

# Chapter 11

## Key Factors in the Development of Tourism– Led Local Innovative Heritage Entrepreneurship in the South Wales Valleys

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter investigates key factors in the development of tourism-led local innovative heritage entrepreneurship in the South Wales Valleys. It is concerned with opportunities to develop industrial heritage tourism enterprises in the South Wales Valleys, with special reference to Merthyr Tydfil. The analysis involved key partners across community and voluntary sectors, local authorities, funding and tourism bodies under the auspices of the Welsh Government. The research reported on eight case study structured interviews and collated data to investigate, in combination with contemporary literature, key factors including network capital to achieve a sustainable regeneration scheme for innovative heritage entrepreneurship development.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7721-8.ch011

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is a further study to previous investigations of heritage development (Powell et al., 2010, 2011) with the aim to investigate key factors in the development of tourism-led local innovative heritage entrepreneurship in the South Wales Valleys. It is particularly concerned with the key factors and opportunities to develop industrial heritage tourism enterprises in the South Wales Valleys, with special reference to Merthyr Tydfil. The research analysis involved several key partners from across community and voluntary sectors, local authorities funding and tourism bodies under the auspices of the Welsh Government. The research reported on eight case study structured interviews and collated data to investigate, in combination with contemporary literature, the key factors to achieve a sustainable regeneration scheme for innovative heritage entrepreneurship development. By focusing on relevant case studies it is possible to shed light on local entrepreneurship in peripheral areas, such as the South Wales Valleys, in relation to tourism. Key factors are funding challenges, cohesion of the community, a strategic approach and network capital in the form of networking and partnerships. Analysis shows growing significance of non-environmental sustainable development and socio-economic regeneration. Through analysis of key factors the importance of innovation and heritage entrepreneurship development has become apparent. This proves they are inseparable due to the need to work together to provide a sustainable approach for regeneration to work effectively in the long-term. A strategic approach is essential as a sustainable way forward to develop heritage tourism enterprises for future generations. The South Wales Valleys area is relatively distanced from the urban industrial hub of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea which provide essential resources and services. As a result the Valleys suffer from marginalisation although they benefit from a broad range of social, cultural and environmental resources. The investigation of the key factors involved in local entrepreneurship and tourism development considered policies and practices in fostering local development exhibiting dichotomies such as innovation versus tradition.

The research undertaken into the key factors in the development of tourism-led local innovative heritage entrepreneurship in the South Wales Valleys has considered extant sources including background literature in the area, sustainable entrepreneurship development and policy in Wales, sustainable heritage entrepreneurship development in the South Wales Valleys and sustainable heritage entrepreneurship development in Merthyr Tydfil. A study of Wales reported that 64% of the country is reliant on grant aid and it was argued that for Wales to be successful and enterprising it cannot depend on continuous grant aid, especially in the current economic climate (Williams, 2009) and post Brexit. As well as business and enterprise in general this is of particular concern to tourism in Wales. A research methodology has been

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