bodies such as CI and the European Union have issued calls for funding to Rupununi communities, which could assist in developing tourism sites in the region and would include the development of a regional website.

The second format, and fulfilling the need to improve information distribution and interpretation on-site, could be accomplished by emulating the website in the local environment. The Rupununi possesses facilities that would align with the fragmented approach; an idea that was also suggested as a way forward for improving interpretation in the region by Brooke *et al.* (2009: 51) in their unpublished report, *Interpretation and Communication Strategy*. For example, the Annai region, more specifically Bina Hill which is the home office for the NRDDDB and Bina Hill Institute, could serve as a hub with an established orientation centre and the many surrounding villages (e.g. Surama, Wowetta, Annai, Aranaputa, Rewa), who conduct tourism operations, as the antennae (Brooke *et al.*, 2009: 51; Corsane, 2009). During the researcher's field visit, it was noticed that there has already been a 'tourism office' constructed at Bina Hill which acts as a key information point for visitors to the Rupununi and is also in close proximity to the local air strip and Rock View Lodge. The small number of staff members that work in this office act as booking agents for visitors to the region, who wish to visit those communities that are not easily accessible or do not possess any means for on-line reservations. Other potential hub points which are popular with tourists include the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre or Yupukari, both in accessible locations near the main road with facilities to host information and possibly exhibition centres.

These hubs could act as key interpretation centres which encourage visitations to satellite communities, or antennae, and provide more detailed information on local sites and heritage resources (Timothy, 2011: 85). Additionally, these information centres would be more beneficial if conceived and established by local communities (Hall &

McArthur, 1998: 58) which assist with improving economic opportunities and strengthening cultural identities (Timothy, 2011: 434). Indeed, this would embolden attempts to develop a greater understanding of the local ‘sense of place’ and identity by allowing each community to showcase their unique and individual heritage resources both for interpretation and as tourism products. This would most likely require collaboration between those tourism stakeholders which possess more financial resources and those communities which do not, although funding has already been established through the EU (Sub-section 6.2.3). Smaller exhibits that are directly made by local communities under the guidance of experienced tourism experts in the region could be developed and showcased in these hubs as well. Ultimately, having interpretation centres could significantly improve the overall tourism experience by consolidating the information into a more easily accessible format. Section 8.3 will elaborate further on the implications of implementing a fragmented approach, especially with regard to stakeholder collaboration and networking.

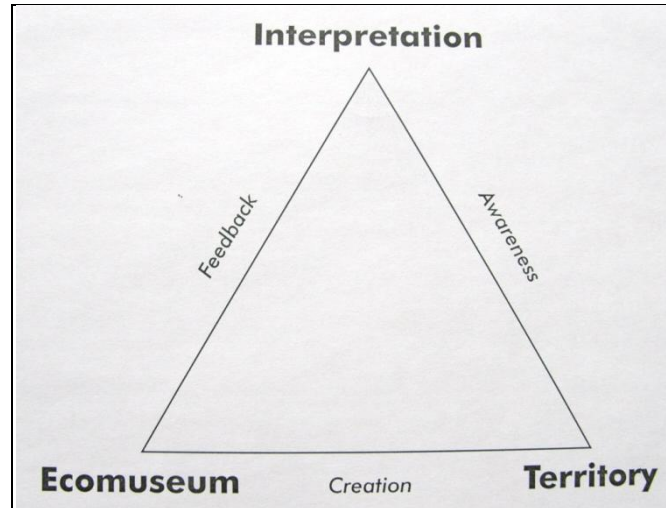
### **8.2.2 Principles 18 & 19**

- *Encourages a holistic approach to the interpretation of culture / nature relationships*
- *Attempts to illustrate connections between: technology / individual, nature / culture and past / present*

In Sub-section 6.2.2, the current state of interpretation in the Rupununi was analysed and found by certain stakeholders and CI (2010: 29) often to be ineffective (see also Sub-section 5.6.2). As a critical tool for educating audiences about heritage resources and their safeguarding, interpretation is a significant activity within sustainable tourism (Galla, 2002: 143). This sub-section first examines the nature of interpretation within ecomuseology before analysing the potential for two ecomuseological principles (18 & 19) in improving interpretation activities in the Rupununi.

Central to tourism and ecomuseum development is heritage interpretation, or explaining the natural and cultural processes of a locality (Galla, 2002: 72-73; Davis, 1996: 103; Perella *et al.*, 2010: 440). Heritage interpretation is fundamental in the “...construction of narratives” about a location (Davis, 2011: 15). In other words, through the selection of particular topics and techniques to deliver a message, interpretation contributes towards revealing the significance of place for both visitors and the local community (*ibid*). Interpretation techniques are also best carried out *in-situ* and can restore cultural

pride and promote sustainable values (Davis, 2011: 270; Galla, 2002: 73-75; Davis, 1996: 103-106). Pierre Mayrand suggested that ecomuseums develop as a result of interpretation techniques spread out (fragmentation) within a locality, and his model (Figure 8.1) further illustrates this point (Davis, 2011: 85).



**Figure 8.1: The Ecomuseum Creativity Triangle**  
(Mayrand, 1994)

Davis (2008: 402) contends that Mayrand considered ecomuseology as part of a “creativity triangle” where an idea moves to foundation. In other words, the use of interpretation generates awareness about a territory, which can lead to the creation of heritage management frameworks (e.g. ecomuseums) and then monitoring provides feedback which revives the whole process. It is through the act of interpretation and illustrating the diachronic relationships (Sub-sections 8.4.3 and 8.5.2) between nature and culture and technology and individuals, that one can move from “...apathy to empathy” (ibid). This interpretation highlights the relationships and elements that define a community’s identity and the different meanings behind heritage resources. For example, the first ecomuseum in North America (c.1980) was located in Quebec and was initiated by a group of local people with the assistance of Mayrand (Heron, 1997: 14; Davis, 2011: 188). There he employed a fragmented interpretation strategy (Heron, 1997: 12) which eventually led to raising the communal conscious about their heritage (Davis, 2011: 188). In summation, interpretation, more specifically as it is articulated in Principles 18 and 19, represents an essential process in ecomuseology and heritage management frameworks in general.

It should be noted, however, that within the list of 21 principles, interpretation is only mentioned once (Principle 18) and emphasises the ‘encouragement’ of holistic interpretation. Furthermore, it responds directly to nature/culture relationships even though interpretation may be fixated on either one individually. It may be that interpretation is an assumed tenet of ecomuseology and is represented at its core beliefs and operations. However, it could also be argued that there should be a more detailed description within this list on the use and importance of interpretation in ecomuseology. Although there is arguably no division between culture and nature, there should be the opportunity for interpretation to represent specific and special natures of natural or cultural resources in isolation. Ultimately, the researcher argues that either a new principle be created that elaborates on the concept of interpretation, including embracing the democratic processes and coverage of ecomuseums, or the existing one be modified to consider these features. For instance, this principle could be stated as:

*Places the holistic and community-driven interpretation of heritage resources and the relationships they share within the centre of its operations*

In comparing the current situation in the Rupununi against these two principles, it would appear that the relationship is complex. On the one hand, stakeholders explained that interpretation is insufficient in the region due to a definitive lack of organised information and also due to a lack of ecological knowledge or education on the part of tour guides (Sub-section 6.2.2). On the other hand, Sub-sections 1.4.3 and 5.2.4 reviewed stakeholders’ opinions that nature/culture relationships currently exist in tourism operations and their interpretation activities. Indeed, nearly all questionnaire participants (95% or 113/119) agreed that Rupununi cultural tourism attractions demonstrate a connection with nature. Furthermore, stakeholders explained that traditional and contemporary life in the Rupununi shares an inseparable bond with the natural environment, making it difficult to separate the two. A voluntary sector interviewee (Interview V4, 2012) commented on the importance of explaining this relationship in interpretation:

*“I think most people are interested to learn about people’s culture, you have to link the culture of course, people’s culture and how they use the landscape, ... how they use their resources is important, how they use the resources is important in how they are shaping how the landscape looks as well, for example the burning of the savannahs. And it’s important I think for tourists to know why the savannahs are being burnt, because their first question is ‘why are they burning the savannahs’ – but there is a reason for doing it, for the regeneration of growth. ... Imagine a tour guide that doesn’t have this information.”*

She (ibid) further argued that tour guides can explain how local culture depends on nature, but often lack the “holistic ecological knowledge” to provide visitors with a more in depth educational experience. It can also be argued that since the Rupununi is undergoing a transitional period, the need to holistically interpret and illustrate this connection between nature and culture, communities and modernisation and the differences between the past and present will become integral to heritage management and can also benefit tourism development. It is here where these two ecomuseological principles can benefit Rupununi tourism development the most.

This section has suggested that most of the tourism attractions in the Rupununi take a holistic approach in the interpretation of the relationships between nature and culture. However, while certain sites may demonstrate the ways in which their individual community/culture is linked to natural landscapes, there remains the opportunity to explore the dynamic connection between each of the communities. This can be partly rectified by adopting Principle 10, which would attempt to organise information and link each of the sites and heritage resources together. However, Principles 18 and 19 suggest an opportunity to explore these relationships further by highlighting the connections between sites and the many ways local culture has engaged with the natural environment (Perella *et al.*, 2010: 440). For example, this could include linking the traditional cassava harvesting in Wowetta Village, or the hunting practices in Surama Village, with the increased traffic influx or technological advances in the region. As a result, interpretation in the region improves by allowing each community to describe its role within the region and in response to changing environmental and cultural factors. Illustrating these connections limits the chance for homogeny and potentially conflict amongst tourism products, as each community or organisation will have its own story to utilise and can deepen their interpretation activities (see Sub-section 5.3.2.4). Subsequently, tourism can then become more sustainable by equipping each site with a better chance to receive more visitors and ensuring more local residents understand the Rupununi story and their place within it (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 119; Timothy, 2011: 253; Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 205).

As suggested in Sub-section 6.2.3, it is important to create stories around a destination and also consider how these stories will be presented (Interview I5, 2012). It has been argued in this section that one manner for telling this story would be through the *in-situ* and *ex-situ* networked arrangement of the many Rupununi sites. Another *in-situ* approach to telling these stories lies in the most popular interpretation technique in the

Rupununi, the tour guide. Local tour guides can provide a personal tourism experience (Howard, 2003: 255-256; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 2008: 503; Jameson, Jr., 2008: 437), detailing the specific meanings behind the nature and culture relationship in the Rupununi (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006: 494-495). However, in order to do so requires that all tour guides are educated on the environmental and socio-cultural ecology of the region. In other words, they must understand the connections between Rupununi sites and the various relationships between cultural activity (e.g. technology, traditions) and natural landscapes. Doing so can contribute to sustainability in the industry by enhancing the visitor experience and influencing understanding on local heritage resources and their value (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006: 486).

Keeping tour guides as the primary interpretation tool may also be the recommended method for avoiding the over-interpretation of Rupununi heritage resources, a phenomena that Howard (2003: 246-249; see also Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 196) argues is not necessary as some locations can “...speak for themselves”. However, the researcher argues that whilst this may be true to a certain extent, revealing the ‘value’ and information that is not evident beyond the surface allows for heritage resources to take on new meaning in communities and visitors alike. Either way, ecomuseum philosophy advocates that within all heritage interpretation activities and information sharing, local communities must be the decision makers and select what material they wish to share. Furthermore, Timothy and Nyaupane (2009: 249) argue that this is also recommended for tourism development in developing countries (see also Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 205). Combining this with a more integrated approach to telling the Rupununi story and the relationships shared between communities and the natural landscape greatly improves the region’s prospects for holistic interpretation and information distribution. Ultimately, interpretation represents a key area where ecomuseum philosophy can provide support, particularly in conjunction with sustainable tourism development.

### **8.3 Defining and Networking a Territory**

The previous section (8.2) reiterated the fact that the Rupununi is a multi-dimensional setting. The region is host to an impressive mixture of natural and cultural heritage resources, numerous communities with different indigenous groups, various tourism products, research projects, educational programmes and more (Sections 1.4, 5.4 and 6.3). Section 8.2 also demonstrated how the linking of Rupununi sites and resources

would benefit the flow of information and interpretation. Further to this point, this section evaluates the potential for ecomuseum philosophy in defining and networking the Rupununi. More specifically, it reviews (Section 6.3) how uniting all of the abovementioned stakeholder activities and heritage resources under a single plan would consolidate the relationships between these stakeholder undertakings and highlight the “...complex points of connection and critical paths” for visitors and locals alike (Corsane, 2009: 7). This section shares a strong association with the previous one, due to the fact that defining and networking the Rupununi would also highly involve the flow of information. Indeed, networking and defining the Rupununi territory by its very definition involves the organisation of information. However, where this section differs is in its analysis on using this unification as a stimulant (Sub-section 6.3.1) to stakeholder collaboration, tourism operations including marketing and improving the visibility of stakeholder actions and processes to visitors.

In general, ecomuseology provides a relevant and opportunistic philosophy for organising and endorsing the activities and resources in the Rupununi. More specifically, there are two principles (8 & 10) which would directly support this initiative, although many more would also provide sustenance (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9 & 15). Both of these principles focus on showcasing key elements of Rupununi tourism and heritage management, and in particular, the work of the NRDDDB and other key stakeholders. The following sub-sections critically analyses both Principles 8 (8.3.1) and 10 (8.3.2) for their potential for networking these Rupununi elements and subsequent impact for sustainable tourism development.

### **8.3.1 Principle 8**

- *Encompass a ‘geographical’ territory, which can be determined by different shared characteristics*

The eighth ecomuseological principle revolves around the establishment of a defined ‘geographical’ territory. Distinction is placed on the word geographical because the territory can be defined by different shared characteristics. Territorial boundaries in ecomuseums move beyond administrative boundaries (Sections 3.3.1 & 3.4) and instead can be selected from diverse sources such as topography, languages or cultural features which comprise its identity (Davis, 2011: 269; Babic, 2009: 251; Donghai, 2008: 37; Corsane *et al.*, 2007a: 102; Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 225). Davis (2008: 401) contends



that ecomuseum philosophy embraces territories as an “...interpretation of spaces” and encompasses “...everything within the region it refers to as its territory”. In general, the Rupununi uses its endemic natural features (e.g. rivers, wetland savannahs, mountains) and some administrative borders (e.g. Brazil, Venezuela) to demarcate a defined territory based on its physical boundaries (see Figure 7.2 and Section 1.3). However, and as mentioned above, there are many features within the Rupununi that make up its identity and could also be used to help define the territory.

While looking beyond conventional boundaries (e.g. administrative) for shared characteristics might assist with defining a territory, it might also support the unity of an informally-recognised segregated area. For example, interview respondents revealed that there is a ‘divide’ between the northern and southern regions of the Rupununi in terms of development, with a particular focus on tourism. The north has seen significantly more development than the southern portion, and is loosely defined (see Figure 7.2) as the savannah area north of the Kanuku Mountains and south of the Pakaraima and Iwokrama mountains (Smock, 2008: 231; Shackley, 1998: 208). An interviewee (Interview P2, 2012) stated that tourism was not as developed in the south because, “People down there are not too aware of what it takes to do tourism, what are the attractions”. As a result, this has created an informal ‘competition’ between the respective communities and businesses. Interviewee respondents also mentioned this conflict by saying there was a perception that “...the north people were cutting the south out” (Interview V3, 2012) and that the “...north isn’t linked up enough with the south” (Interview V4, 2012). Recognising these issues becomes important in establishing management frameworks for tourism.

Nonetheless, there remain key shared features between the two locations which could be combined to form a more cohesive tourism product and linked territory. For instance, part of the Rupununi identity is the cattle ranches (Sub-section 1.3.1), which have existed in various sections of the region. Currently, the north has two attractions based around former ranches (Karanambu and Rock View Lodge) that could be linked up with Dadanawa Ranch, the southern region’s major tourism draw (Smock, 2008: 273). Highlighting these shared characteristics amongst different Rupununi sites is more likely to encourage the branding of new tourism products within the region, encourage more visitations and minimise the noticeable separation of the geographical territory. In addition, it has the potential to provide recognition for sites which have limited resources for marketing. Emphasising the shared characteristics in a territory could flag

locations that tourists were not previously considering, but now are interested in visiting.

Ultimately, the Rupununi has a distinct local identity which is enhanced by the efforts of several stakeholder groups. It also has a defined border which is outlined by the physical boundaries that partly comprise this identity. Nonetheless, there remains the potential for identifying and mapping additional characteristics (e.g. research projects, archaeological sites) that align with the identity and sense of place of the region. Timothy (2011: 88-89) contends that developing tourism requires the identification of heritage resources that have “...played an important role in the patrimony of a region”, which can be important for visitors but can also “...be important places to visit for locals” as well (see also Edgell, 2006: 89).

Once these characteristics are identified and networked as part of a holistic territory, they can be used for promotional tourism purposes and also in the management of heritage resources. The work done by CI has contributed greatly in identifying many of the tourism resources in most Rupununi communities. However, there is room for exploring the points of connection between these communities and how they combine to form the Rupununi identity and territory (CI, 2010: 48; also see Sub-sections 6.3.1). The result of this process has several implications for sustainable tourism. From an economic point of view, the promotion of additional sites showcases a Rupununi with more product diversity and encourages folks to stay longer, thus employing more local communities and adding more revenue. It also has the potential to improve channels of communication between stakeholders (Lloyd & Morgan, 2008: 11) and raise awareness on unrecognised heritage resources, potentially contributing to heritage management frameworks and the development of socio-cultural capital. Finally, the researcher recognises that highlighting these shared characteristics and activities needs the correct framework for disseminating that information, which is where Principle 10 and the following sub-section become important.

### **8.3.2 Principle 10**

- *Takes the form of a ‘fragmented museum’, consisting of a network with a hub and antennae of different buildings and sites.*

In the previous sub-section, it is argued that the adoption of Principle 8 would assist Rupununi tourism development by defining the local territory and highlighting the

connections, activities and resources shared by stakeholders. The main topic of this sub-section, Principle 10, is arguably a structure for the manifestation of this defined territory. As presented in sub-section 8.2.1, Principle 10 and the fragmented site approach are linked to the *in-situ* and holistic interpretation and conservation of a territory. Davis (2011: 271) contends that the primary ramification from the fragmented approach is that all “...aspects of heritage” should be interpreted and “...that interconnections between the sites – and between culture and nature – are fully explained”. Indeed, the fragmented approach places prominence on these interconnections between sites, including stakeholders and their activities, heritage resources and all other elements which define the territory. While the fragmented approach could benefit Rupununi tourism by enhancing and promoting “information-gathering, research, display and education” (Davis, 2011: 80), certain aspects could also directly benefit from this tactic including marketing, stakeholder collaboration and the formal arrangement of an already informally linked Rupununi network (Sub-section 6.3.1).

Adopting a fragmented approach would significantly contribute to networking the various Rupununi sites. Fragmentation itself suggests an ecological model where individual elements are all connected in forming a whole. Within a tourism industry where there is a mix of linkages and natural fragmentation amongst stakeholders (Pavlovich, 2003: 203; Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 170,185), the fragmented approach presents an adhesive to bind them together. According to an industry stakeholder (Interview I4, 2012), “We need a link between each other... because we all work as a group together in tourism”. In addition, a member from the public sector (Interview P3, 2012) argued that creating a plan (Section 6.3) would “...bring about collaboration” amongst stakeholders. She (ibid) described how her organisation depends on the work and research of other organisations to stay updated on the Rupununi because “...we don’t have the man power on the ground to tell us what’s happening and the changes”.

Using the fragmented approach would assist with the establishment of channels of communication (Sub-section 2.4.4) between host communities and other stakeholder groups, a key element for sustainable tourism development (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 246-247). On the importance of tourism networks within a destination, Hall (2000: 145) states, “Networks refer to the development of linkages between actors (organizations and individuals) where linkages become more formalized towards maintaining mutual interests”. Network structures improve the balance of “hierarchical

control” and allow for the stakeholder groups with less power (e.g. host community, tourists, media, voluntary sector) in decision-making processes to play a larger role, thus further contributing towards sustainable development (Hall, 2000: 144; see also Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010: 113; Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 169). These structures allow for the increased probability that negative economic, environmental and social impacts will be mitigated and benefits will be equally distributed amongst all stakeholder groups.

Although the fragmented approach would be a method for endorsing a single destination, one of its key functions would also be to market the individual sites within the Rupununi. It is this action which closely aligns with sub-section 8.2.1 and using Principle 10 to improve the flow of information. Beyond the benefit of having more logistics information (Sub-section 8.2.1) for trip planning, creating a Rupununi destination image and marketing that image is essential for a successful tourist destination (Howie, 2003: 141). Marketing provides opportunities to both increase visitor numbers and improve heritage management efforts by communicating effectively with targeted visitors (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 185; Hall & McArthur, 1993: 139-140, 164; Timothy, 2011: 275). Currently, there are a few well known sites which have better access to funding and resources and subsequently are able to attract and host more tourists. However, there are other communities and attractions in the Rupununi that have equally market-ready tourism products, but lack the human or financial resources to market their products. A member of the industry (Interview I1, 2012) commented on the uniqueness of each property in the Rupununi. She (ibid) stated:

*“...every property, no matter where you are located, has something unique to offer and because you have something unique to offer, it makes it interesting for people to go out there and explore. What you will experience at Iwokrama, Canopy Walkway, Surama, Rock View, Aranaputa, Rewa...is all different and it gives you the additional advantage of wanting to go out there and see what that property has to offer. ...So the sharing of information and the uniqueness of the product is a perfect example of linking everybody together.”*

Given the right platform (e.g. website), having a plan would allow each community or attraction to be equally promoted and recognised *ex-situ* and *in-situ*, which could lead to higher visitor numbers and revenue. A host community member (Interview C2, 2012) agreed and argued that having a plan “...would be better...so everyone could equally benefit, so it’s important we have this plan with these lodges and sites so they could be

linked together”. Members of the voluntary sector commented that in creating a plan, “...what you are trying to do is capture what is unique about each location” (Interview V1, 2012) and, “It’s an opportunity to showcase ...similarities but unique selling points, and in doing that, there is so much more you can bring to the region” (Interview V2, 2012). In addition, an industry stakeholder (Interview I5, 2012) indicated that a plan would allow stakeholders to further differentiate their product while still promoting an interconnected destination. She (ibid) stated:

*“People can understand what other people are doing and how [they] can complement that, how [they] can do something that is going to fit in with what that other person is doing and make the destination more important. Because that’s what it’s all about, selling the destination. It’s not about selling Surama or Iwokrama...people don’t travel for that. They travel because they are going to a destination, and so you want to market it as a destination and the more you do to link and create that destination, the more that it’s going to be strong.”*

In regards to marketing a single destination, a public sector stakeholder (Interview P1, 2012) asserted that a plan “...would help to...brand and position the Rupununi, to offer easier access to the world in terms of a one stop site for everything Rupununi...the various experiences and itineraries in the Rupununi”. He (ibid) also added specifically that a website would be an ideal “...in trying to pursue the branding of the Rupununi”. Branding would provide the Rupununi with an identity that would help to distinguish it from other similar regional tourism products (Howie, 2003: 152). Furthermore, an industry stakeholder (Interview I5, 2012) argued that with a fragmented approach, marketing would improve “...because you could join together to do your marketing”. Having a plan that mapped out the resources and the significance of each place would also contribute to a stronger awareness and sense of pride about the Rupununi and its tourism product. A community member (Interview C3, 2012) commented, “I think [a plan] would be a great strength to us because a lot of us don’t know what is there and what tourism is and how you go about doing things”. In this sense, using a fragmented approach would provide a very practical platform for local communities who are unfamiliar with tourism networking operations and how the region can be linked up as a single destination while still promoting their individual products.

Understanding the spatial characteristics of a tourism destination is also important in the management of heritage resources (Timothy, 2011: 97). It assists with informing management groups on the potential “...positive and negative impacts” of tourism (ibid).

The use of a fragmented strategy would integrate the various spatial features of the Rupununi and provide a window for the local population and other stakeholders to understand its holistic sustainable management and how it relates to their identity (Perella *et al.*, 2010: 439). It would also be complimented by allowing this network of interconnections to remain fluid by accepting any patterns of change over time (Principle 9) (Pavlovich, 2003: 204). Again, and as mentioned in Sub-section 8.2.1, this could be presented both on-site (e.g. hub, interpretation centres, antennae sites) and off-site (e.g. website). This formal presentation, or branding, could potentially attract investment and additional support, key needs identified by stakeholders (Sub-section 6.3.2). Funding bodies could be particularly interested to see how individual initiatives serve as part of a larger “...integrated overarching whole” with international impact (Corsane, 2009: 7). However, a key challenge rests with who is best situated to manage the implementation of a fragmented approach, amongst other pressing tourism issues. This is discussed in more detail in Sub-section 8.6.2, which outlines the key stakeholders who would be most likely to support these changes. The next section now focuses on the applicability of key ecomuseological principles in the more general field of heritage management.

#### **8.4 Heritage Management Processes**

Heritage and its relationship with local populations is an important symbol of individual, communal, regional and national identities (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 35). It also evokes a sense of place and can have economic significance, particularly through tourism (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 13). As a result, protecting local identities and ways of life requires appropriate heritage management techniques. Heritage management is complex and multidimensional (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 193) and is centred on the processes which determine the policies, applications and manner of development for heritage resources (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 6-7). This section demonstrates how ecomuseum philosophy, and its flexible and holistic approach to heritage management, can provide site-specific support for Rupununi tourism development.

Chapter Seven, more particularly Sub-section 7.4.2, demonstrated that there are several heritage management practices currently being implemented in the Rupununi. For example, Table 7.2 highlighted some of the key *in-situ* heritage management techniques being used in the Rupununi for both natural and cultural heritage resources. These

included educational outreach programmes, conservation zones, cultural groups, community mapping and the work of the Wildlife Clubs and Makushi Research Unit. Although the continued safeguarding of these resources through the highlighted techniques is certainly important and necessary, there remain other areas which were identified within this research project that require attention.

The central heritage management issues identified in Section 6.4 include the dominance of natural resource management in the Rupununi, dealing with an area which is in a state of constant cultural and natural change and balancing the developmental needs of local communities with heritage management processes. In this section, these issues are critically compared and analysed against five ecomuseum principles (4, 6, 9, 12 & 15). The following sub-sections (8.4.1 - 8.4.4) demonstrate how the implementation of these principles would complement the already existing heritage management efforts, thus creating a more sustainable tourism industry. As mentioned previously, although these specific principles can provide support for the identified issues, central tenets of ecomuseology (e.g. community empowerment and total control) would need to also be enforced for them to be effective.

#### **8.4.1 Principle 4**

- *Places an emphasis on the processes of heritage management, rather than on heritage products for consumption*

Ecomuseum philosophy embraces the actions and outputs of cultural heritage processes. This embracement is captured within Principle 4, which stresses the prominence of these processes for heritage management, rather than focusing on heritage products. A specific example of this can be found at the Ecomuseo della Canapa. This ecomuseum was initiated by a local historical association to revive the local rope-making industry (Corsane *et al.*, 2007b: 226). Resident communities have donated objects while volunteers manage the site and run educational programmes (ibid). The project was initiated as a way to both capture local identity and aid tourism development (ibid). Corsane *et al.* (2007a: 107-108) have noted, “Although the site is historically important, it appears that the process of working together to conserve and interpret it was arguably more significant, bringing local people together with a common purpose of conserving an important fragment of their heritage”. They (ibid) stress that the site has become a “meeting place” where the community can celebrate its heritage and identity while

promoting cultural tourism. It is these dynamic and participatory processes of managing the site's heritage through a collective memory that have had the most impact on local communities (Corsane *et al.*, 2007a: 113; Perella *et al.*, 2010: 445; Smith, 2006: 307-308).

The situation for implementing ecomuseology in the Rupununi differs from the Ecomuseo della Canapa. The original and primary aim of that project was less concerned with economic development through tourism and more concerned with keeping memories of the local industry "alive and valued" (Corsane *et al.*, 2007a: 107-108). Although keeping memories and heritage resources alive is certainly part of the goal for heritage management in the Rupununi, development, particularly tourism, is also a primary goal with great importance for local communities. Indeed, Hall and McArthur (1998: 6-7) argue that heritage management tends to focus on "...conservation of the resource" and subsequently, "...limited attention has been given to the human dimension, even though it is the human dimension that gives rise to heritage resources". As a result, heritage managers must be considerate of these development needs in managing local resources, but still remember that it is the processes of cultural heritage management that can have lasting sustainability implications. This becomes even more relevant in the Rupununi, as there is a strong desire for expedited tourism development in many communities (Sub-section 5.2.2).

As tourism is a targeted economic activity in a remote and economically deprived rural area, it becomes difficult to suggest that communities should focus more on the processes of heritage management and not the tourism product. Indeed, Howard (2003: 208) stresses that heritage is simultaneously both a product and a process. In operating a business that they hope will be profitable, communities should consider their heritage products and how tourists will 'consume' them. However, the reason this principle has potential to aid this process is because it encourages communities to inquire and celebrate why this heritage resource is valuable to them, and, why they want to share it with visitors. As in the Ecomuseo della Canapa, heritage managers in the Rupununi should strive for activities that unite communities and ignite their collective memory on the territory and sense of place. While the 'product' is a consideration for many communities, there are many instances where the focus has been more on process. For example, the activities of the Makushi Research Unit, Bina Hill Institute or Community Wildlife Clubs (Sub-sections 6.4 & 7.4.2) have all been vital processes for reviving local memory and traditions. During the wildlife festivals, community members of all



ages unite to practice traditional skills (e.g. cotton spinning, cassava grating) and therefore engage in meaning-making experiences.

Using these same processes in setting up tourism products and then maintaining them could make the heritage resources more sustainable, as well as the community's involvement with them. For example, if Surama wanted to start an experiential story telling product, they could hold a community meeting where members attend and share local stories and myths. The process of doing so could help with establishing what stories they would like to share as a product, but at the same time it is revitalising an intrinsic part of their heritage by remembering and generating memories, "...creating and recreating values" (Smith, 2006: 307-308; see also Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 181). This action, which is in line with Smith's alternative heritage discourse (Section 7.3), would allow the processes of heritage management to continue while still considering the development needs of the community. However, heritage managers need to be extremely cautious that the product, or economic well-being of the community, does not take precedence over the resources; a common issue (section 7.2) in developing countries (Larson & Poudyal, 2012: 933; Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 123; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 21). This balance between heritage management and development is now continued in the next sub-section, which discusses the role of volunteers.

#### **8.4.2 Principle 6**

➤ *Depends on substantial active voluntary efforts by local stakeholders*

Volunteers play a key role in both the tourism industry (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 153) and in ecomuseums (Davis, 2011). They carry out tasks that range from daily operational activities (e.g. providing visitor information) to more senior roles (e.g. board of directors) (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 153). Ecomuseums worldwide depend on various levels of voluntary efforts, but most share the fact that volunteers are a prominent feature of their operations. However, the notion that a heritage organisation that follows ecomuseum philosophy should depend on substantial voluntary efforts may not accurately reflect the situation of developing countries. More specifically, the opportunity to volunteer in heritage management may be less attractive to community members in a developing country, where they struggle with high levels of poverty and unemployment (Section 7.2) (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 123-124). Consequently, it appears as though this principle may have been written with the Western context in

mind. This is compounded by the fact that 70% (at least 289) of the world's ecomuseums are based in Europe, spread across 18 countries (Ecomuseum Observatory, 2011). Volunteers can be difficult to source in nearly all countries, but this appears to be easier in developed countries where more individuals have secured employment or a higher standard of living and are able to donate their time. Although the 21 principles only act as guidelines for ecomuseum development, they have more potential to be universally applicable if they reconsidered the evolving needs of developing countries as well.

The Rupununi presents a very similar situation to the one described above. The region has suffered from a considerable lack of employment opportunities and urbanisation (Sub-section 1.3.3) and does not possess a significant volunteer system, or un-paid work done for improving the well-being of local communities. As a consequence, local communities are less inclined to take volunteer positions as opposed to any paid work in their pursuit for sustainable livelihoods (Sub-section 7.5.1). Although acquiring volunteers may be more difficult in the Rupununi, this does not change the potential benefits of utilising more active voluntary efforts, which is where this principle can be of particular use. Volunteer efforts have potential to improve tourism operations and allow for increased engagement with heritage resources. Volunteering also has the potential to provide individuals with a stronger 'sense of pride' and stronger connections with society. Increasing volunteer responsibilities would make heritage management more "proactive" as opposed to "reactive", a shift which Larson and Poudyal (2012: 918) argue is important for integrating development and heritage protection.

The researcher argues that it is difficult to suggest that individuals in the Rupununi take on more volunteer work amidst current circumstances. However, as tourism increases in the region and communities and individuals become more comfortable with their livelihoods, the consideration for, and commitment to, volunteering can and should increase. Furthermore, with the adoption of other ecomuseum principles, such as a fragmented interpretation approach, new volunteer opportunities may arise with a renewed valuation of heritage resources in communities. An important consideration will be keeping local communities interested in volunteering in an area where the tourism product is still very much a reflection of their daily lifestyles (Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 123-124). In these locations, such as the Rupununi, heritage does not share the same value as in developed countries, because local residents typically have lived in the

region for generations and therefore volunteering for the management of their daily lifestyle may be difficult for communities to grasp and appreciate. Therefore, it will be necessary for heritage managers to make the volunteer programme a rewarding experience for local communities and recognise both formal and informal voluntary efforts. Nonetheless, the use of volunteers would significantly benefit Rupununi tourism development by encouraging community members to get more involved in the processes of heritage management.

#### 8.4.3 *Principles 9 & 15*

- *Cover both spatial and temporal aspects, where, in relation to the temporal, it looks at continuity and change over time rather than simply trying to freeze things in time*
- *Encourages an on-going programme of documentation of past and present life and people's interactions with all environmental factors (including physical, economic, social, cultural and political)*

The principles listed above, especially within Sections 8.2 and 8.3, primarily consider the spatial aspects of ecomuseum philosophy and their impact on territorial identity and organising a destination and its heritage resources. Within this sub-section, attention now shifts towards the temporal aspects of ecomuseology. In particular, these principles are evaluated with respect to current and potential activities in the Rupununi that relate to the presentation and documentation of heritage resources diachronically, or over time. As culture is a fluid and evolving process, changes are a constant phenomenon (Smith, 2006: 83). Therefore, examining and documenting a particular timeframe within the Rupununi would not be reflective of the overall Rupununi identity. Ecomuseology encourages communities to view their culture in this fashion; emphasising that they should ascertain and document their identity as it relates to, and changes with, all environmental factors (Perella *et al.*, 2010: 440; Galla, 2005: 104-105; also see Sub-section 3.3.1).

Chapters Five and Six have presented the Rupununi as a place currently experiencing significant change. Key developments within the region are in the process of shifting various social, economic and cultural values. For example, improvements to the Georgetown-Lethem road (Sub-section 1.3.3) have allowed for new economic opportunities to the region (e.g. petroleum, mining, large-scale agriculture, tourism),

increased urbanisation and modernisation and the influx of more cultural diversity. As a result, significant changes to the environmental and cultural landscapes of the region have also been on-going. Principles 9 and 15 encourage heritage managers to consider these changes and document them both within past and present contexts. These actions allow local communities to navigate through the process of cultural change by providing them with a window to observe changes to their cultural and environmental resources. In turn, this has implications for modifying heritage management frameworks and also sustainable tourism. For example, it could support sustainable tourism by identifying which heritage resources are undergoing any detrimental changes, which is in line with the Limits of Acceptable Change framework covered in Section 9.3. Additionally, documenting changes over time can also be used for exhibition purposes to guide visitors through the heritage of the Rupununi, thus creating meaning behind experiences for both visitors and locals.

Within the Rupununi, there have been numerous research projects that have assisted with this documentation. This includes, for example, studies that have documented the relationship of place and hunting patterns amongst indigenous groups (Read *et al.*, 2010), community-based wildlife conservation efforts (Fook & Tanya, 2012) and the role of social memory in natural resource management (Mistry *et al.*, 2013). Yet, although these projects are assisting with this documentation and used local knowledge in many cases, they were not initiated by local communities and the researcher is unsure as to what level local communities even have access to these reports. There have also been attempts to document Amerindian cultural heritage in an exhibition (*Time and Space in Indigenous Amazonia*) at the Walter Roth Museum in the capital city of Georgetown (MCYS, 2013). A visit during data collection revealed that much of the exhibition focuses on historical artefacts and traditions with some references to modern day heritage resources. Although this exhibition establishes a good model of covering and documenting heritage resources in the Rupununi, its *ex-situ* location severely limits the connection with Rupununi-based communities.

While the above-mentioned activities should continue in documenting the diachronic changes of the Rupununi, the region would also benefit from having a locally based, community-lead effort as well. A key project that has attempted this is the Makushi Research Unit. Its publication on Makushi language as well as stories, legends and flora and fauna was a significant step in documenting local heritage resources diachronically. Further activities such as this will become vital to heritage management

as the region continues to adapt to its ever-changing surroundings. Other than the work of the MRU, there appears to be few mechanisms for documenting change in the Rupununi. Ecomuseum philosophy emphasises that the process for documenting these changes should be locally-based, participatory and dynamic as communities redefine their identity (Perella *et al.*, 2010; 445). These efforts could align with other ecomuseological principles, such as Principle 10, and the adoption of a fragmented approach with information/interpretation centres. These sites could be used as exhibitions spaces for local communities to create and share how local natural and cultural landscapes have changed over time. It could also potentially involve Principle 6 and volunteering as volunteers could be involved in documentation which could result in new tourism products. As traditional livelihoods and activities evolve, documenting and the presenting them will continue to evoke collective memory within the local population, enabling them to hold on that which they consider most important and embracing the new (Davis, 2011: 44). In return, these efforts have major implications for sustainable tourism development, as the industry uses many of these resources as products (Sub-sections 6.5.3 & 7.5.1). These two principles will be a key aspect of heritage management in the region as development and cultures evolve.

#### **8.4.4 Principle 12**

- *Gives equal attention to immovable and movable tangible material culture, and to intangible heritage resources*

Ecomuseology is a heritage management framework that is inclusive and accepting of all types of heritage resources. Previous sections have demonstrated that ecomuseums focus on the spatial features (8.3.1 & 8.3.2) as well as temporal features (8.4.3) in a region. In addition to this, ecomuseums recognise all of the tangible and intangible heritage resources which define a territory and its population (Sub-section 3.3.1). These aspects of heritage can range from the daily, intangible habits or conversations of communities to the larger, more noticeable tangible features of a territory, such as architecture or natural and cultural landscapes. For example, the Him Dak Ecomuseum in the United States is based around one building, the Him Dak, but the community considers the entire reservation (e.g. landscape, people, and buildings) to be their museum (Graybeal, 2010: 16). Also important with Principle 12 is that within this equal distribution of attention for all heritage resources, communities must remain empowered in deciding which resources are recognised. In other words, communities

may have the power and ability to recognise aspects of their natural or cultural surroundings, but may not choose to do so. For example, within the Rupununi, interview respondents (Sub-section 6.5.1) revealed that certain cultural aspects are very intrinsic and communities are not comfortable sharing these with outsiders. As a result, the opportunity to recognise all heritage resources may not always be utilised.

The cultural heritage management techniques listed in Table 7.2 include the primary activities listed in Sub-sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2. Although there are cultural resource management techniques currently being employed in the Rupununi, the researcher feels that this is an area which would benefit from additional support. The work of the MRU, Iwokrama (Sub-section 5.4.4), NRDDDB (Sub-section 5.4.5), wildlife clubs and other organisations and individuals have all been significant steps in garnering attention for all Rupununi heritage resources, particularly indigenous knowledge systems which are a “...critical ingredient in sustainable development” (Timothy, 2011: 432). However, additional *in-situ* mechanisms could be established to safeguard both intangible and tangible cultural heritage resources. For example, in following ecomuseum philosophy and recognising the numerous archaeological sites (Sub-section 6.4.2.1) mentioned by various stakeholders (Interview I2, 2012; Interview V1, 2012; Interview I3, 2012), safeguarding measures and a renewed sense of place could be developed amongst visitors and local communities (McManamon, 2008: 463-465). Potentially this could involve the local communities and NRDDDB in establishing a local museum or education centre (neither of which are currently present in the Rupununi), where local communities and visitors could interact with and learn more about local heritage. Nonetheless, the inclusion of more cultural heritage resources should be initiated by communities, especially as they are the primary guardians of their cultural heritage resources (Keitumetse, 2011: 50-51). Communities can identify the resources they would like to recognise more and use that to move forward.

Timothy & Nyaupane (2009: 21) have argued that improving cultural resource management has direct links to sustainability, yet continues to be a missing feature in some sustainable development programmes (see also Keitumetse, 2011: 50-51; 55). For example, the safeguarding of cultural resources helps communities withstand impacts from modernisation, preserve collective memory, build nationalism and increase economic activity (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 21). Timothy and Nyaupane (2009: 21; also see Section 7.2) have also argued that within developing countries, the primary motivation for safeguarding cultural heritage resources is economics, more specifically

tourism. The following section (8.5) discusses this idea further, and looks at how the increased use of cultural heritage resources would support their protection and promote sustainable tourism development.

### **8.5 Rupununi Cultural Tourism: A Potential Product**

The Rupununi is a region comprised of world-class biodiversity and impressive natural landscapes which are directly reflected in the tourism product and marketing. As presented in Sections 5.2 and 6.5, nature-tourism has been, and continues to be (OP, 2013), the primary focus in the Rupununi with bird and wildlife watching being the most popular tourist activities. The researcher, and a majority of stakeholder participants, agrees that there is more potential for cultural heritage resources in tourism development, particularly intangible resources (Sub-section 6.5.1). Responsible tourism, a key principle within ecomuseum philosophy (Sections 7.2 & 7.5), is a key way forward for cultural tourism and has potential for safeguarding cultural resources in the region and contributing to sustainable development (Edgell, 2006: 73-75).

The previous Sub-section (8.4.4) argued that equal attention should be given to all heritage resources in heritage management, including the intangible. This section extends that argument and contends that there should also be an equal opportunity for cultural heritage resources in tourism development, which could potentially result in their safeguarding. Furthermore, this inclusion can provide more diversity to tourism and avoid the solidification of a monothematic product. Although cultural heritage represents a development opportunity for tourism stakeholders in the region, the researcher understands that this is a complex scenario. Firstly, natural resources are an easily justified product to use for Rupununi tourism due to their abundance and market demand. As a result, a nature-based tourism product is highly desirable by local communities and visitors and will continue to be a primary focus (Edgell, 2006: 41). Secondly, the central consideration of sharing cultural heritage with visitors originates with the wishes of the host community. Communities must be willing to share and select their cultural resources for tourism. If not, the risks for socio-cultural impacts become higher and tourism becomes detrimental in the safeguarding of heritage resources. Ultimately, this section argues that by developing cultural tourism products, which follow ecomuseum philosophy and are endorsed by communities, Rupununi stakeholders can support the protection of cultural resources and contribute to positive impacts for host communities.

Within the argument for a balanced inclusion and utilisation of heritage resources for tourism, ecomuseum philosophy has three specific principles (5, 9 & 12) which could provide support. These principles have been selected because they are able to address certain sustainable tourism issues such as authenticity, economic activity, loss of culture and changes in the social fabric over time. The following sub-section (8.5.1) will first analyse how the enhanced collaboration between stakeholders and local craftspeople and artists could stimulate the revitalisation of indigenous craft-making and sense of pride in the Rupununi. The last sub-section (8.5.2) will then finish the section by evaluating the impact on sustainable tourism from presenting cultural resources diachronically.

### **8.5.1 Principles 5 & 12**

- *Encourages collaboration with local craftspeople, artists, writers, actors and musicians*
- *Gives equal attention to immovable and movable tangible material culture, and to intangible heritage resources*

Although nature and wildlife will continue to be the foci of Rupununi tourism, the researcher argues that consideration should also be given to cultural resources. Both types of heritage resources celebrate the uniqueness of the Rupununi through different experiences. Cultural tourism involves the visitation to cultural and historical resources, is one of the oldest forms of travel and is currently one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry - more so than any other form of tourism (CI, 2010: 6; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 3; Richards & Munsters, 2010: 1; Jansen-Verbeke & Lievois, 1999: 88). Cultural tourists, who tend to spend more than other tourist types (Stone, 2006: 9), could open a new and beneficial market for the Rupununi and its unique indigenous culture (e.g. Yupukari, Sub-section 5.4.2.2). Moreover, the demographic profile of the Rupununi's current tourists (Sub-section 5.5.5) fits within the description of cultural tourists: educated, middle-class and well-travelled (Steele-Prohaska, 1999). Therefore, including more cultural experiences for tourists opens up a market for both new visitor types while capitalising on the tourists who are already present.

Cultural tourism also aligns with indigenous tourism with its focus on heritage, history, habitat and handicrafts (Smith, 1996: 287). Indeed, Sinclair and Ali (2006: 95) assert that the Rupununi could make a name for itself as "...a living museum of indigenous



vitality”. There is also a rising interest for “...un-crowded and authentic attractions” in tourism; much like what the Rupununi has to offer (CI, 2010: 6). Furthermore, cultural heritage is often considered to be an important aspect of ecotourism, the key market for the Rupununi (Steele-Prohaska, 1999: 278). Ecotourists tend to have interests in both the natural and cultural heritage of the places they are visiting, which further stresses the potential development of cultural experiences for tourism (ibid). Ecomuseum philosophy, and the importance it places on the equality of heritage resources, suggests that these cultural resources should have the opportunity to be shared with visitors.

Principle 5 contends that ecomuseums encourage collaboration with local craftspeople and artists, key features of cultural tourism practice globally, which are not currently being utilised in the Rupununi according to stakeholders (Interview V2, 2012; Interview T4, 2012; Interview P2, 2012, Interview I1, 2012; Interview C1, 2012; also see Sub-section 6.5.1). The Rupununi possesses a rich history of traditional craftwork, art, stories and performances. As a result, the utilisation of these resources for tourism can aid the industry’s sustainable development, particularly with economic gains from the addition of new products. Furthermore, the collaboration and promotion of local crafts and arts through tourism helps to preserve cultural traditions (Edgell, 2006: 74), which can lead to a renewed sense of place and pride, central elements of “social well-being” (Galla, 2002: 143; see also Edgell, 2006: 73-74). Indeed, tourism provides a market and an interested audience for local artisans, which drives the preservation of skills (Edgell, 2006: 74). Surama (Sub-sections 5.4.2.1 & 6.5.1) represents a paradigm of this notion, with clear success in their sale of handicrafts and use of cultural traditions and performances for tourism. Their place as the flagship community-based tourism enterprise in the region is very probably linked to the inclusion of cultural resources and as Sub-section 6.5.1 demonstrated, this action has caught the eye of other Rupununi communities who are considering the same.

Although Surama has achieved much success with cultural tourism activities, it should be noted that this success is based on a community consensus, which directly controls decisions involving tourism and heritage resources (Sub-section 5.4.2.1). Indeed, and as suggested in 6.5.1, perhaps the reason other communities have not more fully adopted cultural tourism activities is because they do not wish to commercialise their cultural traditions (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010: 15; Bynoe, 2006: 15). Whether the reason is because: they are “shy” (Interview V2, 2012; Interview P3, 2012); do not understand the value of cultural resources (Interview V4, 2012); do not have enough

support (Interview C3, 2012); or, simply do not want to present a product that is not part of their daily routine and would be considered ‘putting on a show’ (Interview P2, 2012), communities, following ecomuseum philosophy, would have the full right to establish how they would use cultural resources. This also allows the tourism product to be more authentic, which is addressed further below and in the following sub-section (8.5.2). Under ecomuseum philosophy, in particular Principle 5, communities would be encouraged to celebrate and collaborate with local artists and craftspeople and understand their value for social-cohesion, identity and tourism. However, this principle will ultimately have to refer back to Principle 1 and the community’s right to include, or not include, these cultural resources.

A central element of Rupununi cultural heritage that was discussed during this research project was the idea of performance, or live interpretation. Whether it was through the presentation of daily traditions (e.g. cassava grating) or more elaborate dances, stories or songs, Rupununi stakeholders agree that few communities partake in these activities for tourism. Smith (2006: 69-71) argues that this form of interpretation in and of itself does not necessarily translate to an inauthentic product as is often suggested. Instead, the “emotional content” of the performance and importance for maintaining social values is the underlying factor for determining the product’s authenticity and effectiveness (ibid). This is also in line with the thoughts of a tourist participant (Interview T2, 2012; Sub-section 6.5.2), who argued that a performance must “...mean something to them” to be enjoyed by visitors (see also Smith, 2006: 70). Indeed, communities should only use live interpretation if they are comfortable with sharing their identity. This is particularly true within indigenous communities, such as the Rupununi, where cultural identity is an “...important resource of power” (Smith, 2006: 287). Therefore, although collaboration with artists and craftspeople is encouraged, the decision remains with local communities. The following sub-section now analyses the impact of presenting cultural resources diachronically for sustainable tourism development.

### **8.5.2 Principle 9**

- *Cover both spatial and temporal aspects, where, in relation to the temporal, it looks at continuity and change over time rather than simply trying to freeze things in time*

In the previous sub-section (8.5.1), the argument was presented that more cultural resources be utilised for tourism development. This sub-section extends this and contends that the presentation of these resources is best delivered diachronically. As seen in sub-section 8.4.3, Principle 9 encourages heritage managers to exhibit cultural changes over time. Within the realm of heritage management processes (Section 8.4), the use of Principle 9 was recommended as a way to document the changes in the Rupununi so that communities could better understand their socio-cultural and environmental circumstances. However, in this section, the use of Principle 9 deals more with how the diachronic presentation of cultural resources can impact on visitor satisfaction with the tourism product, a key aspect of sustainable tourism development. In particular, it is argued that presenting cultural resources as they have appeared over a period of time allows tourism and heritage managers to make the tourism product more authentic and inspires meaning-making experiences for visitors.

Ecomuseum philosophy emphasises that heritage interpretation should not be ‘frozen in time’, but instead look at continuity and change. An interviewee from the voluntary sector (Interview V4, 2012) maintained that tourists should not be fixated on a particular period in history. Instead, they should embrace the changes in local culture (ibid). On the specific issue of whether or not to perform traditional dances which are not typically conducted by many communities, she (ibid) argued:

*“I don’t care about that. This here is art. This is art. Culture is dynamic. Culture changes. Culture is not about living in the past – and this is part of their emerging culture. I don’t care about authenticity. They are doing Makushi music...Look, any tourists that come, the first thing I would ask is ‘excuse me, do you live like your grandparents’? ...Culture is dynamic and this is part of their culture now and should be showcased”.*

Following this philosophy, it then becomes beneficial for communities to interpret and document both their older cultural traditions and the on-going changes to those traditions in the face of cultural transformation. It is likely that presenting only one specific time period would hinder the authenticity of the tourism product in the Rupununi. At present, the region is going under a period of significant change, where traditional lifestyles are slowly being replaced with more modern forms of living (for examples see Sub-section 7.5.1). As these changes continue to infiltrate the Rupununi, it will become increasingly more essential to interpret how these changes have shaped Amerindian lifestyles and values. It is important to note that while westerners may view these changes as losses of indigenous culture, local communities see them as signs

of progress (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009: 248-249). Regardless of the viewpoint, this change can and should be included in tourism interpretation to better inform visitors and local communities alike. Although certain aspects of local culture may be more enticing for tourism development, communities should continue to demonstrate the various stages, amongst the whole story, of their cultural heritage over time and allow the tourist to develop their own understanding based on this (Stone, 2006: 10; also see Sub-section 2.3.2).

Based on the findings presented in Sub-section 6.5.2, it would appear that tourism in the Rupununi is authentic in its representation of community lifestyles. Furthermore, 'putting on a show' is not a particularly desirable activity according to stakeholders because of the false depiction it would present, as certain performance aspects (e.g. dances) are no longer practiced in communities. Indeed, stakeholders, and also personal observation during data collection, suggest that the tourism product is very much a reflection of the ordinary lifestyles lead by Rupununi communities. In other words, communities lead their daily lifestyles and if tourists come across a traditional practice they deem interesting, it is often a fortuitous event rather than a planned one. Communities are not presenting a specific aspect of their cultural heritage for tourism, such as traditional dances, because they are not a common feature of their cultural practices anymore. It does not inspire meaning amongst community members which indicates there is a loss of authenticity in that heritage resource and also a failure to transmit their true culture. In turn, utilising these heritage resources could translate into a poor tourism product and poor visitor satisfaction.

An exception has been Surama where these aspects of cultural heritage have been revitalised for tourism which has in turn generated pride and employment opportunities amongst local community members (Sub-section 6.5.1). Presenting these cultural aspects that are not representative of today's society is a decision to be made by host communities. A media stakeholder (Interview M2, 2012) agreed, stating:

*"I think that's up to the village...Like Surama, as tourism has grown and they redeveloped their cultural group, the dance and singing and they put on their traditional costumes that they made for that, and I know that has been important for them and got them in touch with that history. And if the village thinks that is important and I think a lot of them do, at least while some of the elders are still around, realize the importance of keeping that alive, because a lot of them see it slipping away, especially as the younger kids growing up have less and less interest in that. And so if they decide as*

*a community that's a way of holding on to it, by keeping it alive by telling stories to visitors, that's great."*

An industry member (Interview I5, 2012) also summarised this point and added that she doesn't "...think it's a good idea for people to come and say you should revive it for the tourists; but I think that a lot of these communities want to revive it. There is a desire because they feel like they lost their culture. ...It makes people proud of their culture again and it gets people staying home, it has a whole lot of positive impacts". In terms of presenting culture for tourism in both a past and present context, a member of the host community (Interview C2, 2012) commented, "I think it should be both, past and present, because that will determine how things changed over time...because things have changed, things have advanced, tremendously, in this part and especially in some communities". This will ensure communities continue to have a strong relationship with their cultural heritage and also decrease the chances that their heritage will become purely commoditised for tourism development. These actions provide the meaning and authenticity for tourism products that eco- and cultural tourists are seeking in today's market. As a result, this can encourage more repeat visitation from tourists due to higher levels of customer satisfaction and enhances word-of-mouth and international marketing strategies. Continuing the discussion on ways to enhance the Rupununi tourism product, the next section now evaluates the potential of creating an actual Rupununi Ecomuseum.

## **8.6 A Rupununi Ecomuseum**

The examples mentioned in Chapters Seven and Eight have illustrated the diversity of ecomuseum projects worldwide. Ecomuseums range from those which are small scale and primarily for community education and identity (e.g. Ecomuseo della Canapa) to large, profitable ventures driven through tourism income (e.g. Ecomusée de la Cevenne). Ecomuseums are initiated and managed by diverse sources from local associations to individual community leaders. Although the concept of the ecomuseum ideal may be *introduced* to a community, it is vital that the project is then *initiated* by community leaders and managed under their consent. Bergdahl (2006: 104) contends, "We can identify an ecomuseum by the level of participation of the local inhabitants. A real ecomuseum is a mirror of local culture and heritage which is interpreted by the people in the region where it is situated. It is a way of using history to create the future". Successful ecomuseum implementation is visibly linked to the 21 principles with a

particular focus on strong community leadership and participation, adequate training and guidance, heritage conservation, and long-term strategies that include funding (Davis, 2004: 93; Murtas & Davis, 2009: 159-160).

Although the theoretical framework has been represented in certain locations in Latin America (Davis, 2004: 97), ecomuseums have been scarce in most locations in the developing world. Whilst several communities possess a strong desire to adapt an ecomuseum framework, they lack the appropriate support (e.g. funding, training, empowerment) to achieve their goals. Furthermore, although communities should be the primary stakeholder in ecomuseums, there must be a balance of involvement from external partners (e.g. experts, government, society) or the project runs the risk of being short-term (Howard, 2002: 72). This also applies to ecomuseums in developed countries, but is less of an issue due to the wider availability of financial and political support. In either context, ecomuseum futures will be dependent on financial resources and the ability of management to pass on enthusiasm about local culture to younger generations (Galla, 2002: 73; Murtas & Davis, 2009: 160-162).

The previous sections (8.2 - 8.5) and Chapter Seven have all demonstrated ways in which ecomuseum philosophy can support heritage management and sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi. This section now evaluates the potential of creating an actual ecomuseum within the Rupununi. This evaluation includes analysing the realities of the Rupununi tourism structure versus the limitations of ecomuseum theory and practice (Section 3.5). Ultimately, it is argued that although the creation of a Rupununi Ecomuseum would create numerous benefits for communities and tourism development, there are several limitations from using the 'ecomuseum' name that may limit the project's success. Whether or not a Rupununi ecomuseum is created, the adoption of an ecomuseum philosophy still has significant potential for supporting sustainable tourism development. These findings are presented in the following sub-sections which discuss the use of the ecomuseum title in the Rupununi (8.6.1), the central issues of funding and management (8.6.2) and how ecomuseology already exists in the Rupununi and shares many of the same principles as sustainable tourism.

### ***8.6.1 What's In a Name?***

The benefits from creating a Rupununi ecomuseum exist primarily in the use of the name itself. Indeed, the implementation of the ecomuseum philosophy does not require

the use of the actual term and examples can be found in many successful heritage management frameworks worldwide that exhibit ecomuseological principles, but do not carry the name (e.g. Mexico, Britain, North America, South Africa) (Davis, 2011; Corsane, 2006b). For instance, Corsane (2006b) noted the many ways in which the Robben Island Museum in South Africa followed ecomuseum philosophy in its initial years. However, the ecomuseum movement continues to grow internationally and using the term 'ecomuseum' would allow for a 'branding' (Sub-section 8.3.2) that could be used for marketing to attract external organisations, including funders (Corsane, 2009: 8). Funding remains a key issue for Rupununi stakeholders and attracting any external financial resources could assist with improving the interpretation of heritage resources, marketing and developing new products – all activities mentioned in this chapter. Corsane (ibid) also argues that by including the 'ecomuseum' term, the project "...will join a movement that has critical mass and is gaining increasing momentum internationally" (see also Murtas & Davis, 2009: 159). Davis (2011: 281) states that ecomuseums have often "...been created in places with a low tourist profile but which have aspirations to develop income by attracting more visitors". In turn, this would help the Rupununi reach more audiences worldwide. Although the use of the term ecomuseum could bring potential benefits to the Rupununi, there remain several challenges to using the term.

As presented in Section 3.5, the ecomuseum title has been used by several organisations worldwide that do not follow ecomuseum philosophy and instead use the term for marketing or short-term business planning. This has created confusion amongst those who would be interested in ecomuseums and limited their ability to fully grasp the ecomuseum concept and its main purposes. As a result, adopting the ecomuseum name must be a contextual action and only be considered for those organisations or communities, who are able to fully reflect ecomuseum philosophy. Using the term 'ecomuseum' is a symbolism of heritage management and organisation and should only be used if community members are able to fully grasp its meaning and relevance. Chapter Seven has indicated that communities and stakeholders in the Rupununi closely follow ecomuseum philosophy in many regards. Indeed, the Rupununi may even be considered to be a closer fit to the ecomuseum ideal than several other ecomuseums globally (Corsane, 2009: 5). However, in addition to the communities' willingness and desire to initiate a Rupununi ecomuseum, ecomuseums require a certain amount of political and financial support and leadership. In the end, ecomuseums must be initiated by local communities in order to fulfill their mandate and the researcher does not

currently feel that Rupununi communities are fully aware of the details of the ecomuseum concept and its potential relevance for the region. This train of thought is supported by the limited success for certain ecomuseums in China where there is a distinct lack of understanding on the meaning and operation of ecomuseums within communities (Davis, 2011). Although using the name may bring several benefits to Rupununi tourism, the aforementioned challenges must be considered and are the focus of the next sub-section.

### **8.6.2 Funding and Management**

Ecomuseum operations, particularly those in developing countries, have continually been challenged by a lack of financial and human resources (Sub-section 3.5.2). Management concerns include both enthusiasm and leadership used in training and for continuity of the ecomuseum. Financial obstacles for ecomuseums include the deficiency of funding sources, particularly from external avenues (Davis, 2007: 213). The Rupununi has noticeably struggled with these two challenges. Funding has been a continual sustainability issue for several stakeholders in the region (Sub-section 6.3.3). In addition, the adoption of the ecomuseum name would most likely require further funding for a management team or equivalent, promotional material and possible infrastructure changes. This sub-section discusses a previous attempt at having a Rupununi tourism management body and the issues they continue to encounter.

Having effective leadership is important for any project or business, and Rupununi tourism has not been any different. The Rupununi Community Tourism Association (RCTA), formed in 2006, is a group whose mission is the “...development and promotion of the unique ‘Rupununi Experience’ as a tourism product and the preservation of the region’s indigenous culture and natural resources” (CI, 2010: 50-51; see also Edwards, 2006: 68). The association was formed as a result of the Rupununi’s “own tourism initiatives” and has representation from leaders from all over the region (Edwards, 2006: 68-69). As for the overall aim of the RCTA, a public sector member (Interview P2, 2012) added that the RCTA was formed to try and:

*“...merge all the tourism businesses in the Rupununi and make it one marketable package. Trying to integrate more businesses, more attractions, projects so that when a visitor comes to visit, they could go to whatever unique one they wanted to...So the idea of the Rupununi Community Tourism Association is to bridge that gap, make it one Rupununi experience, that was the aim of it”.*



CI (2010: 50-51) has outlined five key goals, which appear to share some of the same values of ecomuseum philosophy, of the RCTA which are:

- *To orient communities and persons to the economic value of the culture, history and natural features of the Rupununi;*
- *To encourage communities to put aside political and racial differences for the development of a civic society and to focus on common objectives;*
- *To encourage communities to take pride in their cultural heritage and to share their culture with others;*
- *To promote community tourism that compliments the lifestyle of the Amerindian communities, without creating a dependency on tourism alone;*
- *To preserve community lifestyles, environment and values, to make visitors experience more unique.*

Since the RCTA's formation, the group has encountered several operational challenges. As of 2010, the group lacked any staff or annual budget and struggles to serve such a large geographical area (CI, 2010: 50-51, 87). An industry stakeholder (Interview I2, 2012) commented on the RCTA, stating:

*"...it came out of very good ideals from Conservation International and the Ministry of Tourism, but it was too big a concept. ...The RCTA collapsed, it did not meet its objectives, the funds were not sufficient. I do not think there was enough, how should I say, supportive guidance, it was a little before its time...the money was not enough to carry out the vision and the scope was too big. So basically that was the problem."*

Another industry stakeholder (Interview I5, 2012) mentioned how the RTCA could be integral for the "...whole idea of linking the region...but it's never really moved forward". She (ibid) also suggested that the reason it hasn't moved forward is simply because "...people are just busy running their businesses. That's really part of the problem in that region is that really there is only a handful of people doing everything". Reviving the RCTA is something that a public sector stakeholder (Interview P2, 2012) feels will be "...hard to do right now...because to bring that organisation back together, people need to refocus". CI (2010: 50-51) agrees and argues that the RCTA should evaluate which "institutional structure" can best assist the three distinct geographic areas of the Rupununi (North, Central and South) based on their varied levels of tourism development.

A Rupununi ecomuseum would certainly need a management group similar to the RCTA. It would provide the guidance and support in representing the community's wishes and managing certain aspects of the ecomuseum. However, as this group continues to struggle with financial and human resources itself, it becomes apparent that any group organised to run a Rupununi ecomuseum could, and most likely would, share many of the same problems. The next sub-section (8.6.3) demonstrates how ecomuseology and sustainable tourism already share a similar philosophy and that although the issues identified in this sub-section may detract from using the ecomuseum name, sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi can still be enhanced by adopting the 21 principles.

### **8.6.3 *Similar Goals***

This section has demonstrated that although the creation of a Rupununi ecomuseum could potentially bring several benefits to local communities, there are multiple challenges to consider including human and financial resources. Therefore, adopting the ecomuseum name may be less beneficial for tourism development than merely adopting ecomuseum philosophy. It can also be argued that by adopting the principles suggested in this chapter, Rupununi stakeholders may stand to gain the same benefits from adopting the 'ecomuseum' title regardless. Indeed, the inclusion of these principles within the Rupununi tourism framework can assist with addressing the challenges listed above and other aspects of sustainable tourism development. In the end, ecomuseums and sustainable tourism share very similar goals, with ecomuseums arguably being one of the first campaigners of sustainable tourism (Barbic, 2009: 243). In locations where tourism and heritage management run in integrated patterns, ecomuseology can even be considered a tested platform for sustainability. The use of ecomuseum philosophy to support sustainable tourism development has the potential to enhance the three main sustainability pillars and paves the way for a potential Rupununi ecomuseum, should communities wish to establish one.

As stated above, there are significant overlaps between ecomuseums and sustainable tourism. There is a consistent synergy between the principles of ecomuseology (Sub-section 3.4.1) and sustainable tourism (Section 2.3). The two lists of principles both emphasise long-term development with limitations to growth, stakeholder collaboration, satisfying human needs while safeguarding all types of heritage resources and the empowerment of host communities. It may even be argued that many, if not all, of the

21 principles could also be used as guidelines for sustainable tourism development. Perella *et al.*, (2010: 445) argues that ecomuseology serves as the “...interface of the three pillars of sustainability” which is “...especially true of rural and marginal areas”. They (*ibid*) also state that through ecomuseum philosophy, sustainable planning is more feasible in areas “...undergoing profound changes” due to its ability to provide cultural support and involve local communities. The Rupununi presents a very similar situation to this notion. In fact, and as demonstrated in Chapters Seven and Eight, the principles of ecomuseology have direct potential to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi.

**Table 8.1: Cross-over between sustainable tourism pillars and ecomuseum principles in the Rupununi**

<i>Using Ecomuseology for Sustainable Rupununi Tourism Development</i>	
<i>Sustainable Tourism Pillars</i>	<i>Ecomuseum Principles</i>
<b>Socio-Cultural</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21
<b>Environmental</b>	2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20
<b>Economical</b>	5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21

Table 8.1 highlights those principles which could support, and currently are supporting, sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi. For example, the adoption of Principle 5 presents an opportunity for local communities to earn more revenue from the sale of craft. It can also enhance a sense of pride for local communities and individuals and revitalise aspects of their cultural heritage, contributing to its preservation (Sub-section 8.5.1). In addition, the use of Principle 9 has the potential to contribute to all three sustainability pillars. Considering the spatial and temporal aspects of heritage resources in the region allows for the organisation of information (Section 8.2) which can lead to longer visits from tourists and allow communities to witness changes to their culture and the environment over time. The latter will inform heritage management frameworks and allow resources to be safeguarded. Thus, sustainable tourism development is enhanced by the use of ecomuseum philosophy.

Based on this, one can see how sustainable tourism development and ecomuseology align. Adopting the highlighted principles can support the sustainable development of the tourism industry and deliver the same benefits from adopting the ecomuseum name minus the specific challenges. Therefore, the creation of a Rupununi ecomuseum should only occur if local communities are ‘on board’, can successfully manage those

challenges and stand to benefit from using the name. After Rupununi tourism stakeholders have acquired more funding through increased tourism revenue, potentially through the adoption of ecomuseum philosophy, they may be better placed to adopt the ecomuseum name. Ultimately, the researcher argues that this would be a preferred move forward. Using ecomuseum principles could allow communities to make tourism development more sustainable by increasing revenue and improving heritage management strategies. However, and as always with ecomuseology, this would ultimately rest with the wishes of the host communities (Davis, 2007: 212).

## **8.7 Conclusions**

The overall aim of this chapter was to critically evaluate the key areas where ecomuseological principles could be integrated into the Rupununi tourism framework and support its sustainable development. In particular, four key elements of the Rupununi tourism structure (sections 8.2-8.5) were analysed in conjunction with ecomuseum philosophy before the final two sections evaluated the possibility of creating a Rupununi ecomuseum and future considerations for tourism development. This chapter represents the penultimate section of this thesis and has continued the discussion from Chapter Seven in answering the research question which has guided this research.

A key finding in this chapter is that ecomuseological principles have proven to have considerable potential for uniting the spatial and temporal features of Rupununi communities and heritage resources. Indeed, Sections 8.2 and 8.3 demonstrated how ecomuseum philosophy provides a mechanism for organising a fragmented Rupununi tourism network. Davis (2008: 403) has described the ecomuseum as the “thread of a necklace that holds together the varied elements” that characterise individual locations and makes them unique. It is precisely in this manner that ecomuseum philosophy can provide significant support for sustainable tourism development. It advocates that all heritage sites in the region be aligned and share the same ‘thread’. Moreover, ecomuseology provides an inclusive framework which would recognise all of the individual elements that define the Rupununi (e.g. communities, research, heritage resources) and contribute to its identity and use that to promote the destination under a united format. This will encourage visitors to explore the region and engage in its different tourism activities. The use of ecomuseum philosophy also allows for the monitoring and documenting of changes over time to communities and the heritage

resources that matter to them. It also can link past, present and future cultural landscapes. As a result, communities and other stakeholders are better able to manage an area that continues to undergo significant change.

Another main result from data analysis was the use of ecomuseum principles in heritage management in the Rupununi, particularly concerning cultural resources. Instead of shifting focus away from natural heritage to cultural resources in the Rupununi, ecomuseology advocates the balanced recognition, protection and sustainable use of both based on the host community's wishes. This chapter has shown how ecomuseology could support both the heritage processes and products for tourism consumption. It has emphasised that although tourism products are important, especially in the Rupununi, the processes to reach those products are equally significant and should be included in heritage management frameworks. It has shown that there is value in the daily routines of communities for tourism, should they wish to pursue it. This will assist communities with balancing their development needs with the need to safeguard local heritage and foster local pride. In turn, this will hopefully assist with managing the processes of urbanisation and marginalisation in the region.

Although this chapter has outlined several ways in which ecomuseum philosophy would support sustainable tourism, the issue of creating a Rupununi ecomuseum remains complex. While it has potential to address some key local problems such as funding, it also requires a lot of funding and management to operate. These are two key areas which the region is struggling with at present. However, ecomuseum philosophy shares a definitive link with sustainability and the use of those principles for tourism development can provide all of the same benefits, whether or not the ecomuseum name is used. While official ecomuseums in the developing world (e.g. China, Vietnam) have proven to benefit local tourism development and heritage management, the researcher feels that this endeavor may be better suited in the Rupununi as a future contemplation. The more important action to consider is the use of ecomuseum philosophy, as opposed to the name.

## **Chapter 9.**

## 9 Conclusion.

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### 9.1 Summary

This final chapter presents the conclusions from this research project. In particular, key findings from data collection and analysis are examined, as well as opportunities for further research (Section 9.2) and some final thoughts on the future of Rupununi tourism (Section 9.3). This research set out to answer the question: “how could the principles of ecomuseology be used to support sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi region of Guyana?” Chapters Seven and Eight directly answered this question by analysing key areas within the tourism framework where the principles of ecomuseology could be used to enhance its sustainable development. This included those areas where ecomuseum philosophy could already be found (Chapter Seven), and those areas where it is noticeably underused in tourism and heritage management operations (Chapter Eight). Central to this study was the selection of a specific research approach and design capable of answering the research question. This included a mixed-methods approach that employed quantitative and qualitative techniques, both of which were necessary in meeting the aims and objectives outlined in Chapter One.

Research for this study was guided by five aims which are detailed in the table below (Table 9.1). Within this table, the main conclusions drawn from completing these aims are presented, as is the corresponding chapter in which they are showcased.

**Table 9.1: Research Aims versus Conclusions**

Aims	Conclusions	Corresponding Chapter
<b>1. To explore the theory of sustainable tourism.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A central issue within sustainable tourism is the difficulty in its implementation</li> <li>• Stakeholder involvement and collaboration is vital to sustainable tourism development</li> <li>• While implementing sustainable tourism may have difficulties, it is argued that if each destination adapted their own unique set of sustainable tourism principles and practical application strategies, this effort could collectively contribute to global sustainability in the sector</li> </ul>	2
<b>2. To explore the philosophy of ecomuseology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecomuseology presents a unique community-based framework for heritage management that encourages stakeholder collaboration and community-led decision-making</li> <li>• Ecomuseology also shares several implementation difficulties due to a combination of practical and conceptual limitations</li> <li>• Ecomuseums are sometimes limited to Western ideologies and do not comprehensively reflect the situation in developing countries, including the need for economic development to coincide with heritage management efforts</li> </ul>	3
<b>3. To identify and evaluate the heritage resources and stakeholders within the Rupununi tourism framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host communities are highly empowered in Rupununi tourism</li> <li>• Natural heritage resources are the primary tourism product despite a multitude of cultural heritage resources</li> <li>• The region struggles with unemployment and economic diversification</li> <li>• Many communities and stakeholders have developed tourism products, but still lack the visitor flow</li> <li>• Major challenges limiting progression include a lack of marketing and branding for the Rupununi, funding and high costs associated with transportation</li> <li>• Tourism has the ability to provide increased benefits to the region including employment, the safeguarding of heritage resources and development of socio-cultural capital</li> <li>• Due to its young state, market ready products and ample heritage resources, tourism remains full of potential and has yet to have any major impacts on the region</li> <li>• The work of key stakeholders, and their collaboration, in the region (e.g. NRDDB, Iwokrama, CI) has initiated several effective heritage management frameworks</li> </ul>	1,5, 6



**4. To identify and critically analyse any issues or challenges within the Rupununi tourism framework**

- Several areas of significance within the Rupununi tourism framework were identified through fieldwork
- There is an ‘information gap’ in Rupununi tourism that has direct impacts on interpretation and the quality of the visitor experience
- The Rupununi is a fragmented site with several communities, research projects, tourism products and heritage resources scattered throughout the region
- Although the area remains informally linked, a formal plan to identify and connect these various elements and sites could improve operations, stakeholder collaboration, the distribution of information and interpretation
- This plan can be presented off-site through a Rupununi website and mirrored on-site via a defined network
- The Rupununi is undergoing a period of significant cultural change, as access to the region improves
- Regarding heritage management, more work has been done on safeguarding natural heritage resources
- However, there have been effective heritage management strategies for protecting both natural and cultural heritage resources
- There is a distinct lack of cultural tourism products in the region, despite a key interest from host communities to promote their culture
- Nonetheless, the cultural tourism products that exist are considered to be authentic, due to the fact that community lifestyles are still very traditional and communities do not engage in ‘staged’ tourism demonstrations

5, 6

**5. To critically analyse the potential for ecomuseum philosophy to support the**

- Heritage management and economic development share a distinct relationship and are equally important in developing destinations like the Rupununi
- Although the ecomuseum name is not used, Rupununi stakeholders undertake several activities that align with ecomuseum philosophy
- This is most evident in the empowerment of local communities, focus on sustainable development and safeguarding of heritage resources, promotion of the local identity and ‘sense of place’ and on-going research activity

7, 8

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**sustainable  
development of  
Rupununi tourism**

- Although ecomuseology can be found in the actions and opinions of stakeholders in the region, there are several areas where its principles can be utilised further to support sustainable tourism
- In particular, ecomuseological principles have considerable potential for uniting the spatial and temporal features of Rupununi communities and heritage resources
- Adopting ecomuseum philosophy has the potential to address the key areas of significance identified during fieldwork
- The use of a ‘fragmented strategy’ to network and link the various sites and communities can improve information distribution and interpretation efforts
- By considering and documenting the diachronic changes to the Rupununi, stakeholders can monitor the impacts on heritage resources and communities and present a more authentic tourism product
- Equal attention should be given to both natural and cultural heritage resources, especially with regards to heritage management efforts and tourism development
- Although adopting the ecomuseum name might bring several benefits to the region and tourism development, ultimately the researcher argues that the necessary human and financial resources needed to maintain it are not currently sufficient
- Ultimately, ecomuseology and sustainable tourism share very similar goals and principles

In general, this thesis was based on identifying and analysing specific elements within the Rupununi tourism structure where ecomuseum philosophy could be used to enhance its sustainable development. This process was initiated through a continuous examination of the academic literature on both sustainable tourism and ecomuseology (Aims 1 & 2). This was necessary to develop an in-depth understanding of the theory and practice behind these two ideologies to better analyse the Rupununi tourism framework. This knowledge was then combined with the chosen methodological framework to critically evaluate Rupununi tourism.

Taken as a whole, this study challenges the applicability of ecomuseology in developing countries and critically compares the concept's compatibility with sustainable tourism development. More specifically, this thesis has demonstrated that the principles of ecomuseology possess significant potential for supporting sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi (Aims 3-5). The findings from this research also show that development and heritage management must be equally considered in the region. Similar to De Blavia's (1985: 229; Section 7.2) reference to museums, this directly supports the notion that heritage management frameworks in developing countries must also be devoted to development (see also Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Indeed, the two can be mutually reinforcing as tourism generates values for heritage resources. In a region that suffers from high unemployment and poverty, this dual consideration allows communities to prosper and improve their livelihoods, while also safeguarding the heritage resources upon which their livelihoods are based.

As traditional ecomuseum philosophy suggests that heritage management remain more prominent over development, arguing otherwise presents a key challenge to ecomuseological theory and practice and is discussed further in Section 9.2. However, the researcher understands that this strategy is fraught with challenges and difficult to maintain. Indeed, and as Howard (2002:66; Sub-section 3.5.1) has argued, heritage can often become a commodity in ecomuseology and the economic mandate becomes the priority. Nonetheless, in an area such as the Rupununi, where economic hardship is widespread, it is hard to make the argument that heritage management remain the primary goal when those who depend on these resources the most are struggling to maintain their livelihoods. As a result, efficient management techniques, such as Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC's) are recommended to monitor the impacts from balancing development and heritage protection and are discussed further in Section 9.3.

It is apparent through this research and the reality of the situation on site that the Rupununi is undergoing significant changes to its culture and way of life. As access to the region improves and further external interests are established, this trend is likely to continue. Therefore, the region needs a heritage management framework that is flexible to these changes and can respond to any impacts from development. Ecomuseology possesses fundamental principles which could be adopted by stakeholders to address these changes and others identified during this research project (Chapters Six & Eight). This includes ensuring equal attention for all tangible and intangible heritage resources, identifying and monitoring the spatial and temporal features of the region and placing attention on the processes of heritage management. As described in Chapter Eight, this will enable Rupununi stakeholders to ensure that heritage resources are safeguarded, while also enhancing the tourism product to promote economic development. In addition, encouraging the continuation of those aspects of ecomuseum philosophy that are already being practiced (e.g. community empowerment, stakeholder collaboration, sustainable use of heritage resources) should also be a priority for stakeholders.

Ultimately, it is argued that these efforts should not yet lead to the development of a Rupununi ecomuseum. Instead, ecomuseological principles should be adopted as guidelines for heritage management and development in the region. This argument is placed within the limitations of both ecomuseum and sustainable tourism theory and practice. For example, the need for each global destination to adopt its own unique set of sustainable tourism guidelines, or principles for practical application strategies, has the potential to improve local and global sustainability (Sub-section 2.5.1). Within this study, the researcher has identified that the principles of ecomuseology possess considerable potential in acting as the Rupununi's own set of sustainable tourism guidelines. Indeed, ecomuseological principles have direct practical implications that can significantly affect tourism development in the region (Chapter Eight). However, due to the fact that ecomuseums require sufficient financial and human resources, it is argued that the Rupununi may not presently be able to comply with these requirements. Subsequently, the immediate creation of a Rupununi ecomuseum may be less appropriate. Instead, adopting ecomuseum philosophy, without using the name, can still improve sustainable tourism operations in the region. As tourism development progresses and effective heritage management frameworks are established, local communities may wish to create an ecomuseum and this action likely holds further future benefits for stakeholders and the protection of heritage resources (Section 8.6).

This research is one of the first, and only, in-depth academic studies on Rupununi tourism development. By exploring stakeholder opinions, the literature, and on-site conditions, key gaps and issues within the Rupununi tourism framework have been highlighted in this study. This has specifically included issues in marketing, heritage management, product development and interpretation. However, the opinions and recommendations presented by stakeholders have also suggested numerous avenues to resolve these issues; many of which fall directly in line with ecomuseum philosophy. Moreover, these recommendations, integrated with the researcher's analysis and final suggestions, have provided a thorough view into how tourism development can holistically address all three of the sustainability pillars (socio-cultural, environmental and economic).

## 9.2 Opportunities for Further Research

Findings from this research prompt several new opportunities for further study. In the first instance, this study provides some unique contributions to the field of ecomuseology by evaluating its theoretical and practical application in developing countries and regions (discussed further below). However, there remains significant potential for further investigating these approaches, including the contextual functionality and applicability. This is an area which is much less featured within the field of heritage management and ecomuseology. Findings from this research have demonstrated that several ecomuseological principles (Corsane *et al.*, 2004) tend to be better suited to developed, Western contexts. Furthermore, it is suggested that some of the principles adopted by Corsane *et al.* (*ibid*) (e.g. 6, 18, 20) either be re-written to be more inclusive and reflective of developing country contexts, or a new list be generated specifically for these locations. This includes the argument presented in Chapters Seven and Eight that heritage management cannot hold precedence over developmental concerns depending on the context.

The nature of this relationship needs to be explored further to analyse and evaluate its dynamic. For example, giving equal consideration to economic development alongside heritage management frameworks can be a difficult and delicate endeavour. Although the researcher agrees that heritage management should eventually be the primary consideration for stakeholders, at which point within local community development does this shift occur? This obviously requires a fine balancing act in heritage management and development frameworks and further studies should be done to

consider and evaluate these elements in a range of contexts. Understanding the benefits, challenges and opportunities of linking development and heritage management would have significant appeal to many organisations, communities and individuals worldwide.

Another key finding from this study involves the use of ecomuseological principles as guidelines for sustainable tourism development. As suggested in Sub-section 8.6.3, there are many synergies between the principles of sustainable tourism and ecomuseology, with ecomuseums arguably being one of the first campaigners of sustainable tourism (Barbic, 2009: 243). Indeed, the researcher argues that ecomuseum philosophy could potentially be used as a set of guidelines for sustainable tourism development in many locations globally. As a result, there is potential for a study on using ecomuseology simply as a management framework that bears no official name, but is instead a philosophy that guides sustainable tourism development. However, the researcher recognises the importance and use of the ecomuseum name which has provided significant branding and marketing power for numerous organisations. Nonetheless, with the limitations that are consistently reflected within the ecomuseum title and practice (Section 3.5), re-conceptualising this ideology presents a unique opportunity to enhance its contribution to sustainable development and heritage management.

Again, this research is one of, if not the only, first in-depth academic studies on tourism development in the region. The work of the NRDDDB, CI, Iwokrama and other local and international stakeholders continues to contribute greatly to the Rupununi tourism framework, but further research will be needed to monitor the impacts of tourism in the region. This includes exploring the opinions and values of host communities and other stakeholders as tourism continues to grow and changes to the socio-cultural fabric and natural environment occur. A stated limitation within this research (Sub-section 4.3.5) was the sole use of 'expert' opinions during fieldwork. However, the thoughts and values of those who are not directly involved in tourism remain equally important and should also be explored within tourism research. In addition, it would be quite useful to compile a study on the tourist stakeholders themselves. This would allow the other stakeholders to better understand the wants and needs of their visitors, which would inform management decisions. This is a pivotal moment for both heritage management and tourism development in the region and special consideration will have to be given to both if sustainability is to be achieved.

### 9.3 Future of Rupununi Tourism

While Chapters Seven and Eight have addressed several key areas within sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi, it should be noted that tourism is still very much in its infancy in the region and the future is likely to possess many unknown challenges. During data collection and analysis, several conclusions were formulated concerning the future of Rupununi tourism development. In terms of general development in the region, Watkins *et al.* (2010: 226-227) assert that future policy should focus on “...development objectives rather than just economic growth”, including the encouragement of local ownership and capacity-building (e.g. institutional, organisational and individual). They (*ibid*) also add that Iwokrama, the NRDDDB and the Bina Hill Institute, through their expertise, resources and local representation, will be increasingly important as mechanisms to support capacity building and the sustainable development of the area. As for tourism specifically, visitor numbers continue to grow each year, even though the overall level remains relatively low (CI, 2010: 28). Despite the fact that the majority of the region’s 16 tourism businesses receive low visitor numbers, several are planning to expand their business suggesting that stakeholders continue to put considerable faith in the future growth of the industry.

At present, Rupununi tourism finds itself at a crossroads where decisions are required regarding future economic development and the protection of its heritage resources. Watkins *et al.* (2010: 226) argue that tourism is not a “panacea” and should not be considered as such. Unregulated growth can lead to several detrimental impacts on both the local communities and natural environment. The future development of tourism should be limited so that sustainable frameworks can be put in place. Furthermore, local involvement and ownership should be imperative during all stages of development (*ibid*; see also CI, 2010: 10). Educating communities on the full value of their resources and having their complete participation are vital ingredients to building a sustainable tourism sector. However, communities should also explore the possibility of other economic opportunities in the region and diversify their economy as much as possible as there is “...no single road to development” (Bandarin *et al.*, 2011: 15-16). With its focus on improving collaboration with craftspeople, researchers and all stakeholders, ecomuseology embraces this diversification and provides examples for the first steps forward.

Another key consideration will be the development of visitor management strategies to deal with any future impacts from tourism. Although tourism development at present is

small-scale and low impact, any increase in visitor numbers will certainly bring with it both positive and negative impacts. A recurring trend during interviews was the reference by stakeholders to other Latin American destinations that possess similar tourism products, but are further along in their development. Stakeholders reasoned that Rupununi tourism is still in the early stages and can learn from other regional destinations that have undergone similar transformations. For example, one tourist (Interview T2, 2012) stated that that Rupununi is "...maybe one of the few places I have seen where you have the chance to start a thing and use the knowledge from all the countries that have been doing this for 20-25 years and they have done a lot of mistakes". He (ibid) further added:

*"I can see that Guyana is at the starting point of ecotourism. I have visited many places, I come straight from Costa Rica now...one of the first developers of ecotourism...Costa Rica is a very different society, very Americanized...so price levels have gone up...and the amount of ecotourism places is enormous...I think there is a very hard competition..."*

When asked whether or not tourism has had a negative impact on the environment and culture there, he (ibid) responded, "...It always has. The whole population has become Americanized". An industry member (Interview I5, 2012) also mentioned the comparison with Costa Rica, stating, "Guyana is Costa Rica 30 years ago". A separate industry member (Interview I2, 2012) added:

*"I understand that what we are doing here in the North Rupununi is extremely appreciated when compared to what they see in ... Costa Rica and various other places. So my gut feeling is that we've stepped in at the right moment when change is taking place, the challenges of the road, the challenges of tourism, the challenges of technology, internet, the web and all that. So it's not too late because the two generations are still here, but if we waste any time, it's gone and the opportunity is lost."*

As for the future, a member of the voluntary sector (Interview V2, 2012) cautioned, "Do we want to replicate the mistakes made by our cousins in Latin America...and what they have been through? I think what we have seen through them has been really helpful in how we craft the product and how that product is being developed. So I think we need to be very careful". Another voluntary sector member (Interview V3, 2012) added that comparing with these other destinations can be a "...great lesson. Trying to promote too much can get you in serious trouble. If it becomes popular and tourism numbers start spiking, then we've got a big problem. So management and sustainability



is important”. One effective management tool Rupununi stakeholders could utilise to manage these impacts is the Limits of Acceptable Change model (LAC).

The LAC model advocates inventorying heritage resources and establishing the maximum degree in which change to those resources is acceptable (Hall & McArthur, 1998: 130; Larson & Poudyal, 2012: 926; Keitumetse, 2011: 52). This helps to avoid detrimental effects on local society and natural environments. The LAC model would be enhanced by ecomuseum philosophy as well, particularly with the diachronic documentation of heritage resources (Sub-sections 8.4.3 & 8.5.2). This would allow communities to witness these changes and make informed decisions based on the level of impact. As Rupununi tourism continues to expand, the issues listed within this final section, and the thesis in general, need to be given serious consideration by stakeholders, particularly host communities. Ecomuseology presents a flexible and potentially effective framework for guiding this consideration and ensuring that both heritage resources and host communities are protected. However, in the Rupununi it is arguably not the right moment to establish an ecomuseum by name. This may be an action that is more appropriate somewhere in the future once more pressing development needs have been met.

**Appendices.**

## Appendices.

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### Questionnaire

#### Public Survey

This is a survey that is part of a PhD research project at the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University, UK. The overall research examines, through stakeholder perceptions, how the principles of ecomuseology could be used in sustainable tourism development in the Rupununi region of Guyana.

As part of this research I am interested in your opinion.

It should only take about 5 minutes and your responses are completely anonymous. The answers you give will only be used in the research project and in related papers and presentations. You can leave out any questions you don't want to answer and can stop at any time.

Thank you for your time.

Newcastle University



International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies

**NOTE: For this questionnaire, the word 'stakeholder' refers to any group associated with tourism in the Rupununi.**

**A. BASIC INFORMATION**

**1. Which stakeholder group do you represent?**

- Public sector (all governmental organisations)
- Private sector
- Host community
- Voluntary sector (e.g.NGO's)
- Media
- Tourist

Other? Please state \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Age:**

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

**4. Gender:**

- Male
- Female

**6. When did you last visit the Rupununi?**

- 0-1 years ago
- 1-3 years ago
- 3-5 years ago
- 5+ years ago

**2. Are you a Guyanese citizen?**

- Yes
- No

If no, please state your home country:

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Please select the highest level of education you have completed:**

- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctorate

**7. If you are not a resident, how many times have you visited the Rupununi?**

- 1-5
- 5-10
- 10+

**B. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: GENERAL**

8. In your opinion, please rank the following aspects of sustainable tourism in order of their importance, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important, or alternatively check box ‘f’:

Sustainable tourism feature	Ranking (1-6)
a. Protecting local cultures	
b. Environmental conservation	
c. Providing benefits to the community	
d. Overall Tourist satisfaction	
e. Providing benefits to local tourism industry	
f. All above options are equally important	

9. The following questions relate to the general nature of sustainable tourism in the Rupununi. Based on your knowledge, please circle the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
A There is a demand for sustainable tourism in the Rupununi.	1	2	3	4	5
B Groups involved in tourism development should work together.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>C</b>	There is sufficient available information about tourism sites.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>D</b>	There are different subject areas being researched.	1	2	3	4	5

**10. Based on your knowledge of tourism in the Rupununi, please rank the following stakeholders in order of their importance in sustainable tourism development, with 1 being most important and 6 being least important. Or alternatively, check box ‘g’ or ‘h’.**

Stakeholder	Ranking (1-6)
<b>a. Government Sector</b>	
<b>b. Private Sector</b>	
<b>c. Voluntary Sector</b>	
<b>d. Host Community</b>	
<b>e. Media</b>	
<b>f. Tourist</b>	
<b>g. All stakeholder groups are equally important</b>	
<b>h. Don't know</b>	

**11. Does there appear to be an overall plan that links/connects the different tourism sites in the Rupununi?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you feel that adding more information on site about the natural and cultural resources of the region would enhance the sustainable development of tourism?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**C. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: ENVIRONMENTAL**

**13. The following statements relate to the environmental aspects of sustainable tourism in the Rupununi specifically. Based on your knowledge of tourism in the Rupununi, please circle the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>A</b>	Tourism has had negative impacts on the environment.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>B</b>	Tourism and environmental conservation are compatible.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>C</b>	Tourism can	1	2	3	4	5

	promote the responsible use of the natural environment.					
<b>D</b>	Host communities are knowledgeable on the environmental impacts from tourism.	1	2	3	4	5

**14. Would more collaboration between tourism stakeholders in the Rupununi improve environmental conservation and sustainable tourism development?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Do the cultural and heritage attractions in the Rupununi show a relationship between nature and culture?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**D. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL**

**16. The following statements relate to the social and cultural aspects of sustainable tourism in the Rupununi specifically. Please circle the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>a</b>	Tourism has had	1	2	3	4	5



	negative impacts on the host community's culture.						
<b>b</b>	The host communities are empowered in tourism decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>c</b>	Tourism has brought social benefits to local communities, such as a higher standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>d</b>	Tourism has promoted pride about the Rupununi.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>e</b>	Heritage and cultural resources are protected on site.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>f</b>	The conservation of cultural sites promotes tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>g</b>	Cultural and heritage resources are important in community well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	

**17. Do you feel that ‘intangible’ cultural resources (language, knowledge, song, music, dance, ceremonial practices) are promoted adequately as part of the tourism package?**

Yes

Don't know

No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**E. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: ECONOMICAL**

**18. The following statements relate to the economical aspects of sustainable tourism in the Rupununi specifically. Based on your knowledge, please circle the number that most represents your agreement with the statement.**

			<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>a</b>	Tourism has created new employment for individuals and host communities.		1	2	3	4	5
<b>b</b>	Tourism has brought financial benefits to host communities.		1	2	3	4	5
<b>c</b>	A community's economic strength is more important than environmental conservation.		1	2	3	4	5
<b>d</b>	A community's economic strength is more important than cultural and heritage preservation.		1	2	3	4	5
<b>e</b>	Revenue from tourism activities is equally distributed amongst stakeholders.		1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

## **EPA Preliminary Trip Report**

Jared Bowers, Newcastle University, January 2012

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for the proposed Ph.D. project by Jared Bowers was carried out from December 2011 to January 2012. This involved in the first instance the use of questionnaires, which were completed by 119 participants. Participants were selected by a mixture of random sampling and previously identified individuals. After these were briefly analyzed, 22 interviews were conducted with select individuals. Both the questionnaires and interviews solely involved Rupununi tourism stakeholders.

### **Findings**

The questionnaires were entered into an excel spreadsheet and briefly analyzed to discover any significant patterns. These initial findings from the questionnaires were used to identify themes for the interviews, which included the following:

- a lack of available information on tourism sites in the Rupununi
- the need for a plan to link all of the individual tourism sites together
- using tourism as a vehicle for environmental and cultural conservation and preservation
- overall feelings toward tourism development in the Rupununi
- use of intangible cultural heritage in tourism
- challenges/benefits to tourism development

These topics for discussion were elaborated on by participants in an informal conversation style which will allow the researcher to analyze for consistent themes and meaning on Rupununi tourism and the potential use of ecomuseology to aid sustainable development.

**Final Thoughts**

Data collection was successful in that the researcher was able to speak with all of the previously identified individuals as well as unknown participants. Due to the researcher’s previous and extensive experience working in Guyana, he was able to travel around easily and use his network of contacts to locate individuals and acquire their participation. All participants were very accommodating and willing to take part in the questionnaires and interviews and provided quality information which will now be used in analysis. The questionnaires and interviews will be reviewed further in depth over the coming months to reveal any significant outcomes. Upon completion, a copy of the final thesis will be sent to the EPA. All field notes written during this study can be found below. In addition, a copy of all audio recordings and photographs taken can be found on the attached CD.

**Field Notes**

Questionnaire Comments January 2012

Question	Comment
12.	It enhances the importance of the sustainability efforts
15.	To an extent
17.	This needs to be promoted more. And, the natives should be encouraged to preserve their unique culture which is slowly being lost.
17.	Not enough
17.	Wildlife is pushed more than culture
11.	Not promoted as one region/community
9.c	Definitely not.
11.	The CI blueprint gives a possible direction.
12.	Need more education about this in schools
15.	Being encouraged
17.	Need to get children involved in promoting this for tourism
9.c	Mostly through tour guiding
18e	Community members feel revenue is not shared

17.	Not enough
11.	Plan to do so in the future
11.	Overall plans do exist but they need to be revisited and amended with the changes in the tourism product
12.	Important to know how everything in the environment (flora, fauna, people, etc) co-exist and therefore why certain behavior must be adapted
15.	Large amounts of cultural riches and large numbers of attractions must be protected and used sustainably to maintain that relationship
17.	Can be done but it is important to understand the nature of the Amerindian people – they are shy.
17.	This may be evident in some of the communities, however it is not practiced by all the communities, just a select few.
11.	Information needs to be written down,
10.	Can't function without the other
17.	I don't think persons in the Rupununi would provide all the information that has passed down to them from generations to the tourist they would hold back some important info.
10.	All stakeholders are important but are not always available for development
11.	There are plans that are only available from lodge to lodge. Most times community members are not available
11.	There are features that could link communities that are not being explored.
11.	Not enough information
12.	Great idea
17.	Not enough info.
17.	Language – no, knowledge – yes, song music dance - no

- Several participants answered not YET to the impacts on local environment and culture
- The question about there being a plan is ambiguous and not sure people interpreted the right way.
- Very few listings of sustainability at tourism sites
- Iwokrama and Surama has information about how nature and culture are used – signs and guiding
- Surama is certainly the flagship tourism destination concerning cultural heritage and community-based development, everyone is aspiring to follow their model
- Atta – no signs, tree identification only, no relationship display but they do with guiding, no posted mission statement
- Need to specify in methodology what community stakeholder is versus private (e.g. Surama) could be its their community
- Almost all interpretation is guided tours, (Surama, performances, Rewa?)
- Tourists feel there is not enough information available and there is no obvious link between sites
- Communities think there is a link and enough info but it's still young, and there is no basis for comparison
- How many tourism workers in each community?
- Had to explain questions to all stakeholder groups, bias will now affect results a bit more
- Questionnaires started to evolve more as structured interviews with more elaboration - As one local person told me, "Guyanese people don't like questionnaires, we prefer to talk for a while"
- Always spoke with the Toshao of the village
- Annai ecotourism shop – it's called that but the Toshao said it is only cultural tourism, they may not know the difference
- Definitely a misunderstanding in the communities about where money goes
- Aranaputa – peanut butter factory, women's co-op, peanuts sourced locally, distributed to schools and tours available
- Negative impacts deals with the distribution of revenue
- Wowetta – "need funding for tourism"
- "People are conscience of their resources and want to protect them"
- Many of the communities have great ideas but no funding to make them happen – could an ecomuseum help with this?
- Tour operator – "Tourism should be the primary national focus over the next 5 years"
- There is an undeniable lack of awareness by stakeholders in GT on the Rupununi
- No one at media stakeholder had spent any time in the region – they said tourism had not benefitted the region at all
- No specific person in the media stakeholder groups in town that covered Rupununi, just whomever and sourced the info
- Conflict between tour operators

- Tour operators know very little on the product in the Rupununi, an ecomuseum plan could do much to promote this
- Several folks elaborated on the unequal distribution of revenue
- “The evolution of tourism in the Rupununi – new sports fishing, air strips, all the things that will change the culture”
- Definitely not an equal amount of knowledge on the Rupununi, many are unaware as the Rupununi is pushed to foreign tourists and is too expensive for locals. So they are not aware of this rich natural and cultural heritage.
- Ecomuseum would raise the profile of the area, give a plan and promotion
- Allow each place to be promoted within the larger network
- Stopped by the National Trust and they have not documented the Rupununi at all, but are going to try in the future the said “we help people to realize what is unique about their culture”
- Need to involve them more and see how they could get involved in the Rupununi – their none involvement means that Rupununi heritage is solely being promoted by tourism and the Makushi Research Unit and the voluntary sector
- Tourists have very little knowledge on the product, so I tried to interview people who have been to a few different sites
- National heritage month - Amerindians

### Conversation in Annai

- In Annai, benab for having children involved with crafts – continuing heritage (sustainability)
- “Younger ones – teach them heritage and try to involve tourists”
- “Annai is all cultural tourism – architecture, crafts, stories, traditions, old time”
- “We recognize that tourism is a big industry in the world”
- “Every community has different ideas and products so we need more information to suit every community” (savannah products versus forest products)
- “Communities need to communicate so there is no overlap in products – Annai focuses on crafts culture/culture only”
- “Annai has a conservation area for leaves to make thatched roofs, this is sustainability because the population is growing and yet we need to remember the community and tourism”
- “We need to explain what the generations have done”
- “We understand environmental impacts such as slash and burn and bad agriculture”
- “Tourists appreciate the way we live”
- “We are losing language and it’s our fault too – hardly any children speaking Makushi”
- “The Makushi Research Unit is helping”

- “Community members not aware of the charge and payments for tourism”
- “Young people have little interest – maybe it’s the little money they’re getting”

**Further comments:**

- “Tourism is a new direction of livelihood.”
- “Cultural bit is what the customers want to see, this allows us to get back to myself, to recognize who I am as an Amerindian”
- “Oil, gold, diamonds these things can go. More education and awareness about the value of sustainable tourism is the way to go”
- “Fortunate to have women involved in tourism”
- “Pride in knowing they are involved”
- “Conservation without money is conversation”
- “NRDDB may not be able to deal with everything, need capacity building”  
“Tourism needs to be more of a focal point, particularly the interior”
- “You have pressures on the interior such as mining and agriculture because the communities have no other economic generators”
- “What is the economic tipping point where you do not partake in those pressure activities so that everyone tries to work in tourism”



## **Abbreviations**

<b>IIC</b>	Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development
<b>CI</b>	Conservation International
<b>NRDDB</b>	North Rupununi District Development Board
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund
<b>MoAA</b>	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
<b>STD</b>	Sustainable tourism development
<b>ST</b>	Sustainable tourism
<b>WTTC</b>	World Travel and Tourism Council
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
<b>RCTA</b>	Rupununi Community Tourism Association

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