Regeneration Schemes in the South Wales Valleys: A Stimulus for Innovative Heritage Enterprise Development

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Abstract: The aim of this analysis is to investigate ways in which current regeneration schemes provide further opportunities in developing industrial heritage tourism enterprises in the South Wales valleys with particular application to Merthyr Tydfil. The analysis involved several key partners from across the community and voluntary sectors, local authorities and funding and tourism bodies under the auspices of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The research reported on eight case study structured interviews and the data collated to produce, in combination with the contemporary literature, four key themes to achieve a sustainable regeneration scheme for heritage enterprise development.

Key words: Regeneration, sustainability, heritage tourism, enterprise development, investigate, UK

INTRODUCTION

Wales has been described as the first industrial nation (South Wales Industrial Heritage Initiative, 2003). Industrial and cultural heritage within South Wales is vast and impressive, the landscape providing raw materials and natural infrastructure accommodating the Industrial Revolution, providing a unique way of life and work (South Wales Industrial Heritage Initiative). The built environment has now been shaped by industry and later, together with post-industrial regeneration which has also changed the landscape itself from its natural state to what it is today (South Wales Industrial Heritage Initiative).

Merthyr Tydfil has for many years been depicted as a relatively deprived South Wales valleys town with high levels of unemployment and social exclusion (Kenway et al., 2005). This emphasises the recognition of the need to promote the area and help make it the South East Wales Capital Region as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's fifteen year framework for the Heads of the Valleys strategy: Turning Heads (WAG, 2006).

Merthyr Tydfil in particular is a town of worldwide significance since the Industrial Revolution swept across the South Wales valleys in the course of the 19th century. This town was once the Iron and Steel Capital of the World. Merthyr Tydfil transformed itself from a small parish to become a worldwide exporter of iron and steel (Robinson and Thomas, 1990). It is also known for the remarkable achievement of engineer Richard Trevithick, inventing the first high-pressure steam engine to run on rails (Loops and Links, 2006). Therefore, Merthyr Tydfil has a rich history of industrial heritage and has produced remarkable entrepreneurs of industrial significance. However unfortunately, the majority of its industrial heritage has disappeared over the decades due to post-industrial regeneration (Jenkins, 1992). This analysis endeavours to promote the conservation of the remaining components of this legacy.

Literature review: As a term, enterprise is commonly linked to both the individual who establishes and runs a business and the specific venture that attempts to grow and enhance profitability through innovation (Carland et al., 1984; Thomas et al., 2009). Enterprise is also commonly linked with new venture creation and small business management (Gibb, 1999). It is also useful to consider corporate enterprise and intrapreneurship in terms of public sector enterprises (Carrier, 1996; Thomas et al., 2007). This is often referred to as intra-corporate enterprise (Pinchot, 1995) and in-house enterprise (1987). Whereas, corporate enterprise is more likely to be used in large commercial organisations (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003).

A recent study stated that 64% of Wales is reliant on grant aid and some argue that in order for Wales to be successful and enterprising, it can no longer depend on grant aid constantly, especially during the current economic climate. This can apply to tourism in Wales as well as business and enterprise in general.

The principle's of regeneration and socio-cultural regeneration: The United Kingdom's approach to contemporary regeneration has undergone what

Diamond and Liddle (2005) refer to as a renaissance. Since 1997 and the election of new labour, a mixture of innovative and contradictory initiatives have been launched in which the new target of intervention is neighbourhood or the community. New initiatives therefore, show more than the physical redevelopment of an area and also profound social, organisational and political implications for those living and working in an area which will be sustainable (Diamond and Liddle, 2005).

Socio-cultural regeneration is a process that in recent years has become quite active in the South Wales valleys. The Welsh Assembly Government is aiming for a safe environment in which people want to live, work and play with a sustainable high quality of life and a thriving population (Davies, 2005). This is mainly due to the issues that have been highlighted from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) showing the state of mass unemployment in Wales but particularly in the South Wales valleys themselves with incredibly low levels of education, health concerns and employment inactivity (WIMD, 2005). Such issues also explain the reason behind the Wales Spatial Plan team in trying to provide regeneration evenly throughout the South Wales valleys, in a way that will enable everyone to benefit (WAG, 2004).

In terms of external funding such as European funding with the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), it has been recognised that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) levels have dropped below 75% in parts of Wales, particularly in the South Wales valleys (WEFO, 2004). This has resulted in Objective one funding between 2000 and 2006 to replace Objective two. The whole idea behind Objective one was to ensure long term growth in the South Wales valleys and West Wales, such as developing small and medium sized businesses, community economic regeneration and rural development (Clarke, 2003).

It was felt that in order to combat social exclusion, under Priority Three of the Programme Complement, 2000-2006 by targeting local, community based action on the most deprived communities would provide more effective improvements (WEFO, 2004).

Furthermore, it was deemed beneficial to enhance skills and employability but at the same time improve conditions for local businesses (WEFO, 2004). This relates to the Welsh Assembly Government's economic development strategy: A Winning Wales which emphasises that successful communities provide the opportunities for communities to grow and for businesses to be successful (WAG, 2002). Communities first which is the Welsh Assembly's programme to embrace poverty in deprived communities, will be complemented by activities in this measure (WEFO, 2004). This indicates the importance of incorporating the involvement of the public, private and voluntary sectors together for maximising effect. The Convergence Programme, 2007 will have more of a strategic approach in the sense that there will be larger projects which will as a result have stronger economic aims and more economic improvements (WEFO, 2006).

The Welsh Assembly aims for a socially diverse environment with a full range of modern leisure, cultural and social facilities. This would in turn result in the building of a confident future with clear leadership and positive action that will unite communities together. In particular, there is the aim to provide the way for success in south east Wales as an internationally recognised capital region (Davies, 2005).

The most significant change that has occurred is that current regeneration initiatives are taking place through partnerships with local communities. This indicates a change in direction with a more positive and qualitative approach in thinking and practice which should be accompanied by an understanding of circumstances in the community where the initiative is taking place, this is simply because each locality has a distinct local history. How improvements are put into action in each locality will vary as the challenge exists to meet the needs of a community within its available resources (Diamond and Liddle, 2005).

In the case of the Turning heads strategy for the Valleys 2020 programme formulated by the Welsh Assembly Government, the strategy to regenerate the South Wales valleys will be delivered through partnership with key stakeholders within the public, private and voluntary sectors (Davies, 2006). The stakeholders consist of over 3,000 organisations in the voluntary sector, over 3,500 businesses and five local authoritie. The Local Development Plan (LDP) scheme established by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2005 was aimed at involving local communities in planning developments (Jones, 2006) indicating the increasing importance of communities for successful regeneration.

Socio-cultural regeneration in Merthyr Tydfil and heritage tourism: The Heads of the Valley's town (Merthyr Tydfil) normally features near the top of most of the dismal lists that appear in the papers (David, 2004b). This is further supported by the Audit Commission in Wales (AciW) in which the ACiW discovered that the town had the characteristics of a failing council (David, 2004b). As such, it did not have the capacity to improve and lacked strategic and effective political and managerial leadership. There were warnings that if Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) did not demonstrate

its willingness and ability to make some important changes, it would face intensive regulation and even referral and intervention (David, 2004b). This therefore indicates that a strategic approach is very important in order to provide long term success and clear leadership.

However, the Chief Executive of MTCBC confirms that over the last few years, the situation has changed (David, 2004b). The decision for the capitalist system to run local services was a risk but it appears that the total opposite effect has happened, for there is no longer need for intervention. Due to a population decrease to 55,000 previously, there was a threat that Merthyr Tydfil being the smallest local authority could potentially reach a watershed of 50,000 by 2010. Therefore, Alistair Neill felt that being merged or subsumed with another local authority would diminish the focus on regeneration (David, 2004b).

The developments of the Rhyd-y-Car leisure project was aimed at developing the sport, leisure and tourism industry. There were plans to provide easier access to the Taff Trail incorporating a 60 bed hotel on the site to improve accommodation facilities and attracting more visitors (MTCBC, 2006). This is clearly visible since the project has been completed with such facilities in place. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the development at Rhyd-y-Car has not stimulated an increase in visitor numbers.

David (2004a) points out that he feels service industries in Wales generally such as tourism are not sufficiently well-developed or attractive for any realistic developments of new hotel and restaurant enterprises. However, despite the limitations of the valleys as a tourist destination, new partnership programmes such as HERIAN; Heritage in Action provide new opportunities (David, 2004a). This is a partnership of 13 local authorities designed to create a new industrial heritage based tourism sector housed in Merthyr Tydfil at the Ynysfach Engine House.

HERIAN (2004) shows that they will go some way to help, though even co-ordinated Welsh industrial heritage tourism will be much harder to sell to non-specialist visitors from outside Wale.

HERIAN as well as a partnership of councils and other public and voluntary bodies are promoting the Welsh Assembly-funded plan to highlight the industrial relics and attract more tourists with the trail of light scheme which began in 2006. The use of flood lighting on historical structures is part of the South Wales valleys regeneration strategy.

Cefn Coed viaduct in Merthyr Tydfil is one of the sites that will be highlighted amongst more than forty other sites by Turning Heads (BBC Wales, 2005).

Although, HERIAN is now based in Ebbw Vale, this is not to say that HERIAN is no longer active. From the 1st April, 2009, HERIAN's work programmes are to be subsumed within the Regeneration Directorate of the Welsh Assembly Government and HERIAN will cease to exist as a separate legal entity after this date.

HERIAN's work will be managed through the valleys Regional Park (VRP). The VRP Environment for Growth Phase One Convergence Funding bid provides an opportunity to secure funding to support the regeneration of the VRP area through the VRP Action Plan.

The 3 year project will be lead by WAG to form a part of the wider branding concept for the valleys. The project aims to raise the profile of the area as a visitor destination and an attractive location to live and work. This will be achieved by improving access infrastructure and visitor facilities as well as promoting activity based tourism through events and community based initiatives centred on countryside and heritage centres (WAG, 2009). The scheme is also working alongside the principles of the Wales Spatial Plan by focusing on the aims of the WEFO Convergence Funding programme, whereby there is a more strategic approach in order to ensure that the valleys are not excluded from the scheme (WAG, 2009). This also links to the case study interviews conducted when they discussed the WEFO Convergence Funding programme.

It becomes even more apparent that the South Wales valleys does have a Unique Selling Point (USP) for heritage tourism enterprise developments. This is something that Evans (2004) discusses in his research, Life after Coal by stating that it is hard to avoid the industrial history of South Wales; it is inscribed in its landscape. According to Evans, this is seen as advantageous by looking at the ideal location of the South Wales valleys area with the extensive road networks, providing a central location. In the case of Merthyr Tydfil, Evans (2004) shows the potential of the area by highlighting itself as an Historic Iron Town, yet the majority of its industrial heritage has been destroyed.

The principle's of sustainable enterprise development and the policy in Wales Research shows that defining sustainable enterprise development is a complex phenomenon as it is a very ambiguous term (Culingworth and Nadin, 2006). However, the principles of sustainable development are predominantly used to refer to environmental impacts caused by new developments and the need to prevent harmful impacts (Douglas *et al.*, 2001). Alternatively, sustainable development can actually refer to balancing the economy and also social and cultural implications that can sometimes be difficult to control (Culingworth and Nadin, 2006).

There is now a general consensus over what is meant by sustainable development and that the main challenge is implementation. Many refer to the Brundtland Report (1987) definition and the idea of integrating social, environmental and economic considerations into policy making (Williams and Thomas, 2004). The Welsh Assembly also refers to the Brundtland definition: Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Jones *et al.,* 2004). Research discovers that there is a huge variation in meanings and understandings in terms of implementation and definition. This diversity is apparent within and between organisations, professions, sectors and policy areas (Williams and Thomas, 2004). Williams and Thomas (2004) state that until the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1998, the course of SD (sustainable development) in Wales departed little from that in the rest of the UK.

There is a need to balance three dimensions of sustainable development which consist of economic, environmental and community aspects (Jones *et al.,* 2004). This has been recognised by the Welsh Assembly as a legal responsibility and can be seen in the Action plan, produced in the year 2000 in their sustainable development scheme Learning to Live Differently and a consultation document Starting to Live Differently in 2003. Sustainable development is a way of approaching decision-making that seeks to create development that brings environmental, social and economic improvements. When the concept of sustainable development entered the international political agenda, one outcome of the 1992 Rio Summit was commitment to sustainable development called Agenda 21, created by 152 countries. This commitment was taken up by many local authorities in appointing Local Agenda 21 (LA21) officers. In Wales, sustainable development has also been driven by many non-governmental organisations that have an interest in sustainable development.

Furthermore, the structure of the Welsh Assembly in comparison to Scotland, due to the 1998 Government of Wales Act has financial freedoms in the areas of mainly health, housing, education, culture, agriculture and transport. A significant defining factor in the governance of Wales is scale in comparison to England's larger number of institutions. As a result, relationships are closer and networks more established which makes the process more sustainable and more effective. Key individuals tend to appear in many different areas and according to one Senior Local Government Manager: the beauty of Wales is its manageability in terms of scale, there is a real chance to take SD (Sustainable

Development) forward (Williams and Thomas, 2004). Other important developments in the governing capacity for sustainable development in Wales includes a Sustainable Development Forum for Wales, designed to offer an independent voice for Welsh civil society on sustainable development matters and a catalyst for change at a local and regional level (Williams and Thomas, 2004).

Wales evidently has a unique, institutional and governance framework to manage sustainable heritage enterprise development. Nevertheless, the process involves an array of duties, mechanisms, organisations, regimes and other arrangements at different levels and encompasses a diverse range of public, private and voluntary organisations acting collectively. Williams and Thomas (2004) highlight that it is legitimate to suggest that Wales is presented with a huge opportunity for making a significant impact in SD. Therefore, the aim is to deliver sustainable change but in order to achieve this everyone needs to work together to achieve the shared vision (Davies, 2005).

Sustainable heritage enterprise development in the South Wales valleys: In terms of providing a sustainable future for tourism in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government's aim is to achieve an appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience. The strategic goals by 2020 for the Heads of the valleys area will be identified as an attractive place to live and stay, offering local people and visitor's high quality facilities and attractions, involving cultural events. The tourism and leisure sector will have a more significant role in the economic prosperity of the area, networking with other areas such as Cardiff, Newport, the Gower and Brecon (Davies, 2006). The Assembly's strategic programme aims initially to establish the Heads of the valleys area as a successful day visitor destination, in order to then encourage its development into a short-break location (Davies, 2006). The overall intention is to increase the profile of the heritage sector by providing more opportunities with sustainable development.

Tourism is the biggest industry in Wales, contributing ≤6 million a day to the economy which is more than £2.5 billion a year. It represents seven percent of Welsh GDP and employs 100,000 people which is 10% of the workforce (Mugaseth, 2004). Figures revealed that in the first nine months of 2003, spending by visitors from within the United Kingdom, rose by seventeen percent to £1.4 billion. However, the cultural aspect of tourism in Wales is under-developed. Statistics indicate that expenditure generated by United Kingdom visitors to Wales who are motivated by a cultural interest is approximately £47 million (Mugaseth, 2004). According to

figures representing the United Kingdom's cultural tourism market in Wales between 1997 and 1999, the most popular activities were performing arts, visiting heritage sites and artistic or heritage exhibits. In terms of those visiting heritage sites, 162,000 trips were recorded (Mugaseth, 2004).

Recognising the potential for the heritage tourism sector, the Wales Tourist Board (2003) has drawn up a Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales. This sets out broad parameters within which the cultural tourism market could be developed (WTB, 2003). The first ever cultural tourism co-ordinator for Wales was appointed in November 2003 to oversee implementation of the strategy and to ensure coordination between the cultural and tourism sectors (Mugaseth, 2004). The strategy highlights areas that need to be developed to maximise the potential of cultural tourism. As well as this, Cultural Tourism Partnerships have been established at European and Welsh levels and for the four economic regions of Wales. These provide a forum in which people from the cultural and tourism sectors can cooperate and develop joint projects (Mugaseth, 2004).

Sustainable heritage enterprise development in Merthyr Tydfil: The value of industrial heritage is not based on artistic importance, it is based on its value as a witness of an industrial process which has changed society (Edwards *et al.*, 1996). Edwards *et al.* (1996) feel that the traces of the Industrial Revolution should be developed to the advantage of tourism, emphasising that the landscape, society and culture of the Welsh valleys needs to be documented and preserved before it disappears.

Merthyr Tydfil is an excellent example of an area that has so much historical significance but unfortunately the development of heritage has been neglected, accompanied by a lack of confidence and resources to overcome the obstacle of using its full potential (Jenkins, 1992; Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2006). The Cyfarthfa ironworks was once the largest in the world that constantly employed 1,500 men, during the Industrial Revolution (Jenkins, 1992), knowing that this is now only represented by the remains of blast furnaces is disappointing.

There is still no evidence of developments to this site as a heritage attraction, since the 2004 report named, The Cyfarthfa Heritage Masterplan which produced plans to develop the Cyfarthfa Iron works into a heritage tourism attraction. However, the site is seen as a preferred location for a new Valleys Information Technology and Communication Centre (VITCC). It is believed that its location within this site of historical importance will enhance further funding opportunities (MTCBC, 2003).

Nevertheless, since the Welsh Assembly Government building was built at Rhyd-y-car, this centre was built behind the building instead due to site constraints and was therefore relocated. The building was also renamed the Orbit Business Centre (MTCBC, 2009). The Orbit will play an important part in nurturing business start-ups in the area with its conference centre and advice from professionals on business and enterprise.

In terms of heritage sites, Jenkins (1992) explains that Merthyr Tydfil is home to early furnaces, the Trevithick Tunnel, Nonconformist chapels, the Dowlais stables, as well as Cyfarthfa Castle and Joseph Parry's cottage. At the Ynysfach Engine House, the story of iron in Merthyr Tydfil is presented. This therefore shows that there is very little the town has to present to visitors and also to remind the local community about their very significant history.

Since the late 1990s with regards to Ynysfach Engine House, the building was no longer being used. Nevertheless, since the year 2004 some improvement has been accomplished by HERIAN who use one floor of the engine house as offices to promote heritage tourism throughout the South Wales valleys (HERIAN, 2004).

Furthermore, plans were drawn up in 2007 to secure funding for part of the Engine House to be used as an exhibition centre. This contained interactive interpretation, in conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Trust to tell the story of Merthyr Tydfil which will in turn tell the story of the whole of south Wales' industrial legacy with the promotion of other heritage locations to visit in the South Wales valleys (HERIAN, 2007). It has therefore been recognised that communities, claiming ownership of their industrial past can bring community regeneration (IcWales, 2005). However, sadly due to funding issues the engine house has closed once again and it is still uncertain as to its future. This therefore contributes to the debate that in Wales there is far too much dependence on funding from external sources.

Evidence suggests that many buildings of historical significance are being restored and modified for contemporary tourist use. It is common for heritage properties to be renovated and used for other purposes other than their original objectives (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). Heritage can therefore be used as a functional resource. In some cases, entire sections of towns are being used by residents as well as visitors (Gunn and Var, 2002). This has been the case for various historic buildings in Merthyr Tydfil. A visit by his royal highness, the Prince of Wales in November, 2006 saw the Dowlais Engine House, officially opened to mark the commencement of a youth community project. This is an example of an historic building that is not specifically

used for historical purposes but shows that local people are taking pride in their local heritage which Merthyr Tydfil is beginning to experience (Evans, 2006). Additionally, there is further evidence that the community project has been worthwhile with a recent award: the Oscars of Property Development, for its outstanding contribution to the community of Merthyr Tydfil (Thomas *et al.*, 2007).

Significantly, for some historic buildings at Merthyr Tydfil, progress seems to be very slow such as the Merthyr Tydfil Old Town Hall and the YMCA. Decisions have not been made to restore and protect these important buildings (O' Conner, 2006; MTTCP, 2006). Additionally, there has been a discovery of an industrial site: an iron stone mine, dated from the early 1800s. Unfortunately, the ground has been allocated for development. However, the Monmouthshire archaeologists have excavated the site and documented their findings (Thomas *et al.*, 2007).

The Trevithick, 2004 bicentenary celebrations indicated the support for community involvement to secure funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), WEFO and various other generous contributors with a year full of events. A temporary exhibition centre attracted over 7,700 visitors from all over the world, during the 4 months that it was open between June and October 2004. A significant role in the Industrial Revolution was played by the tramways, railways and canal towpaths, south Wales having a greater quantity than any other area of equivalent size in the world (IcWales, 2005). The Trevithick Trail at Merthyr Tydfil recognises the significance of these historical trails and its appreciation is shown by the community from a clean-up project in 2007 (Mendez, 2007).

The involvement of Glamorgan GATES in the artwork of the trail shows the advantages in involving young people from the community to become involved in their local heritage (University of Glamorgan, 2006).

Every local authority since, The Local Government Act 2000 has a Community Strategy (Communities and Local Government, 2006) which contains what that local authority, intends to focus on for future development. MTCBC's Community Strategy which was formulated in 2004 aims to embrace heritage to regenerate the area with the priority to make the area an attractive place to work, live and visit (MTCBC, 2004).

Diamond and Liddle (2005) raise some very significant points in their study in the sense that each locality will differ slightly in its approach because each area has different circumstances in terms of regeneration. This explains the importance of community discussion, because it is for the benefit of the people. In terms of

sustainable development, the main difficulty appears to be implementation. A strategic approach is the only sustainable way of achieving success, for it has agreed priorities from the beginning, with partnerships between relevant stakeholders.

The significance of networking with other local authorities is therefore of paramount importance. Such issues are gradually becoming resolved with further research but it will be a gradual process as Douglas *et al.* (2001) state: communities are complex. It becomes clear that a new marketing strategy needs to be implemented to enhance further developments by raising the profile of heritage enterprise development in the South Wales valleys.

Above all, building confidence becomes apparent and Merthyr Tydfil is an area that has great entrepreneurial potential. It is therefore important to emphasise that both regeneration and sustainable development are interlinked and are an important part of the enterprise regeneration process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology involved a case study analysis including multiple semi-structured interviews, with eight public sector stakeholders in the Merthyr Tydfil regeneration area. Riley and Love (2000) consider the positivist traditions as the dominant paradigm in tourism research an approach that has been supported by the movement of visitors focus that tourism studies has tended to favour. This however has not always been the case with seminal work in tourism studies initiated though qualitative research (Boorstin, 1961; Cohen, 1972; Cannell, 1973). Riley and Love (2000) do however point out that there has been a paradigm shift and that the emphasis is now upon understanding why the tourist phenomena occurs and attempting, through qualitative methods to understand the subjective reality of those that are studied in order to make sense of and understand their motives actions and intentions in a way that is meaningful. The qualitative research design has facilitated a method that is flexible, responsive and recursive, developing theory from data and using the data to shape the subsequent research.

The eight case study interviews included key partners from across the community and voluntary sectors, local authorities and funding and tourism bodies under the auspices of the Welsh Assembly Government. Aaekar *et al.* (1998) support the view that case studies are the most appropriate method for analysing complex situations. Thirteen questions were included and presented at each of the case study interview sessions.

- Case study/organisation A is the planning division at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Case study/organisation B is a quasi university body, promoting lifelong learning through enterprise innovation and education
- Case study/organisation C is the tourism division at a neighbouring local authority
- Case study/organisation D is the Welsh Assembly Government's funding division
- Case study/organisation E is the enterprise and economic development division within the Welsh Assembly Government
- Case study/organisation F is a membership-based body concerned with economic policy in Wales
- Case study/organisation G is the Welsh Assembly Government's Heads of the valleys regeneration partnership
- Case study/organisation H is a quasi Welsh Assembly Government body developing hub and cluster networks across the South Wales heritage tourism sector

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research has already established that Wales has a competitive advantage in terms of both regeneration and sustainable enterprise development, due to its unique partnership approach, partly due to being smaller in size. Furthermore, the formation of the Welsh Assembly in 1998 has added to greater political and financial freedoms (Williams and Thomas, 2004). As a result, closer networking opportunities provide potential for the future. The literature review clearly reaches the conclusion that due to the complexities of implementing sustainable development, closer partnerships in Wales will be an asset. This therefore emphasises that networking is important and a strategic approach is important indicating how crucial sustainable development are to one another. The findings of this analysis further emphasises such issues and also looks at the funding aspect and the leading role of the Welsh Assembly's strategy for the Heads of the valleys in obtaining long term success.

Partnership and networking: The primary, significant theme emphasised by the participants is partnership and networking. The support of all key stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors is seen as crucial in order to share resources, ideas and expertise from previous experiences.

Both case study organisations, E and B, emphasised that more action, would result in more outcomes commitment and positive attitudes achieved by comparing

the ineffectiveness of previous regeneration programmes. Merthyr Tydfil, particularly, through collaborative networking stands to gain expertise in using the potential of its area fully. For this process to work effectively in Merthyr Tydfil and the South Wales valleys, the main priority is to have a clear structure. Evidence suggests that despite a considerable amount of innovative networking, little outstanding change is being generated within the South Wales valleys particularly Merthyr Tydfil. The complexity of achieving funding is regarded as a serious issue for projects.

Partnership-networking within the valleys avoids the duplication of projects which case study organisations, F and G, strongly emphasised. Co-operation through sharing resources rather than competing for limited funding. As a result, working in partnership is the essence of regeneration.

Therefore, it is a crucial element for developments to be successful and work efficiently. Case study organisation G emphasised that previous lack of local authority collaboration was experienced from Objective one funding. This consequently had a negative impact upon the potential regeneration opportunities. In North West Wales there were clearer aims for involvement and collaboration which resulted in greater improvements to the area. Whereas, the South Wales valleys did not see significant improvements which in the opinions of some are more in need. Therefore, the aim to provide support evenly between West Wales and the South Wales valleys was unsuccessful with Objective one funding.

Additionally, in terms of tourist attractions the formation of a joint tourism trail to other places of historic interest within the South Wales valleys could prove advantageous resulting in more facilities for tourists in the long term due to more interest in the area. HERIAN has reviewed ways to integrate the whole of the South Wales heritage attractions. HERIAN refers to the hubs and the clusters approach whereby there are links directing visitors to different areas which is an effective way of forming a partnership between local authorities. Promoting thirteen local authorities will provide both stronger local authorities and communities. Case study organisation C pointed out that this refers to the idea behind the Wales Spatial Plan. These plans are at more of an advanced stage particularly in Merthyr Tydfil when 2007 was to see an interactive exhibition established in Ynysfach Engine House, for both the visitor and the local community.

The majority of the participants felt that a potential danger with networking can be too much emphasis on meetings and discussions rather than a great deal of action. This is the importance of a more strategic and

holistic approach which will be discussed in more detail later. Essentially, all participants emphasised an integrated approach is the only sustainable way of achieving long term success.

Strategic approach: All participants felt that a well planned, strategic approach with clear aims and objectives is the only way forward in order for improvements to be carried out efficiently and effectively in the long term. Case study organisations E and G stated that this has been learnt from previous regeneration schemes and Objective one European Funding, as previously mentioned in the first theme (Partnership and networking). However, case study organisation E further emphasises the importance of not viewing such difficulties too negatively because it has proven that we can learn from these different approaches in order to improve on the present situation. The Welsh Assembly has recognised that the most effective approach is strategic in order to provide a more sustainable future. The 2007-13 replacement programme indicates this recognition. Case study organisation D stated that the economic basis of the new programme will enhance further economic developments by encouraging community enterprise and so improve employment possibilities.

A strategic approach appears to be the only sustainable way to provide progression whereby all key stakeholders have clear leadership. This can be seen in the structure of the Heads of the valleys strategy by the Welsh Assembly which is organised into themes from year-to-year as part of a 15 years programme providing development through a more manageable and clearly structured approach. The Heads of the valleys programme is a long term, integrated approach to regeneration. Heritage tourism is seen as providing an exciting insight into industrial heritage with a beautiful landscape and with excellent communication links adding to the potential of the area.

Case study organisation E further explains that the Heads of the valleys programme identifies tourism as one of the key economic providers by working with the local authorities and high councils. Therefore, the Heads of the valleys strategy looks at how this potential can be developed and recognises tourism as an economic force for progression in the valleys. Commitment to sustainable development making the area more accessible with cycle routes and providing other ways of opening the countryside up for the public to enjoy have all been ambitions for the 2008-09 year of heritage tourism. A strategic approach is very important in the sense that regeneration has to take place first, before any tourism can be developed. Case study organisations C and G,

emphasise that it is important to understand that developing heritage tourism is a gradual process and developments occur simultaneously. First of all, it is important to regenerate an area to make it an attractive place to work and live before attracting tourism. Therefore, it is crucial that in order for any tourism developments in an area to take place; it has to be well-planned to ensure that tourism follows on by itself afterwards. Case study organisation H emphasises that if this procedure is not followed through, this will result in tourism being developed too early. Premature development would prove not sustainable; resulting in investment not being cost effective.

Case study organisation A supports this point by explaining that in order for visitors to be attracted to an area, the area itself needs to be regenerated itself. Merthyr Tydfil is an example where the town centre needs to be regenerated more and tourism can follow on by itself afterwards and investment in the quality of the built heritage is vital.

Case study organisations G and A, in particular emphasised that in order for there to be significant advances in heritage tourism enterprise developments in the South Wales valleys, there is a need for a heritage tourism strategy to develop agreed priorities. It becomes clear that Merthyr Tydfil particularly is in need of this. Respondent A indicated that a heritage strategy needs to be put forward because heritage needs to be prioritised and at the moment this does not appear to be the case. Heritage needs to be incorporated as a regeneration tool with an enforcement of standards that need to be met and supportive grant funding. Therefore, it becomes apparent that an integrated approach is important, in order to bring heritage tourism and regeneration together. Additionally, regeneration and sustainability cannot be separated because they affect one another due to the simple fact that developments have to be carried out in a sustainable entrepreneurial way in order for them to work efficiently.

Community cohesion: The close communities that exist in the South Wales valleys today are of paramount importance. This is felt to have its origins in the previous coal mining industry in South Wales whereby comradeship and strong communities became dominant in the valleys. This links with heritage enterprise development and regeneration, in the sense that heritage is an important part of regeneration. It is argued that the South Wales valleys has a competitive advantage due to friendly communities. Case study organisation E established that it is important to capitalise this opportunity which indicates that regeneration in the South Wales valleys will be much easier to implement due

to the fact that these people will be more cooperative. Case study organisation C emphasised that regeneration will work particularly well if it is approached in the right way. This sense of community is unique within the South Wales valleys and will be an asset to regeneration.

The participants came up with role models that the South Wales valleys as a whole and Merthyr Tydfil in particular should consider. Community cohesion has been very successful in regenerating Blaenavon which has World Heritage Status as well as Ireland and Scotland who have utilised the uniqueness of their friendly communities.Case study organisation G also argues that there is a need to encourage more civic pride and greater confidence for the future. By drawing on the successful experience of establishing community group projects from the Objective one funding programme, it appears that significant insight into the success of these projects can be gained.

Case study organisation D highlighted that at Merthyr Tydfil successful projects such as the Ynysfach project which helped establish HERIAN, featuring community involvement.

This indicates that getting the right people involved will contribute to the success of a community as well as enhancing the opportunities for receiving support from funding. This is the basis upon which WEFO works in terms of projects. If there is no evidence of direct community involvement for a project , it will not be feasible and will not therefore go ahead.

The challenges of funding: The main challenges in terms of funding over the years have been accessibility and its usage once achieved, as well as encouraging more funding applications. Case study organisation E emphasised this from experiences with earlier regeneration schemes (Theme one: Partnerships and Networking). In terms of European funding, it is hoped that the 2007. Convergence programme will improve upon the previous difficulties with Objective one, by having more of a strategic approach. This new programme will also include town centre regeneration.

Case study organisation A stated that this is important because it is the town centres that are at the heart of the community and represent the area. Therefore, it is important to note that in terms of regeneration and funding, a strategic approach is crucial. However, all participants concluded that there are other important resources of funding that should be used such as HLF, the Big Lottery Fund and the Arts Council for Wales (ACW).

The main hindrance appears to be confidence in applying for funding which emphasises the need for both the community and those that have the power to provide change to work together as a team. Any lack of enthusiasm from those that have more power to provide change as well as the community will result in the failure of regeneration. Case study organisation D explained that there is becoming gradually more equality in terms of spatial targeting, resulting in more funding to benefit areas that need it the most. Case study organisation G pointed out that the ACW particularly has a large budget. Previously, most of the funding was spent in the cities and rural communities which excluded towns in the South Wales valleys. Nevertheless, this is no longer the case, for there is evidence of more involvement in the South Wales valleys.

Therefore, it appears that perceptions and attitudes need to change for more confident communities. Case study organisation C also pointed out that there is an issue in small local authorities with regards to actually having the ability within the local authority to pass financial capacity. Merthyr Tydfil is an example of a small local authority that lacks in terms of personnel as well as financially. HLF has significant quantities of funding but excellent applications for projects to be accepted are important. This is where HERIAN's work of engaging with local communities has been advantageous by helping the communities to develop a business plan for their heritage project.

However, projects need to be well-thought through and sustainable. Therefore, it appears that because of this difficulty, small local authorities are not getting enough support and they will continue to rely on external funding for some time to come. However, improvements are underway. The Welsh Assembly's Heads of the valleys strategy, for instance aims to unite five local authorities by creating partnerships in order to share resources and ideas for a sustainable future. Nevertheless, it is challenging but with more partnerships being formulated it is hopeful that improvements will be experienced.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this analysis is to consider how current regeneration schemes in the South Wales valleys provide further opportunities for industrial heritage enterprise development with application to Merthyr Tydfil. It has become apparent that funding issues can only be resolved by working in partnership with all stakeholders. The importance of funding appears to be more about how money is spent as well as encouraging people to apply for funding, rather than how much support is provided. Therefore, success can be achieved by working together in partnership to provide sustainable communities for

future generations to come. The competitive advantage of community cohesion in the valleys has become particularly apparent due to the friendliness of the people. The co-operation of the people is crucial to the overall implementation of any improvements. It is felt that such characteristics of people in the valleys of south Wales today derives from the close communities that existed during the mining industry.

This analysis has shown the growing significance of non-environmental sustainable development and socio-cultural regeneration. Networking and strong partnerships have proved crucial for the long term vision of regeneration. If strong partnerships are formed within the public, private and voluntary sectors this will provide the best opportunities in creating positive and confident communities.

Additionally, resources and experiences can be shared which is particularly important with regards to projects because duplication can sometimes occur. Throughout the main themes that have been analysed, the importance of socio-cultural regeneration and sustainable enterprise development has become particularly apparent. This has proved that they are practically inseparable due to the fact that they need to work together in order to provide a sustainable approach for regeneration to work effectively in the long term.

It has become apparent that a strategic approach is essential for it is the only way that is sustainable in order to develop heritage tourism enterprises for future generations.

As a result of a more structured approach with partnerships in place, there is clearer leadership. The findings show that the most significant issues faced are both the accessibility and the usage of funding; lack of clear direction; the significance of commitment from those with the power to provide change as well as communities; and a need for more networking and collaboration between local authorities. Nevertheless, such issues are beginning to improve and there has been a realisation by local authorities, funding bodies and national government that times are changing to ensure mistakes of the past are not repeated.

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