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Uncovering absences and gaps: using Ketso in qualitative research for accessible tourism

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Engagement of stakeholders in the research process provides valuable insights around tourism issues yet can be fraught with challenges. Ketso is a toolkit that can help overcome these barriers to facilitate stakeholder inclusion and collaboration. Drawing on a study into accessibility and tourism, this paper provides critical reflections on the potential of Ketso as a qualitative method in bringing together diverse stakeholders for inclusive dialogue around social change. Ketso can develop opportunities for change in the tourism system by making the absences of knowledge and assumptions in the worldviews of powerful tourism stakeholders apparent. Our analysis revealed how Ketso enabled inclusive collaboration to engender both tacit and wider community stakeholder knowledge, building capacity for co-created solutions to make tourism more accessible (barrier-free) for travellers with disabilities.

Keywords: *Ketso, participatory method, qualitative research, accessible tourism, tourism stakeholder*

1 INTRODUCTION

The qualitative turn in tourism research has enabled critical, humanising, soft science thinking and a deeper richness of understanding and conceptualisation of tourism phenomena and their complexities to emerge (Phillimore/Goodson 2004; McIntosh 1998; Tribe 2005; Walle 1997; Wilson/Hollinshead 2015). As Riley and Love (2000) remind us, much seminal work in tourism is derived from qualitative research. However, there remains a call to move research away from the traditional top-down academic as 'powerful expert' approaches (Cockburn-Wootten et al. 2018; Nowotny et al. 2003). Previous research has demonstrated the need to address issues relating to power, and the exclusion of the 'invisible' participant or 'dominant' voice (Aas et al. 2005; Tosun 2000; Wearing et al. 2010). Instead, critical scholars have argued that collaborative and co-created knowledge sharing frameworks should be adopted as they disrupt conventional long-held methodological knowledge and assumptions in the field (Ateljevic et al. 2007; Ren et al. 2010; Wengel et al. 2019; Wilson/Hollinshead 2015). There is a need to ensure the inclusion of marginalised voices, for example, people living with disabilities, in research and stakeholder conversations to gain insight and collaborative inclusive solution for social issues (Wolbring 2013). These alternative methods and qualitative approaches are argued to cultivate more

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inclusive relationships, closer engagement with communities and, importantly, positive impact for end-users.

Collaboration within tourism stakeholder activities, which include opportunities for participatory co-creative thinking and planning, are crucial for problem solving around challenging, 'complex, unconsidered, and polysemous issues' (Cockburn-Wootten et al. 2018: 1491; Mitra/Buzzanell 2015), empowerment (Wilson/Hollinshead 2015), and for the future re-imagination of tourism (Baum/Hai 2020). Balomenou and Garrod (2014: 126), for instance, argue that within tourism 'few studies have attempted to apply participatory planning in the real-world context of planning and fewer still have considered its practicality'. The practicality of any given technique should, of course, be considered in the light of its benefits: the additional insights that using it is able to bring to the tourism planning process. To work within the practicalities of community contexts, an orientation by the research team is required that privileges the stakeholder voice, experiences, relationships and processes of knowing (Dredge 2006; McIntosh/Cockburn-Wootten 2019).

To achieve this orientation, communication processes that enhance dialogue, inclusion and participation are essential for achieving engagement. Engagement, despite being a commonly used term, has not always been applied similarly across participatory stakeholder tourism research projects (Wearing et al. 2010). Instead it has been conducted in vague and tokenistic ways, where inclusion, dialogue, empowerment and, importantly, decision-making have remained firmly with the researcher and their organisation, rather than creating impact with the community (Cockburn-Wootten et al. 2018; McIntosh/Cockburn-Wootten 2019; Wearing et al. 2010). Planning and selecting alternative research qualitative tools to enhance these engagement processes are essential then for developing authentic and effective engagement.

We contribute to qualitative tourism research scholarship by providing critical reflections on a participatory method applied to bridge communication between tourism and disability/access sector stakeholders. This paper explains and discusses the tool, Ketso (www.ketso.com), that was used to engage the stakeholders in order to develop richer engagement, increase participation for social change and co-create viable solutions to make tourism more accessible (barrier-free) for travellers with disabilities. We use the term 'accessibility' in this paper to align with wider discourse around disability and tourism, drawn from the concept of 'accessible tourism' (Darcy/Dickson 2009). This terminology reflects a social model of disability wherein society creates an environment that can disable and enable people in society (Oliver 2013). A social agenda that seeks to address the barriers to tourism is essential for achieving equitable opportunities for all people in our communities, and a function of progressive environmental planning that involves the excluded groups (Hine/Mitchell 2001).

The Ketso tool has been adopted in other disciplines – including education, health, social care and environmental studies – to develop collaborative thinking among stakeholders. It has not been readily employed in tourism research, although McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten (2019), Wengel et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2016) are notable exceptions. Our aim here is not to propose Ketso as a new qualitative method (as in McIntosh/Cockburn-Wootten 2016), but to share how Ketso can be applied and to shed exploratory insights on its application for tourism stakeholder collaborations. Specifically, this paper presents research findings that applied Ketso to actively bring tourism and access stakeholders together in a meaningful planning exercise for accessible tourism in a case study city of Christchurch on the South Island of New Zealand. Given the major rebuild of Christchurch following a devastating series of

earthquakes in 2011, the researchers felt the destination posed a valuable opportunity for exploring creative collaborative and future thinking around issues of accessibility and tourism development.

As there has been very little previous consideration of collaboration between the tourism and access sectors in tourism planning and development, there is merit in considering the potential of Ketso to reveal stakeholders' voices and inclusion, and in achieving effective collaboration and co-created solutions from between the different stakeholders. Ketso is a tool that enables reciprocal knowledge transfer and collaborative knowledge generation, and one that encourages creative new thinking (McIntosh/Cockburn-Wootten 2016; Tippett 2013; Wengel et al. 2019). This is particularly important in contexts where the voices of stakeholders from the access sector are not often heard. As such, this paper contributes important insights into how Ketso can be used to engender inclusive stakeholder engagement; address absences in tourism stakeholder knowledge about accessibility; reduce power imbalances in the dialogue between diverse stakeholders; and build capacity for co-created solutions to reduce the social barriers imposed by the tourism industry for travellers with disabilities.

2 STAKEHOLDER VOICE IN ACCESSIBLE TOURISM RESEARCH

For people living with disabilities, travel is an avenue for independence, meaning, quality of life, self-confidence and the ideal of equality (Darcy et al. 2011). Travel, generally, has been promoted as an opportunity to experience, develop relationships and engage with diverse others in our global communities. In effect, travel and tourism can 'accord every individual human being equal value on the basis of their potential for inner growth' (Leipoldt 2006: 23). People with disabilities have a right and desire to engage in tourism activities as part of their citizenship but are under-represented and largely ignored by the tourism sector (Gillovic/McIntosh 2015; Packer et al. 2007). There is also a common misconception by governments and the tourism industry that the access market is small and inconsequential (Darcy 1996). Despite these misconceptions, 'accessible tourism' (Darcy/Dickson 2009) has become a topic of increasing interest among tourism scholars to ensure tourism is inclusive.

Researchers from disability studies have identified the disability sector as a 'voiceless population', ignored both in terms of their health requirements and within wider debates around social change and public policies (Wolbring 2013: 93). Similarly, the experiences of people with disabilities have mostly been excluded from stakeholder collaboration for tourism development, especially with regard to collaborative decision-making and creative thinking for positive social outcomes. Despite many accessible tourism scholars attesting to the business as well as the social case to be derived from accessibility, the state of play around accessible tourism may be characterised by conflicts where tourism businesses fail to see the economic benefit of the access market (Cloquet et al. 2018; Gillovic/McIntosh 2015; Gillovic et al. 2018). In contrast to the business motive, access organisations have an overriding aim of social equity and inclusion. This conflict between business and social equity is noted in other aspects of the tourism industry, such as the interdependence between heritage and tourism (Aas et al. 2005). Of consequence, it is important to involve all stakeholders in collaborative thinking for tourism development, notably towards common goals around minimising the barriers and constraints people with disabilities face in participating in tourism.

In contrast to traditional research, working with stakeholders requires attention to shared decision-making and problem-solving, and needs to ensure that knowledge and social capital are developed for the wider community. Stakeholder participation can provide creative solutions and powerful benefits, all essential for social equity and ecological and cultural integrity. In this regard, Innes and Booher (2016) assert that the processes must 'hear everyone's voice' (Tippett/How 2020: 119) to consider the full range of views from diverse participants; be facilitated by a collaborative structure that allows listening, dialogue and equal chances to contribute; build on shared interests and shared confidence in information; and include tacit knowledge and credible wider information to enable joint reasoning to reach fair and inclusive conclusions. All this requires a flexible, innovative and transparent approach for encouraging a diversity of knowledge, developing learning capabilities and inclusion of diverse voices to identify priorities for social change (McCabe et al. 2012).

Creating these processes that encourage engagement and equal participation with stakeholders provides multiple benefits for all involved. Involving stakeholders throughout the processes, for instance, where they develop the priorities, results and solutions enhances their engagement, commitment and understanding around complex tourism issues (Dempsey 2010). More importantly, collaborative participation also allows stakeholders, who may previously have little to no interaction, to gain an understanding of each other's perspectives and lived experiences, and decreases any potential conflict between them, thus enhancing decision-making (Bramwell/Sharman 1999; Cockburn-Wootten et al. 2018). In addition, communication and coordination between various individuals, groups, and access and tourism organisations can be improved, all of which reduces mistrust, resistance to enhance 'sense-making' for effective social change outcomes (Minnaere et al. 2011). Thus, stakeholder involvement is crucial for tourism organisations as they may have limited knowledge about particular tourists, the changing context, such as the current COVID-19 situation and, crucially for this paper, access needs for tourists living with disabilities regarding their travel-related activities.

Generally, there still seems to be reluctance among scholars and practitioners to adopt authentic 'engagement as a dynamic multidimensional relational concept featuring psychological and behavioural attributes of connection, interaction, participation, and involvement, designed to achieve or elicit an outcome at individual, organization, or social levels' (Johnston/Taylor 2018: 2). To achieve this type of engagement, critical scholars argue, requires time and processes that develop 'commitment, confidence, trust, and a recognition that a complex society requires adaptive, flexible communication to build social capital' (Johnston/Taylor 2018: 14). Within this orientation, the researcher aims to adopt participatory frameworks and qualitative tools for decision-making that increase critical dialogue to overcome silences in stakeholder engagement where dominant voices may otherwise be prioritised (Alabbasi/Stelma 2018). Indeed, scholars have previously highlighted the problems of power, and issues of 'invisibility' or 'dominant' voices in tourism stakeholder collaborations (Aas et al. 2005; Tosun 2000; Wearing et al. 2010). The wider community research literature highlights effective methods from which to consider facilitation tools and processes to gain effective collaborative tourism stakeholder voice, learning and spaces for social change (Goodson/Phillimore 2012). These methods, they argue, should include ensuring stakeholders are heard and have the opportunity to develop their capacities to get involved in research. Typically, a diverse range of qualitative tools are used that open up dialogue, trust and commitment from all parties involved.

With this in mind, researchers, when considering tools that they might adopt in their study, first need to plan how these methods support, resource and build capabilities for the stakeholders. The methods adopted in community stakeholder projects generally need to ensure they facilitate processes for developing social capital, deliberation, trust, competencies, responses and self-efficacy (Graci 2013). Many of these projects will begin with an open workshop discussion process to set the parameters of the study, which identify key issues for further investigation. For example, Gómez and Sordé's research involved 'years of taking a proactive attitude which included promoting access to the university for Roma people' (2012: 27). Relationship development, trust and confidence building needed to occur with this community study before embarking on their research.

Once the stakeholders are ready to open up involvement for a diverse range of people, any methods employed cannot rely on one form of communication, such as written or oral (Guerin et al. 2018). Relying on written tools, particularly in English, does not enhance capacities of diversity in community work, as stakeholders have differing capabilities, skills, language, experiences, cultural knowledge and emotions. For instance, stories, collages, photos, artefacts, music, map-making, poems and other creative visual tools can be employed effectively within community stakeholder work. Cohen et al.'s (2018) research examining placemaking, for example, illustrated how various tools from arts, theatre, dance, social media, mapping the local environment, observations and benchmark surveys can be employed with stakeholders for social change to their environment.

Working within and with stakeholders requires a different mindset orientation. Traditional research methods tend to focus on and become organisational-centric. Instead, methodological planning, critical consideration of wider contextual relationships and critical reflective thinking are required before, during and in the dissemination phases. Early stakeholder involvement is essential as it creates trusting reciprocal relationships, develops authentic engagement for participation and values stakeholders' experiences. Tourism and community stakeholder research has identified that 'local community involvement, [with] ethically-driven stakeholders' (Nicolaides 2020: 11) is essential for enabling engagement and sustainable tourism change (Forenza 2017). That said, methods for tourism stakeholder engagement remain predominantly focused on traditional methods – for example surveys, interviews and focus groups – with little consideration of marginalised voices and co-creative relationships between sectors that would not normally have dialogue with each other.

3 THE STUDY

Using the Ketso tool, we facilitated a round-table discussion with stakeholders from the tourism and access sectors in Christchurch. As a toolkit, Ketso enables participants to consider, discuss and work together based on co-creational and inclusive practices. The method comes under participatory action social science research methods (Tippett et al. 2007; Tippett/How 2011). Our aim in the Ketso session was to foster a meaningful collaborative thinking process to enable the stakeholders to consider priorities and actions for making tourism more accessible for people with disabilities in the city and its wider region. Over 200 invitations were sent out to all publicly listed tourism and hospitality businesses in Christchurch and the wider region. However, in addition to access organisations and their networks, only eight participants participated in the session. The small sample size is unfortunately consistent with a previous

stakeholder study conducted in New Zealand (Gillovic/McIntosh 2015) and reflects the challenge of bringing disparate sectors together.

Participants included four access organisations (such as visual, physical and youth access not-for-profits), one representative from the City Council, two representatives from local tourist attractions, and one local resident. Confidentiality was discussed with all participants before and at the start of the workshop and, given the relatively small sector and population of New Zealand, potential identifying data has not been included (Stanfield/Beddoe 2016). Of note though is that the people who turned up at the workshop reflected those with 'stories to [share] of their lived experiences' (Creswell 2013: 155). The majority of the participants were arguably those already with a knowledge of, and purpose around, accessibility and tourism, and again representative of Gillovic and McIntosh's previous New Zealand study of interested stakeholders. Also of interest is the fact that the majority of tourism stakeholders present were from private businesses. Previous research has identified that those stakeholders within the private sector are most often under-represented in the tourism stakeholder planning process (Medeiros de Araujo/Bramwell 1999). However, this finding may confirm a general lack of perceived relevance among key tourism bodies around an agenda for accessible tourism (Gillovic/McIntosh 2015); indeed, on occasion, this was made explicit as a reason for not attending the workshop. The people who attended the session included individuals with a disability and those without; however this was not the focus for their involvement, and questions relating to individual disabilities were not mentioned unless participants raised the topic themselves.

The aim of the session was to engage participants in a collaborative thinking and dialogue process to consider priorities and actions for accessible tourism development in Christchurch. To achieve this aim, the Ketso toolkit was adopted for the session. This is a portable kit of reusable leaf shapes that can be written or drawn on by participants and placed and moved around on a table-top felt mat, and is run as a focus group style workshop that encourages participants' creativity. Each standard kit contains a large felt mat, grid mat, coloured plastic shapes ('leaves'), coloured felt strips ('branches'), water-soluble pens and a Ketso guide. Developed by Dr Joanne Tippett (2013), it is a qualitative method with collaborative, creative, co-transforming and experiential objectives. The kit can be used with all age groups as both drawing and writing are accommodated. For participants who are colour-blind, each 'leaf' colour is marked with the appropriate letter at the corner of the leaf shape, and the brown leaves have a border to make them easily identifiable.

The Ketso process allows all participants in the workshop to contribute equally and reduces the dominance of certain voices; it draws on philosophies from inclusive learning and systems thinking (see Tippett et al. 2007). Ketso enables each individual to contribute their ideas regarding the central question; then the group collaboratively discuss those ideas. They then collectively group the points thematically around key themes they have identified before finally agreeing areas for priority action. The collation of both individual ideas and group analysis into a visual action plan is one advantage of the Ketso tool. Through the exchange of ideas, the capacities and opportunities for stakeholder participants to question existing practices and assumptions are enhanced. For example, one access sector participant raised the idea of the continuous improvement opportunities of service delivery through moving from positions of 'requested, excited and expected'. She asked the other participants to imagine a place where customers no longer have to request an accessible experience

but are excited that it is happening already, and moving towards a world where accessibility is expected and becomes the norm.

The Ketso toolkit uses the analogy of a tree and associated physical shapes based on different coloured leaves, branches and a central trunk to encourage systematic but non-threatening communication in the planning process. The tree trunk presents the focus of the workshop – in this case 'planning for accessible tourism in Christchurch' (see Figure 1). The questions posed to participants represent an analogy of the growth of the tree using different colour codes. During the three-hour Ketso session, guided by the researchers as Ketso facilitators, the participants were asked to record what is currently happening around accessible tourism in Christchurch that is good and should be continued (writing on the brown leaves representing the soil). Then they were asked to consider what action they would like to see taken to move towards a plan for accessible tourism in Christchurch (writing on green leaves representing growth from the soil). Next, they were asked to consider what the barriers or main challenges are to achieving that plan (writing on grey leaves representing grey skies) and, finally, what bright ideas they would like to prioritise for the future (yellow leaves representing sunshine to encourage growth).

The questions guide the session and are asked one at a time. Participants are provided with a specified time to individually answer each question, writing their ideas on the relevant coloured leaf, which they then relay to the other participants, placing their leaf on a branch/theme that they think best represents their idea. Participants take turns to present one of their ideas at a time. They are then able to independently identify ideas which then become thematically grouped as sets of common ideas during the session. As the Ketso parts are moveable (attached with Velcro), ideas can flow, change and be developed as discussed. The questions and theming of ideas in the Ketso process facilitates valuable conversations around complex issues. For instance, one of the complex issues participants discussed was the need for more creative thinking, role modelling and celebration of pride in order to create positive change and remove social barriers within society. Key benefits of this method are the sharing of knowledge, exploration of ideas, issues for change and participants learning from each other. Importantly, the Ketso process enables participants to contribute their ideas in an egalitarian manner so that the voices of the shyer participants and the more dominant participants are heard equally.

The way that we typically work with Ketso is to allow the main themes (branches) to emerge from the workshop so that they are inductively co-created. This privileges participant voice and knowledge and prioritises their collaborative solution for the issue. We find that this does not then require subsequent separate researcher-led data analysis unless findings from several workshops need to be pulled together. In some versions of Ketso facilitators might decide to pre-set particular themes (branches) from already known or previously well-covered points as this helps focus and develop the facilitated discussions for the issue. Ketso can be held over several workshops with different participants who might be dispersed over a geographical area. There is also no need for note-taking, which can distract from the interaction, as the Ketso process culminates in a visual output. Photographs can copy the output and/or a toolkit proforma can be typed up to record the outcomes. The final visual output (see Figure 2) helps participants identify and 'see' complex relations; these are easily identifiable from the different coloured leaves, where good things are currently being done (that is, most brown leaves) and where there is good potential for new ideas (mostly green and yellow leaves). Participants can reflect on the output and add 'ticks' to further support certain actions or ideas, or indicate caution where further thinking may be required.

Figure 1 Focus of the Ketso workshop: planning for accessible tourism in Christchurch

Figure 2 Ketso workshop output

A final action planning mat can be used to record and prioritise the actions and who will lead them. The tool facilitates communication between the varied stakeholders to maximise the value of their contribution and achieve collective commitment to a priority action plan.

4 STUDY FINDINGS

Ketso clearly enabled critical conversations and dialogue to be shared, heard and learnt from with stakeholders who would not necessarily interact or know about each other's lived experiences. The toolkit enabled an enhanced 'understanding of the Other with no attempt to persuade or to achieve specific outcomes. The participants in dialogue are committed to a process of listening to each other with empathy and to making sincere efforts to understand each other as the sole goal of the conversation' (Toledano 2016: 282). The visual output of the Ketso session indicated that participants felt there was currently lots of positivity (represented by a cluster of green leaves) around awareness, and public understanding of access needs. The participants also determined there was an opportunity to make changes and move forward with an action plan for accessible tourism (represented by a cluster of brown leaves). Attention to the process of dialogue, communication, knowledge sharing and commitment between varied stakeholders is a benefit identified in the Ketso toolkit. Indeed, McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten (2016) argued that Ketso is a valuable tool for bringing stakeholders together to co-create initiatives to propose priority actions and solutions for social change.

Despite the low participation rate of stakeholders in the Ketso session, the visual output showed few other barriers to achieving an action plan for accessible tourism in Christchurch (represented by the lack of grey leaves). One of the objectives of the Ketso method, however, is to try to reduce a negative focus on barriers, instead seeking to facilitate creative thinking around possible processes and activities for social change. As such, participants are facilitated to think creatively about future solutions. The main barriers that were noted during the session included stakeholders' negative perceptions of the cost associated with meeting requirements for access needs, negative cultural reaction and lack of knowledge. These barriers are certainly common findings noted in previous accessible tourism studies (for example Darcy/Buhalis 2011).

Disability is generally regarded by scholars as socially constructed (Oliver 2013), so unsurprisingly, the findings of this research suggested there remains an important need to reduce these social barriers, especially those currently imposed by the tourism industry. To achieve this, we and other tourism scholars within the access field have argued that accessibility needs to be a fundamental part of the value chain among stakeholders (see for example Darcy/Buhalis 2011). Importantly, as an acknowledgement of the limited participation of stakeholders at the session, it was noted in the Ketso output that there is a priority need to garner wider buy-in from the tourism sector with coordination from the national level (represented by a cluster of yellow leaves). This is a conclusion echoed elsewhere (see Gillovic/McIntosh 2015). Specific ideas noted in discussion to raise awareness of accessibility included the need to showcase notable case study tourism businesses; to persuade tourism businesses to include people with disabilities in their advertising; and to try and generate a greater sense of pride among people with disabilities living in Christchurch. Certainly, raising awareness and championing the social and business case for accessible tourism are

also consistent findings of previous studies (Darcy et al. 2011; Gillovic/McIntosh 2015; Michopoulou et al. 2015).

In addition to the overall challenges, areas of potential growth and priorities for action to achieve accessible tourism in Christchurch, the Ketso output revealed seven specific themes (represented by the branches) that emerged from the session: *communication, awareness but still no understanding, innovation, celebration, quality, action* and *return on investment* (*ROI) of accessible tourism* (see Figure 1). The Ketso process engaged participants in revealing the most prominent themes.

4.1 Communication

Communication was seen as an important means to improve public awareness and education around accessibility. One action identified was to encourage the inclusion of people with disabilities, for example in tourism advertising campaigns. A caveat to this was that people with disabilities should not be used as inspirational models in public media campaigns, but rather as a feature of inclusion and a true portrayal of everyone who travels. Also identified was the need to more effectively communicate information about accessible facilities to people with access needs. Communication also related to the need for an accessible tourism plan to involve collaborative efforts from a team of people, and creative open minds. In terms of existing communication, it was felt that Christchurch stakeholders supported a climate for growing momentum for accessible tourism, not just alongside the physical rebuild after the earthquakes but also from increased interest and understanding of access needs. Participants wished for greater communication of the nature, scope and opportunities of accessible tourism, accompanied by 'a move from awareness to consciousness and passion'. Whilst the participants noted that there had been increased interest and consideration of accessibility, they also recognised that overseas countries were much further ahead in their innovation.

4.2 Awareness but still no understanding

Participants commonly felt there was a general theme of awareness but still no understanding. This referred to awareness of international trends and interest in accessible tourism, anti-discrimination and accessibility legislation requirements, and a general increase in awareness of diverse access needs. There was also recognition of the opportunity for innovation amid increased awareness of accessibility in the climate of many new hotels and restaurants being built, and events coming to Christchurch since the earthquake. Also included in their comments was their perception that (access) website standards had improved and that, generally, they felt that people were having a lot more conversations about 'access' needs rather than 'disabilities', and hence a changing language of accessibility at a time that was perhaps more favourable to change. Indeed, the importance of the language of accessibility has been previously advocated (see Gillovic et al. 2018). In the same vein, a barrier from the lack of knowledge sharing about accessibility was reported as well as the perceived fear of access needs 'costing too much' to implement. Indeed, the tourism industry's disengagement with the access traveller is said to be largely psychological (Darcy/Daruwalla 1999). Participants therefore reported the need for innovation and a move towards action rather than a mere focus on strategy. Here it was noted that New Zealand's legislation is not enforceable, which is problematic for achieving such changes. Likewise, Stumbo and Pegg (2005) as well as Gillovic and

McIntosh (2015) have commented that 'reactive' legislation, outdated policies, rules and regulations are ineffective drivers of accessible tourism and in need of amendment.

4.3 Innovation

The theme of innovation emerged from participants' comments around initiatives that were already appearing around the city. For example, one participant reported the increasing use of technology for achieving access, and the changes enacted by the New Zealand Government regarding website standards. One participant noted the increased focus on accessible arts in the city. A further example was other city attractions which were rebuilding with a focus on accessibility. Despite the historical focus on reaction and a 'too hard to fix' culture, participants noted an opportunity for a national call to action driven by the government so that the campaign could be coordinated. It was stated that the campaign needed to show people they can cater for different needs and that accessible facilities can look 'cool', to diminish the perceptual barrier that accessibility is not aesthetically pleasing. Indeed, the significance of 'creativity' has been emphasised elsewhere for accessible tourism in New Zealand (see Gillovic/McIntosh 2015). As an incentive to tourism businesses to take action, it was stated that businesses needed to be presented with statistics around the value of the accessible tourism dollar so that they might be more inclined to participate/innovate. This economic motivation is a suggestion made elsewhere in the wider literature on accessible tourism (Darcy et al. 2011; Gillovic/McIntosh 2015; Shaw et al. 2005). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, such statistics are not available in New Zealand, although anecdotal evidence is reported (Rhodda 2012).

4.4 Celebration

Building on the theme of innovation, participants noted that the theme of celebration supported their views around the need for a video on accessible tourism to build positive momentum following already notable events – such as the FIFA World Cup and new accessible restaurant developments – and as a mechanism to continue to stimulate positive conversations and improve education around inclusion. Four future priorities were reported on this theme: (1) the important need for 'pride' among local people with disabilities; (2) the need to lead by example, to empower local people to champion change themselves and thereby encourage New Zealand tourism to be more inclusive and accessible; (3) the hope that people with disabilities will participate in tourism; and (4) to 'model excellent design *and* tell the world' – to mentor and lead in issues of accessibility given the opportunity to rebuild the city. There were no barriers recorded by the participants to achieving these desired outcomes.

4.5 Quality

The theme of quality related to participants' expressed desire for pride in that what was being delivered in Christchurch would make a difference for the future. It was noted that improvement to services should be requested; that is, people need to request/ask, else there will be no change; services should be exciting, and 'owned' by individuals in organisations. As one participant noted, 'Great access is for everyone. Businesses need to know that they can enhance their opportunity by broadening access.' Another participant commented, 'Everyone is a brand ambassador for

Christchurch regardless of whether or not they have [special] needs.' Participants noted that everyone needs to be made aware of their vested interest in accessibility; for example, for public transport to continue to be more accessible. For businesses, this also meant the need for tools to help them improve their access provision and overcome their perception that it is 'too hard'.

4.6 Action

The sixth theme was that of action, whereby awareness around accessibility needs to move to traction. Here, the challenge of existing silos and no apparent coordinated approach were reported as reasons for stalled progress. The good traction made with some existing tourism businesses needed to be role-modelled to showcase success, and a coordinated approach facilitated by government and across the industry. Discussion was held around the need for supporting legislation, increased understanding of the opportunity afforded in Christchurch due to the rebuild, and possible incentives. This finding is echoed elsewhere, where industry complacency and non-responsiveness, as well as lack of connectivity of organisations in particular, means access needs remain unserved; yet small and significant achievements need to be showcased to build upon actions that are easy to implement (see for example Gillovic/McIntosh 2015). Likewise, it is generally advocated that action comes from leadership 'at the top' (Darcy/Dickson 2009; Gillovic/McIntosh 2015). The finding therefore supports the conclusion of Aas et al. (2005) that clear direction and someone responsible for driving the issue forward are paramount. Hence, the participants argued for a national call to action supported by government.

4.7 ROI of accessible tourism

Underlying much of the discussion during the Ketso session was the identified need to garner greater support of the tourism industry via a focus on the possible return on investment. This theme stood alone as recognition of the need to promote the business case for accessible tourism to increase business interest and uptake in the access tourism market; that it is good for business and good for everybody. Indeed, this is a conclusion drawn in previous research (see Darcy et al. 2011). Participants noted the need for public and private incentives to support this.

5 REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF KETSO

Our study illustrates the co-construction of knowledge developed through communication, relationships and collaboration between stakeholders, moving beyond the confines of more traditional methods, such as stakeholder interviews. Stakeholder engagement and inclusive methods need to include tools that enhance dialogue, understandings, knowledge, learning and capabilities. As Taylor and Kent (2014: 384) note, engagement includes dialogue and methods that enable 'organizations and publics [to] make decisions that create social capital. Engagement is both an orientation that influences interactions and the approach that guides the process of interactions among groups.' For community stakeholder relations, gaining engagement is a desirable strategy. Yet, researchers have highlighted that for many organisations the term has not been properly implemented (Johnston/Taylor 2018). Jelen-Sanchez (2017) laments the fact that engagement has come to mean any and all forms

of stakeholder interaction. The reality is that this creates challenges and does not engender authentic engagement for the parties (Johnston/Taylor 2018). As such, many stakeholders struggle to achieve effective engagement as the methods and processes required take time. This orientation also requires collaborative, safe spaces for thinking, learning, reflection and action, all of which aim to build knowledge, shared understandings, skills and outcomes. Any methods implemented in these types of projects for stakeholder engagement need to critically consider resources and support to enable stakeholders to participate.

Ketso encourages effective engagement through the participation and involvement of diverse stakeholders in a process designed to develop agreed social change outcomes. The participants commented during the Ketso workshop that they wanted the opportunity to be involved, but they agreed that there was an apparent wider 'lack of courage to have the conversation'. One participant commented, 'We've got to meet that need and engage in the way we need to.' Using Ketso enabled these engagement processes to occur and a diversity of voices as well as expertise to be heard in order to co-create a plan for accessible tourism. Crucially, the workshop and the use of Ketso allowed stakeholders who would not normally meet in their everyday work to interact, to hear and listen to each other's perspective on the issue. Ketso facilitated dialogue that was effective for breaking down those silos between stakeholder participants from the tourism and access sectors. This collaborative dialogue enabled stakeholders from the different sectors to gain awareness and new learning as a result of interacting and working through critical issues facing the sectors toward the common goal of planning for accessible tourism. Helpful in this dialogue was authentic discussion wherein assumptions can be identified and suspended; understanding is built from listening, observing and hearing each other's perspectives. It fosters relationship building to gain trust for stakeholders to challenge and reconsider existing practices.

However, like much tourism planning and development, greater consideration needs to be given to achieving these trusting working relationships, inclusive communication processes and collaboration with all stakeholders. Our knowledge around the community context was derived from our existing networks, external sources, and we relied on information from social media and other lists in order to contact people. As with all authentic engagement approaches, for us the time spent developing these networks within the community was an issue. Convincing the tourism sector of the agenda for accessibility was also an issue, and this limited who turned up to participate, with only eight stakeholders out of 200 agreeing to attend our planning session. The other key inherent challenge for projects like ours is bringing all stakeholders together in the same place at the same time. This is likely to be challenging within a complex and diverse system such as tourism. In addition, as a standard Ketso toolkit can only accommodate up to 24 participants, multiple kits may be required in research involving larger groups.

Despite these limitations, there are several benefits of using a communication dialogic perspective that is inherent in the Ketso tool and processes. Importantly, the successful application of the Ketso toolkit in this study removed the fundamental challenge in stakeholder theory and processes (such as stakeholder focus groups), namely the removal of power imbalances towards creative collaborative thinking (Jelen-Sanchez 2017; Johnston/Taylor 2018). As a tool it facilitates stakeholders to creatively understand the invisible aspects in their sector and begins to orientate them towards transformation. It achieves this by letting them hear about other people's perspectives, knowledge and experiences. It also highlights what works well, which allows the stakeholders to analyse why these things work well and how they could be

enhanced in other practices. Finally, many researchers have noted increased expectations driven by stakeholders for businesses to engage and allow dialogue to occur. On the other hand, many businesses have increasingly felt the need to enhance and legitimise their practices by encouraging stakeholder communication, especially with sectors they may have ignored or previously not engaged with due to activism against the organisation (Burchell/Cook 2013). Ketso allows these interactions to take place and, importantly, transformation through discussion as stakeholders move towards agreed interventions and bridge the gap between business and civic society needs.

For more powerful stakeholders, Ketso discussions make the invisible, taken-for-granted absences and assumptions in these stakeholders' worldviews obvious, and open up opportunities for changes to the tourism system. For instance, the business stakeholders had held the assumption that accessibility was too expensive; yet through meeting, hearing and direct discussion with stakeholders they were informed of non-expensive changes they could make to their organisations. The social constructionist ontological framing behind the tool enables participants to identify what is invisible or silent, and helps us 'see openings, to provide a space of freedom and possibility' (Gibson-Graham 2008: 619). It facilitates a broader analysis for participants to consider their everyday assumptions, taken-for-granted and common-sense discourses and practices. The paradigm examines how ideas of truth, fact and labelling, along with wider policies, discourses and conflicts, have shaped certain issues, understandings and assumptions (Jacobs/Manzi 2000). Time, context and place, as well as language, symbols, discourses and communication, are central to this paradigm as they construct our ways of being and practice (Burr 2015; Miller 2017). Importantly, within this perspective, once these discourses have been illuminated, we have agency to make changes and consider alternative just and equitable ways of being in our communities.

Indeed, Tippett and How (2020) affirm that Ketso emphasises this perspective through the three pillars of effective co-production processes: 'hear everyone's voice', 'structure effective thinking and creativity' and 'link information across time and place'. As such, the Ketso tool directs attention to who is involved and how, the efficacy of thinking and creative processes, and the flow of information and feedback for future solutions. By coming together and participating in a Ketso session, the stakeholders were able to think about ethical choices for possibilities to occur around inclusive, accessible tourism solutions and spaces so that the barriers and constraints for people with disabilities could be overcome. These discussions allowed stakeholders the opportunity to think, create and consider future solutions without the assumptions or limitations of the past, or the dominant voices of the prominent few.

This study therefore has provided some illustration of how reframing participatory approaches to draw on epistemologies from community participatory research enables stakeholders to creatively conceptualise complex issues and determine actions for change. The ontological perspective behind the Ketso tool reframes relationships, power and expertise for all stakeholders. For stakeholders from communities and businesses, this tool recognises that by bringing different groups together they provide a 'constitutive role … to bring new worlds into being' (Gibson-Graham 2008: 614). By coming together for the Ketso session, stakeholders shared tacit knowledge and co-created a priority action plan alongside stakeholders with direct experience of the accessibility issue. That said, neither the tourism businesses nor the access organisations present in this research felt responsible for taking the first step in moving forward with the accessible tourism plan, instead proposing top-down leadership – despite evidence that establishing communication can be taken as a successful first

step. As such, stakeholder collaboration is still not straightforward and remains fraught with difficulty regardless of the method adopted. A further key challenge for anyone adopting community stakeholder orientated tools is how to sustain momentum. That said, the shared dialogue, understandings and inclusion generated through the Ketso process were vital for the otherwise marginalised voice of tourism stakeholders; those who understand access needs for the sector.

Our discussion with participants underlined that, for those living with disabilities, the Ketso process enabled their voice to be heard, empowered and included in the co-creation process. Compared to other methods we have used (such as interviews), we found that Ketso reduces the dominance of organisational and researcher voices, while learning capabilities and social impact interventions are enhanced (McIntosh/Cockburn-Wootten 2016; 2019). Including dialogic communication processes that allow an orientation towards equal stakeholder participation can lead to multiple benefits for both businesses and stakeholders. This appears to be a significant benefit of the Ketso method over more traditional methods, such as focus groups and interviews or surveys. It is also particularly useful as a visual, colourful and structured method to think through ideas, also building self-confidence. In addition, the Ketso tool accommodates differing abilities – for example, colour blindness, illiteracy – and different ages and knowledge levels, and we found that all the stakeholders enjoyed their participation. If we had one limiting observation about the kit in terms of accessibility, it would be the relatively small size of the leaves, which proved difficult for a participant with impaired hand mobility. For future research it is worth noting that Ketso materials are also available in Russian, French and Spanish. A remote version of the tool, Ketso Connect, is also being developed, which will enable further accessibility for co-creative planning.

6 CONCLUSION

It is certainly clear that stakeholder participation and collaboration are crucial for developing accessible tourism solutions (Michopoulou et al. 2015), as well as barrier-free public spaces in general (Hine/Mitchell 2001). The challenge for achieving this stakeholder involvement is developing an approach that privileges critical dialogic communication processes, time, resources and relationships. There has been little consideration in tourism of how to instigate co-creative participatory tools for authentic stakeholder engagement for social change. In addition, there has been a reliance on traditional methods that can reduce stakeholder voice and inclusion. Critical dialogue theory has been instrumental in Ketso, and successfully applied in broader research sectors such as sustainability, health and community development issues (Burchell/Cook 2013; Cockburn-Wootten et al. 2018; Dempsey 2010; Toledano 2016). Drawing on our study involving tourism and access sector stakeholders, this paper provides critical reflections on the potential of Ketso as a qualitative method for tourism scholars. It used Ketso to examine collaborative and creative thinking for accessible tourism in the case study destination of Christchurch, New Zealand. We found Ketso to have potential for researchers who want to enhance engagement with an inclusive qualitative research tool that draws on critical dialogic communication compared to less co-creative methods such as interviews and focus groups.

Overall, our analysis revealed how Ketso enabled inclusive collaboration for individuals as well as stakeholder voices to engender both tacit and wider community stakeholder knowledge for co-created accessible tourism development. We have

discussed the benefits of adopting Ketso for stakeholder dialogues for organisations, businesses and communities. We have argued how this method re-orientates mindsets and processes to cultivate more inclusive relationships and closer engagement between stakeholders who might not otherwise engage in dialogue. In other practical learnings from our study, we have illustrated that time and relationships are crucial for social change engagement. This develops trust and willingness to get involved, overcomes gatekeepers and identifies 'champions' who are enthusiastic about the method and project. Practitioners and academics can use Ketso to hear about and acknowledge stakeholder experiences, develop learning capacities and clearly ascertain agreed expectations of what will be done or changed in the project.

To gain social change outcomes, learning, relationships, time, inclusive decision-making processes and reciprocal communication are all essential. All of this work creates opportunities for learning and creative outcomes between stakeholders who otherwise would share little interaction or dialogue. Crucially, where social barriers imposed by the tourism industry exist for people with disabilities, Ketso discussions can reveal the absences and assumptions of the dominant stakeholders and open up agency for change in the tourism system. Important consideration of absences and gaps in stakeholder knowledge, and the nature of power and dialogue in stakeholder communication, are thus notable benefits of the Ketso tool for achieving a foundation for more inclusive and accessible tourism.

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