

defend the rights and abilities of diverse groups to participate in public policy as well as stewardship of their communal and ecological spaces.

An important need arises here for a well-informed public in tourism destinations. We can think here of the potential of tourism to facilitate local-global citizenship and empower the local through civic engagement and opportunities to involve diverse groups and vulnerable populations in learning about tourism in the community and engaging in “touristic” activities that enhance well-being. The partnerships described in the Children’s University Tasmania program in Case 6.5 below offers access to leisure and recreational opportunities for less well-off children and their families, facilitating cultural knowledge, status, physical as well as psychological health (self-esteem, self-confidence) as they get to know their community, enjoy its green spaces, and participate in learning through diverse cultural opportunities (visits to museum, etc.). The program helps to empower and enable vulnerable groups to gain social rights to their city, enhancing potential for civic engagement and informed decision making related to tourism as they gain greater understanding and knowledge of local attractions and services. This case, too, points to the merit of exploring a pluralistic approach to justice and well-being in tourism governance, policy, and planning.

Questions for Reflection

1. How do you envision governance for tourism, which takes place in complex social-ecological relationships and interdependencies locally and globally?
2. Pick one case from the several in this chapter and discuss how democracy is being furthered by the actions taking place in the case.
3. Do destinations facing rapid tourism growth have the right to shut their doors to future tourists?
4. What synergies do you see between the democratic cultural pluralism that Young advocates here and the “pluriverse” discussed in the context of the Global South in Chapter 5?

Case 6.5: The Children’s University Tasmania: The Transformative Power of Tourism

Can-Seng Ooi and Becky Shelley

Tasmania is currently experiencing exponential visitor growth. Tourism has become a new engine of economic development for this small Australian state, with a population of 520,000. A record 1.28 million people visited Tasmania in the 12 months to September 2017, up 8% on the previous year, total spending increased to A\$2.3 billion (Tourism Tasmania, 2018). Like many emerging tourism destinations, Tasmanians are concerned with how

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tourism will change their island. A relatively high proportion of Tasmanians experience social exclusion. These people do not seem to benefit from tourism growth. For many of them, their daily activities are distant from the world of tourism, and they do not perceive the industry as particularly relevant for them. Instead they may experience cost of living pressures as long-term rental properties are converted into short-stay visitor accommodation. They may have difficulty accessing services during peak tourism and festival seasons. Despite creating jobs, it is clear that the benefits of tourism are not distributed evenly. There are emerging concerns that tourism may be exacerbating social inequalities (Burness, 2018; Farnsworth, 2018). This case shows how a particular program—Children’s University Tasmania—redistributes benefits from tourism to the local community. The case uses data from a mixed-methods evaluation of the Children’s University being led by Becky Shelley at the Peter Underwood Centre, as well as interviews the authors conducted during 2017.

This case considers children and families who live in marginalized communities in Tasmania. They may not have the resources or ability to enjoy tourism sites that are freely available, such as going to museums or visiting parks (which are among the “trickle down” effects of government redistribution of tourism income toward infrastructure, services and welfare). They may not benefit directly from the growth in tourism unless family members work in the industry. This section of the community has largely been ignored in tourism policy discussions even though policy-makers and the industry often make claims that tourism will benefit society at large. In what ways can the local tourism industry work with children and their families to build up social capital and “cultural capital” in a Bourdieusien sense so that these children will have a better foundation to succeed? Bourdieu identified three forms or “guises” of capital: economic, social and cultural. Depending on the field in which it functions social capital and cultural capital can be converted into economic capital. However, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) articulate in their theory of social reproduction, the different types of “capital” children and their families possess may pose a barrier to social mobility. Children experiencing the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage may not exhibit the embodied sense of cultural capital that tends to supplement or enhance achievement in the education system.

Tasmania and the Children’s University

The continuing relative underperformance of Tasmania in areas such as gross state product, labor market participation, productivity levels, health and well-being outcomes, and life expectancy are referenced to make a case for prioritizing improving the state’s educational outcomes (Eslake, 2016). Tasmania is home to 112,884 children and young people. Tasmanian families have higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage than the national average (Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, 2017).

Within Tasmania, and nationally, there is a high-level consensus on the centrality of education as a policy lever to achieve broader social, economic and well-being goals. This consensus contributed to the creation of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment at the University of Tasmania, where the Children's University Tasmania is based. The Children's University Tasmania uses Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas to determine which government schools to partner with to implement the program.

The Children's University Tasmania is a member of a social franchise that is currently implemented in the United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia and China. The Children's University identifies informal learning as a rich site to foster aspiration, parental engagement and educational success—if the social, economic and cultural barriers to participation can be reduced (Macbeath, 2013). It aims to promote social mobility by providing high quality out-of-school-hours learning activities to children aged 7–14. It targets children and young people facing socio-economic disadvantage to ensure that every child, irrespective of parental means, has access to quality extracurricular learning:

Impact is...measured by three inter-related aspects—knowing, feeling and doing. It is concerned with questions such as...Does the Children's University experience widen children's conceptions of learning and ignite a desire to be more adventurous and self-directed? (Macbeath, 2013)

Using the narrative of travel, when a child becomes a member of the Children's University they are given a "Passport to Learning" in which they record their participation in activities at Public Learning Destinations (Figure 6.5.1). After completing 30+ hours of validated learning, their achievement is celebrated at a formal graduation ceremony, a significant cultural experience itself (Photo 6.5.1). The Children's University builds a bridge for parents and guardians to expose children to diverse cultural experiences.

Tourism

There is a significant body of literature that identifies the significance of extracurricular participation on educational outcomes, and the ways in which access and opportunity to engage in extracurricular activity is impacted by socioeconomic characteristics (Cummings et al., 2012). So, how does tourism fit into this discussion? The Children's University Tasmania has partnered with over 100 local services and attractions that serve residents and/or visitors. They include museums, historic sites, wildlife sanctuaries, regional galleries, and events such as festivals. The Children's University

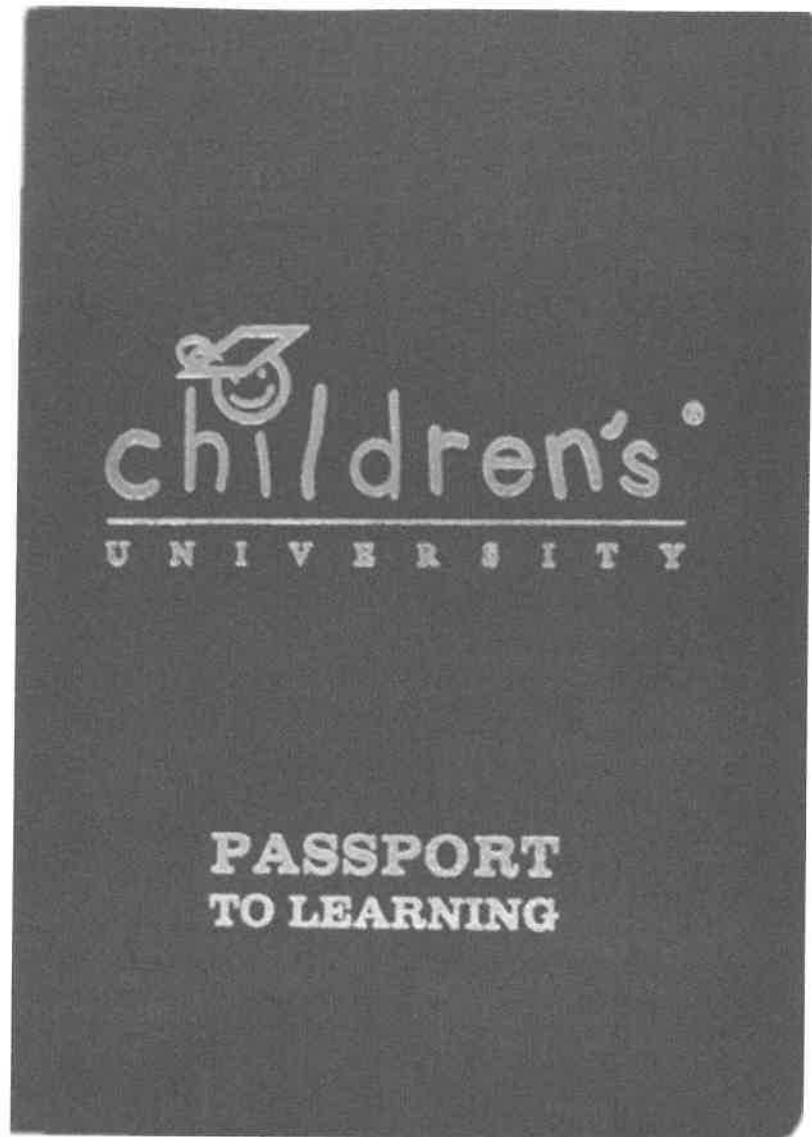


FIGURE 6.5.1 Children's University Australia Passport to Learning

Image Credit: Children's University Australia

Tasmania encourages tourism services to become validated Public Learning Destinations by highlighting their potential to enrich the local community:

Being a Learning Destination is a great way to promote your organization to the local community and to engage with young people in your service delivery. Learning Destinations can enrich communities

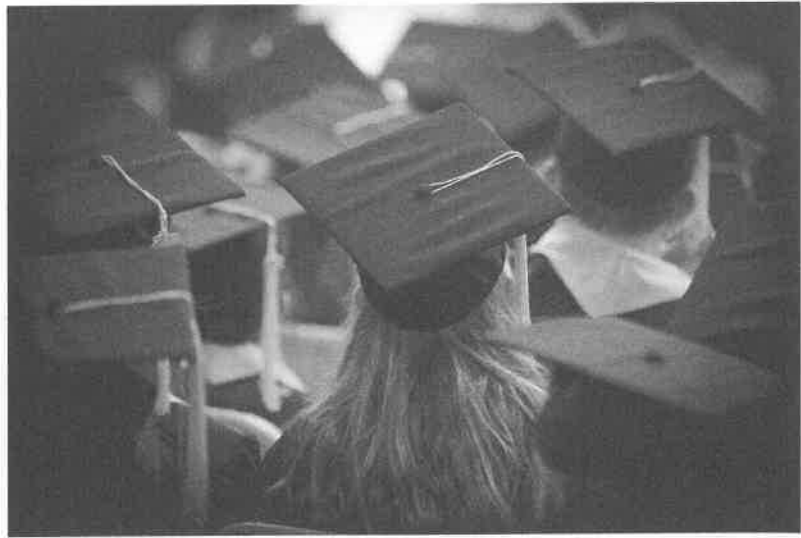


PHOTO 6.5.1 Children's University Tasmania graduation ceremony (December 2016, Hobart Tasmania) <http://www.utas.edu.au/underwood-centre/aspiration-attainment>. Retrieved April 26, 2018
Image Credit: Peter Underwood Centre, University of Tasmania

and build valuable networks that help support children and their families in their educational journey (Children's University Tasmania, 2017).

An unpublished report prepared by researchers at the Peter Underwood Centre supports the claim that families also engage in a learning journey (Eyles, Shelley, & Stratford, 2017).

[the] family has now become involved in visiting Public Learning Destinations on weekends and holidays—they are looking through the destinations for opportunities they can follow up...Previously a lot of her weekend time was spent at home "filling" in time so the whole family have benefited and their outlook has been altered. (School Coordinator)

The program offers/creates the opportunity for families to venture to surrounding sites they may never have gone to. This has been very evident as the parents and children have come to me with stories of their "adventure." From one child wanting to go to a particular destination, a whole family enjoys the benefits. (School Coordinator, unpublished report (Eyles et al., 2017)).

The authors conducted interviews with Children's University Tasmania employees and Public Learning Destinations in 2017. An employee of the Children's University Tasmania observed that:

it provides a structure for parents to understand how and what to engage in with kids outside of school... But I think that is important as parents struggle sometimes with knowing what to do. (Employee, Children's University Tasmania)

Early evidence suggests that the program is having a positive influence on school attendance, a sense of achievement and awareness of further learning as a pathway to a "dream" job in the future. The Children's University Tasmania also highlights an avenue for the local tourism industry to be more proactive in using their social license (Ooi & Shelley, 2018). While many of them serve visitors, they should use similar resources to serve residents. They can become Public Learning Destinations, and not just tourist attractions.

Obstacles remain. It is important to observe that the economic and cultural barriers to participation in local tourism and informal learning opportunities need further analysis. It is evident that even where people have free access to tourist attractions, there are cultural barriers to visitation. The renowned Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) is free to Tasmanian residents but that may not be sufficient to encourage visitation (Booth, O'Connor, Franklin, & Papastergiadis, 2017).

The Transformative Opportunity

The Public Learning Destinations that are part of the Children's University Tasmania are not all tourism sites. Nonetheless, the case suggests resources created for tourism can also be deployed to support broader societal goals, such as raising educational aspiration and attainment. During off-peak tourist seasons, more can be done to engage local children in extracurricular, experiential learning through tourism related services and attractions. The tourism industry has benefitted from skill development initiatives funded by government. Fostering skills in inclusive and child-friendly practices within the tourism industry could be encouraged. The beneficiaries of this approach include the child-participants, but also the industry as they build connections with a new audience, or customer base.

One Public Learning Destination notes they had done work training customer services officers. They observed:

the staff are getting a really good basis in educational principles so that when they are actually teaching or showing students...they are able to give them the information that they need in a way that has meaning to them...it means that the kids are walking away with something a little bit more than just an experience which is fantastic...We want to engage with the Children's University. For one, in terms of pure numbers, it brings us a new audience (Public Learning Destination officer).

In some instances, rich and interesting learning content at tourism attractions can also be harnessed to create online learning opportunities. This is particularly relevant for regionally dispersed communities. Tourism assets can be crafted into mobile "destinations." These can be physical, and digital, or a combination. For example, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has an outreach program. They provide a box that contains items and information that schools can use, while a museum employee connects via video-link and discusses contents of the box. The museum becomes a mobile supporter of learning. Currently, this is used to support formal learning within the curriculum. There are opportunities to develop content that supports informal learning.

While key public institutions such as museums, art galleries, and historic sites often have an explicit educational purpose and resources to support engagement strategies, the Children's University Tasmania case suggests that similar principles can be extended more broadly across the tourism sector. The narrative of travel is a tool that can stimulate the imagination and provide creative, fun and engaging ways to enhance learning about culture, history, science, natural and social environments. As such, it can support broader social and economic goals of improved educational attainment for the children and young people, as well as fostering an understanding of their place (self and community) in a globalized world.

Learning in this environment has really helped me to explore different parts of myself, and learn to be a positive role model in my community (Children's University Tasmania member, age 11).

The Children's University Tasmania is also about the adults. The role of parents, caregivers and home environments as influential agents on levels of educational engagement and attainment is well documented. As noted above, Tasmanian families have higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage than the national average. All parents have aspirations for their children. Yet, navigating to achieve those goals can be hard, especially for socially excluded families. They may benefit from programs like the one described here to understand what experiences and events are available in their local community.

This study illustrates how tourism resources are being used for local and community development, enhancing individual, social and cultural well-being. Tourism policies often aim to bring tourism benefits to local society; this is easier said than done (Ooi, 2013). This study shows one concrete way that tourism can be made to serve the needs of local society, and support disadvantaged families and children to create and fulfill their visions for the future.

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