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Rapid Assessment of Tourism Impacts through community participation. A Pilot Study in Cuba for Projecting new strategies of development



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This presentation gives a report from a pilot study of two coastal communities in Cuba on impacts of tourism on local communities.

The study developed a comprehensive methodology for rapid assessment with full community participation that included four focus groups and other informants in each community.

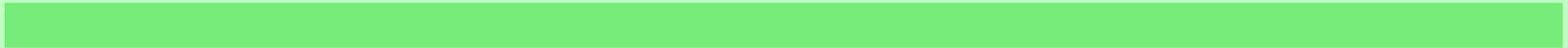




COASTAL COMMUNITIES

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

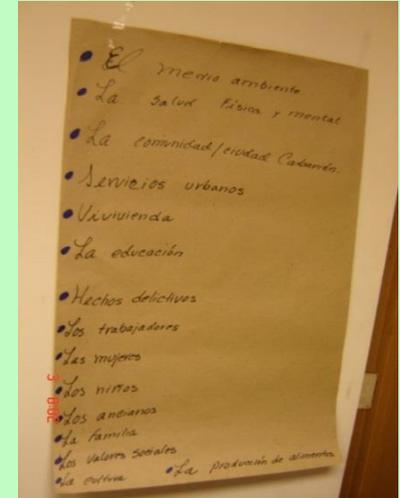
**HEALTH IMPACTS SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED
FOR MITIGATING NEGATIVE EFFECTS**



Main features of the methodology

Rapid Assessment Procedure (RAP) methods:

- **Community participation**
- **Team meetings**
- **Literature review**
- **Informal dialogues and open forums with community leaders / local authorities, health workers and community members focus groups**
- **Semi-structured interviews, with local leaders, authorities, men and women of different ages and researchers**
- **Meetings with key informants in Caibarién and Cárdenas**
- **Review of secondary data**



The centre piece of the methodology was a series of focus groups and key informant interviews to outline concerns, perceptions and observations related to gender role changes and health risks as a result of tourism development



- **Focus group 1 – Decision makers**
- **Focus group 2 – Community**
- **Focus group 3 – Health**
- **Focus group 4 - Tourism**

Key questions addressed in the pilot study

- **Can the links between tourism development and impacts be systematically identified by the community?**
- **Are the tourism impacts different at different stages of tourism development?**
- **Can comprehensive qualitative and quantitative indicators be identified that might tell the tale of the 'real' impact?**
- **Can both men and women be adequately represented by the indicators?**
- **Can mitigating policy measures for protecting and promoting development be identified?**
- **Can the findings be applied to a wider global community?**

Questions for discussion with focal groups

1. Importance that tourism has on: Cuba, The Province, Society, Caibarién & Cárdenas

2. Significant experiences related to tourism

✓ **Labour**

✓ **Relationships with family, partner, and friends**

✓ **Children's Education**

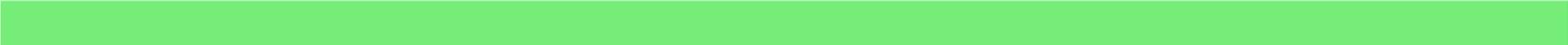
✓ **Economic Impact**

✓ **Emotional**

✓ **Social and Cultural**

3. Specific actions have been taken to counteract those experiences perceived as negative

The step-by-step methodology:

- 1. Meetings in Caibarién and Cárdenas**
 - 2. Definition of composition of focus groups**
 - 3. Preparation of the script for the focus groups**
 - 4. Field research in Caibarién and Cárdenas.**
 - 5. Transcription and revision of focus groups information**
 - 6. In-depth interviews**
 - 7. Analysis and summary of information**
 - 8. Feedback meeting**
 - 9. Identification of indicators**
 - 10. Data analysis**
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Two communities in Cuba at different stages of tourism development have been chosen as the backdrop for the study: Cárdenas, an established tourism site and Caibarién, a new tourist development

Caibarién



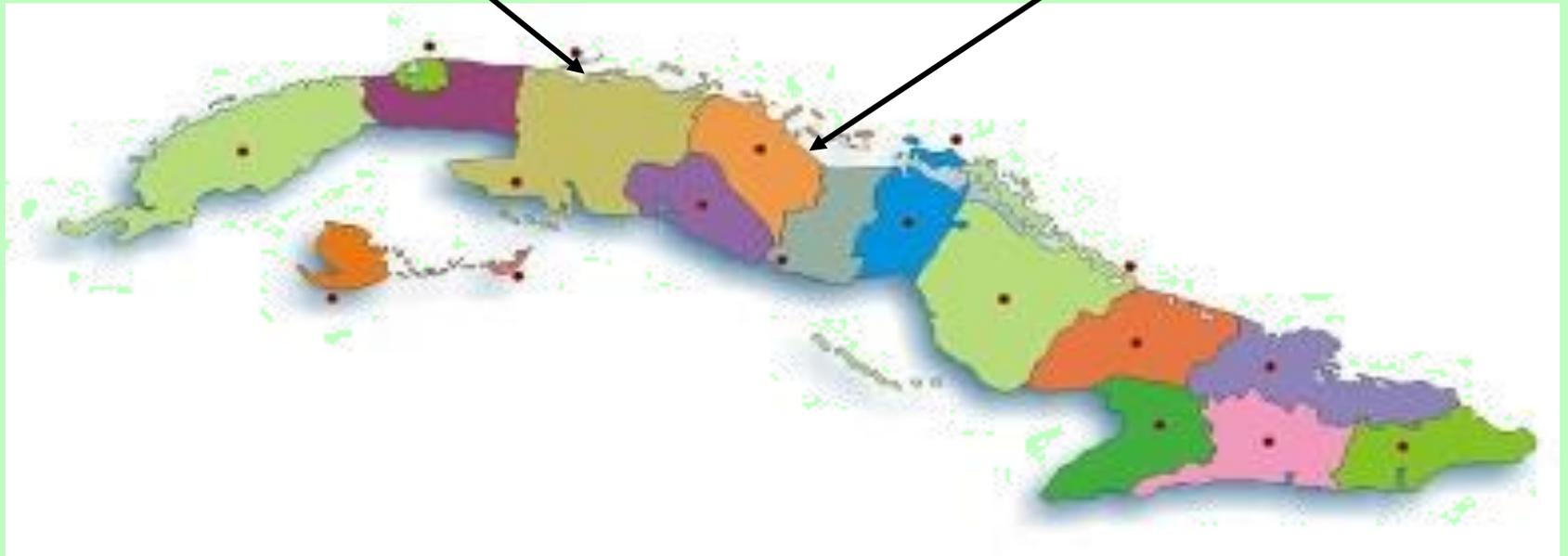
Cárdenas



General characteristics of Caibarién and Cárdenas

Cárdenas

Caibarién



Impacts perceived for the community

Economic impacts

Impacts on labour

Cultural impacts

Educational impacts

Social impacts

Impact on women

Impact on family

Intersectoriality and social cohesion

Political impacts

Environmental impacts

Health impacts

Community

Physical

Psychosocial



Synthesis of the focal groups discussion

Economic impacts

- **Economic level of the country, largest source of revenue**
- **More jobs are created locally, especially for youth and women**
- **Higher wages and salaries**
- **Higher family income, especially for those in the tourism industry**
- **Development of social and economic programs**
- **More housing and better infrastructure in the community**
- **Disappearance of the fishing industry, typical of coastal communities**

Impacts on labour

- **Work force is shifting from the health and education sectors to the tourism sector**
- **More job opportunities for youth**
- **Better working conditions in tourism sector**
- **Less protection by union regulations**
- **Competing work force coming from other areas**
- **Long work hours**
- **A lot of pressure from work (in tourism)**
- **Husband and wife may have different shifts**

Cultural impacts

- **Awareness to raise the cultural level of the community**
- **Creating incentives to preserve and improve the cultural heritage as well as to promote the local culture and traditions**

Educational impacts

- **Higher educational and professional level through special courses**
- **Many university professionals seek jobs in the tourist sector in order to make more money**
- **Fewer students going to high school**

Social impacts

- **Higher standard of living in general for the community**
- **Attraction of population from other areas**
- **Better housing – although mostly for tourism workers**
- **Increased prostitution & drug consumption in Cárdenas**
- **Increased corruption and illegal activities (Cárdenas)**
- **Deterioration of social values**
- **Increased immigration towards Cárdenas – some illegal**
- **Increased social disparity**
- **Work in tourism is the main goal of youth**
- **Barriers to get to tourist areas**
- **Community lifestyle changes**
- **Exposure to other cultures produces a change in behaviour and taste**

Impact on women

- **More employment for women and more women work in the tourism sector; this has created problems where men used to be the main provider (Caibarién)**
- **Increased prostitution; some people entice the tourists to seek women (Cárdenas)**
- **Physical work is heavier for women**

Impact on family

- **Less time for the family; parents working in the tourism sector provide less care to their children**
- **Husband and wife may have different shifts; this prevents them from spending time together (Cárdenas)**
- **Some families have split**
- **More separations and divorces**

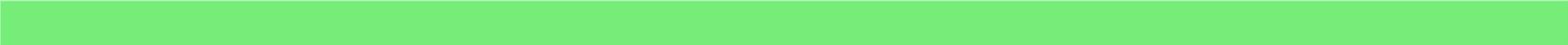
Intersectorality and social cohesion

- **Lack of coordination between tourism sector and other sectors**
- **No links between some municipal activities and tourism activities**
- **All sectors of the community are involved**
- **Need to work with the police to ensure safety of tourists**
- **Stronger social cohesion**
- **Tourism worker has less contact with larger society**

Political impacts

- **Challenge to the ideology**
- **More vigilant**
- **Tourism is a way to show Cuban society and what we do**

Environmental impacts

- **Increased awareness about care of the environment; garbage is not dumped everywhere – some areas give a poor impression to tourists**
 - **There is a larger volume of solid waste; as a result, Cárdenas has a new solid waste processing plant**
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Health impacts

Community

- **More garbage bins and garbage trucks; more frequent garbage collection; more control of vectors**
- **Broader view of health that includes a healthy environment**
- **Better sanitation, but water supply still a problem (Cárdenas)**
- **Workers in tourism have vaccine shots and other tests as prevention**
- **Tourism workers have some more privileges than health workers**
- **Fear of importing exotic diseases already eradicated in Cuba (cholera, vector-borne)**

Physical

- Higher prevalence of hypertension, pelvic problems and exposure to disinfectants and cleaners among tourism workers
- Obesity, cerebro-vascular diseases, heart attacks, arthritis, high cholesterol level
- Physical work is heavier for women: more propensity to back problems, pelvic problems and varicose veins
- Danger of sexually transmitted diseases [STD]
- More concern about keeping in shape

Psychosocial

- “Difficulty to satisfy material needs for those who do not work in the tourist sector”
 - Work related stress
 - Alcoholism
 - Drug use; addictions
 - Some families have become dysfunctional
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Mitigating policies and actions

Health

- ✓ **Community committees for the prevention and control of diseases**
- ✓ **Continued diagnostic about drug use and addiction**
- ✓ **Early warning system to detect exotic diseases**
- ✓ **Epidemiological surveillance for vectors**
- ✓ **A program to discuss environmental health**
- ✓ **Strategies at the municipal level for the protection of the environment and the coast specifically**
- ✓ **Regulation of the relationship between tourists and Cubans in hotels in order to prevent spread of sexual diseases**
- ✓ **Deployment of physicians in all tourist hotels**
- ✓ **Deployment of social workers for general problems**

Mitigating policies and actions

Community

- ✓ **Policy to control illegal immigration into the municipality of Cárdenas**
- ✓ **Vocational orientation for children and youth to guide them to enter professions that are needed**
- ✓ **University involvement in development and research projects for the municipality**
- ✓ **Weekly “System meetings” with health professionals community and political leader (Caibarién)**
- ✓ **Community programs: “Jardines del Rey”, “Adolescencia Feliz” and others for seniors and housing (Caibarién)**
- ✓ **Workshops with workers to discuss job and social concerns**

What have we learned from the community



- ✓ **Links between tourism and health were identified by the local community**
- ✓ **Tourism development has a significant impact on health**
- ✓ **Tourism impacts are different at different stages of tourism development**
- ✓ **Mitigating policy measures for protecting and promoting health were identified by the local community**
- ✓ **Comprehensive indicators for measuring impacts were recognized**
- ✓ **This participant methodology could be applied to a wider global community**

