

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT POLICY VERSUS PRACTICE IN GHANA: THE CASE OF LAKE BOSOMTWE BASIN

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Abstract

The Ghana Tourism Development Policy of 2006 was developed as the basis for accelerated tourism development in the country. The policy's objective is to provide high-quality visitor experiences that are profitable to destinations stakeholders while ensuring that the destinations are not compromised in terms of their environmental, social, and cultural integrity. This study investigates whether tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin is proceeding in accord with the tenets of the policy. The evidence shows that there is a wide gap between policy and practice. Tourism development is ad hoc, haphazard and seemingly unsustainable. Tourism activities have weak linkages to other sectors of the local economy. Water, drainage and sewer systems of established tourism facilities have not been streamlined into respective receptacles nor integrated into local community systems, resulting in improper disposal of wastes. Despite these shortcomings there are benefits such as increased tourist arrivals; new income generating activities; creation of jobs; development of local infrastructure; and diversification of agriculture. The conclusion is that if tourism (unlike primary exports promotion; and industrialization) is to succeed as a development option for Ghana, planning, developing and regulating the sector (presently largely ad hoc and exclusionary) should be controlled and should include destination communities.

Keywords: Ghana, Gaps; tourism policy and practice, conflict of values, uncontrolled tourism development, elitist and exclusionary decision-making

Introduction

Tourism is the fastest growing sector of the world's economy and although it contracted in the 2000s due to security threats and the HINI influenza virus, international tourist arrivals outstripped the 1 billion tourists target globally for the first time in history in 2012 (UNWTO, 2013). Receipts from international tourism increased as well to US\$1.03 trillion (€740

billion) in 2011, corresponding to an increase in real terms of 3.8 percent from 2010 (UNWTO 2013). Africa's share of the growth has been impressive with some 44 million and 52 million international tourist arrivals being made to, or within, Africa in 2007 and 2012 respectively (Okech, 2010; UNTWO, 2013). With the current rapid growth, tourism in the near future is expected to become the most promising sub-sector of the world's economy and the largest item in terms of value of international trade. Tourism development has been advanced as a policy alternative particularly for developing countries to aid economic growth. The arguments for this view are: first, the demand for international travel continues to grow in developed countries; second, as incomes in developed countries rise the income elasticity of demand for international travel means it will increase at a faster rate; and third, developing nations need foreign exchange earnings to aid economic development to satisfy the rising expectations of their growing populations (Robert and Alastair, 1992).

Sub-Sahara Africa seems to have three development pathways: diversifying from over reliance on primary exports from agriculture and mining; embarking on industrialization as a strategy for achieving accelerated and sustained economic growth; and promoting tourism because of the existence of an overseas demand for it (Dieke, 2001). The former two options have been tried out in the past with disappointing outcomes for the majority of the people of Africa. Today, Africa is strangulating under endemic economic stagnation that has led to grinding poverty, mounting international debt burden, fiscal deficits, rising inflation levels and declining economic growth (Okech, 2010). As a way of alleviating Africa's precarious circumstances, some observers have prescribed the promotion of tourism as a promising strategy to compel broad-based development (Dieke, 2000).

The promotion of tourism among others, generates foreign exchange earnings, creates jobs, develops socio-economic infrastructure, and expands government revenues for the destination country (Ghana Government 2006; Okech, 2010). A growing literature argues for tourism as a means of export diversification aimed at reducing dependence on unstable exports (Ayeni and Ebohon, 2012; Blake *et al*, 2008; Mbaiwa, 2003) In fact, there are many cases where tourism constitutes the principal foreign exchange earner. Examples are Kenya, Morocco, Egypt, Costa Rica, and the city state of Monaco (Tosun and Jenkins, 1996; World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011). In Namibia, for example, tourism generates about 6 percent of the gross domestic product, which is the same share as agriculture (Namibia Government n.d) whereas in Kenya, tourism contribution to gross domestic product is 11 percent (Sindiga, 1999; Okech, 2010).

Despite the benefits, adverse consequences can attend tourism development. In recent years, tourism has tended to be a delivery vehicle for

some of the darker effects of globalization: health pandemics and terrorism. International travelers enabled the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome and swine flu to spread rapidly across borders. And holiday destinations, tragically, have become a popular target for terrorists, who want to maximize casualties and publicity for their actions – attacks in Bali, Mumbai, and Sham el –Sheik, Mombasa and Casablanca are examples (United States Institute of Peace, 2009). Some scholars charge that because tourism is often controlled by foreign private interests, it has weak potential to contribute to poverty elimination in the Third World. Tourism is also noted for high levels of revenue leakage, and of the revenue that is retained in the destination country, much is captured by those in the rich or middle income bracket – not the poor (Okech, 2010; Roe and Khanya, 2002). Tourists may alter domestic consumption patterns through the demonstration effect and this can be inflationary (Must, 2010; Sinclair, 1998). Land acquisition for tourism construction has repercussions on the domestic distribution of wealth, while tourism expansion may deplete the country's natural resources (Akyepong, 2008; Mbaiwa, 2003; Sinclair, 1998). Tourism development also results in environmental, social and cultural degradation as well as the lost of the spirit of place/ambience at many tourist destinations (Must, 2010).

Ghana has also had her fair share of tourist arrivals, tourism benefits and costs. In 1996 tourist arrivals in Ghana reached 304,840, that is, more than thrice the level attained in 1986. In 2008 tourist arrivals stood at 698,069 with a corresponding US\$1.4 billion in tourism receipts (Ghana Government 1996). Within Ghana's external trade performance context, tourism's contribution during the 1990s and 2000s is remarkable. Tourist arrivals jumped to 1.08 million in 2011, resulting in US\$2.17 billion accrued tourism receipts (Ghana Tourist Authority 2011). The estimated trade shares indicated that tourism's share increased to about 19 percent in 1993 and 1994 of total trade in terms of gross tourism receipts (Ghana Government 1996). The contribution of tourism to gross domestic product has grown from 1.3 percent in 1990 to 3.5 percent in 1994 and then to 7.8 percent in 2012 (Bank of Ghana 2007; Ghana Tourist Authority 2012; Government of Ghana 1996). Tourism provided about 19,000 direct jobs and 46,000 indirect jobs in 1996. These figures rose to about 47,000 and 115,000 respectively in 2004 and then to 206,091 in 2007 and then jumped to 330,514 in 2011 (Ghana Tourist Authority, u.d). These indicators imply that tourism related jobs have more than doubled in less than ten years.

However, placed in close juxtaposition with the world in general and Africa in particular, it can be seen that despite numerous gains from tourism, Ghana has only been sweeping the crumbs of this "colossal global cake". In 1979 out of 5.3 million tourists welcomed by Africa, Ghana welcomed only

37,429 tourists. In 2007 out of 44 million tourist arrivals in Africa, Ghana's share was only 587,000 (Okech, 2010; Ghana Government, 1996). In terms of tourism receipts, Ghana's earnings are dismal compared to major destinations in Africa. For example, in 2006 South Africa's tourism receipts totaled US\$ 8,967 million, Egypt's figure was US\$8,133 million and Morocco's sum stood at US\$6,899 million, with Ghana earning only US\$ 910 million (UNWTO 2007). It is now known that 1 in 15 jobs worldwide depend on the travel industry whilst in Ghana 330,514 people were directly and indirectly employed in tourism related industries in 2011 (Ghana Tourist Authority, 2011). In other words, about 1 in 1000 jobs depends on the travel industry in Ghana today, which is a negligible ratio compared to the world's ratio. Very modest impact has been made by tourism to the development of Ghana's economy. The sector contributed only 7 percent to the country's gross domestic product in 2012 (Bank of Ghana 2007)). Whilst in other Third World countries like Cape Verde, Namibia, Mauritius and the Gambia tourism contributed 43.4 percent, 20.3 percent, 12.6 percent and 12.6 percent to GDP respectively (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012).

To exploit the untapped tourism potential of Ghana successive governments have introduced a number of initiatives such as the Ghana Vision 2020- which envision Ghana as a middle income country like Malaysia and Singapore by the year 2020. The document provided the basis for the formulation of a 15-year National Tourism Development Plan (1996 to 2010). The plan serves as the policy and planning framework for national level decision-making and the preparation of more specific plans at the regional and community levels (Asiedu, 2008; Ghana Government, 1996).

The policy envisages tourism as a means of development in the wider sense. Some scholars describe the broader sense of development that tourism can leverage as the potential of the industry to have a direct socio-economic impact on destination regions (see for example, Cooper *et al*, 1998; Sharpley, 2000). Binns (1995) and Todaro and Smith (2003) are more pointed on this issue when they assert that development should not only refer to economic matters but should embrace social, economic, environmental and ethical considerations such that its management may include indicators of poverty, unemployment, inequality and self-reliance. Carter (1991) argues that there is a cumulative relationship between tourism development, the environment and socio-economic development. This implies if tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, then it should be economically viable, ecologically sensitive and culturally appropriate (Wall, 1997, Mbaiwa, 2003). This hints that an economic project like tourism should be predicated on the notion that economic development should align with the concept of sustainable development. The essential tenets of this concept are that of intergenerational and intra-generational equity, which opine that our development is

sustainable only to the extent that we can meet our needs today without compromising those of future generation. It also means the distribution of costs and benefits from the development process among the current generation of stakeholders should be fair and not skewed disproportionately in favor of those who wield power and influence. Thus, the present generation should leave for the next generation, a stock of quality of life assets no less than those we have inherited (Sharply, 2000). Good planning, policy design and implementation are supposed to translate the sustainable development notion as outlined above into practice. However, critics charge that the concept of sustainable development seems to be the jargon of managers, and is not yet, the vocabulary of the managed (Chambers, 1989; Sharpley, 2000). And that the ad hoc planning or lack thereof, as well as the elitist and exclusionary policy making processes particularly in developing countries, have not only produced haphazard development but have also marginalized important stakeholders, particularly poor locals in destination communities. Consequently, in many parts of the world, the increasing numbers of poor people has inexorably culminated in the degradation of the environment because of their desperate quest on a daily basis just to make ends meet (Mbaiwa, 2003). This implies the development of tourism in settings like those of the Lake Bosomtwe basin should be designed such that it does not lead to haphazard development and an environmental trade-off but an improved environmental and human welfare. It must give priority to the livelihoods of the poor.

The aim of this study is to determine whether tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin has proceeded in accord with the tenets of the Ghana Tourism Development Policy of 2006. Specifically the paper investigates whether tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin is economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable.

Methodology

The empirical basis of this study is primary and secondary data. The primary information was sourced from tourists, local residents of the lake Bosomtwe basin, local government officials as well as the Ghana Tourist Authority (GTA) and tourism business operators. A multi-stage sampling technique was used; the first stage involved the use of the purposive sampling method to select five of the 22 communities in the lake basin. The five communities which are namely Abonu, Amokom, Adwarfo, Obo and Pipie were selected because they are the most accessible, their tourism infrastructure and facilities are better developed and tourist visits are almost entirely to these communities and tourism activities are much more intense than in the other settlements. The remaining 17 communities are not accessible by road and hardly do tourists visit these settlements. Thus the

selected communities provide the most suitable locations for assessing the match between tourism policy and practice in the Lake Bosomtwe basin.

The second stage entailed the proportional allocation of 180 respondents (sample size of resident population) among the five selected communities – Abonu (52), Amokon (37), Adwarfo (38), Obo (32), Pipie (21). In the third step, the random sampling method was applied to choose the required stratified sample size for each settlement. A list of households generated by the Ghana Statistical Service was used as the sampling frame for the selection of households in the communities. In addition, 10 elite interviews were conducted with functionaries of local governments in whose jurisdictions the lake basin is located – Bosomtwe District Assembly (BDA) and Amanse East District Assembly (AEDA). As well structured dialogue with 10 tourism business managers were conducted. Responses from the different stakeholders enable a well informed and broad perspective on tourism development prospects and challenges in the lake basin to be formed.

Tourism in the developing world

The global tourism sector is currently dominated by industrialized countries from which most of the world's tourism flow originates (Berno and Bricker 2001). Developing countries currently have only a minority share of the international tourism market – approximately 30 percent but it is growing (Roe and Khanya 2002). International tourist arrivals in developing countries have grown by an average of 9.5 percent annually since 1990, compared to 4.6 percent worldwide (Roe and Khanya 2002). The tourism industry contributes significantly to the economies of Third World countries, especially in terms of foreign exchange earnings, employment and GDP. Tourism is a principal export for developing countries; tourism is growing rapidly and it is the most significant source of foreign exchange after petroleum (WTO, 2002). Tourism is a principal export for 83 percent of developing countries and it is the principal export in one third of them. Forty two percent of all international travel takes place to the vast number of today's developing countries. Between 1990-2000, the growth rate of international travel to developing countries was 94.4 percent compared to approximately 34 percent to developed countries (WTO, 2002). Eighty percent of the world is poor, those living on less than \$US 1 per day, live in 12 countries. In 11 of these countries, tourism is significant (greater than 2 percent of GDP or 5 percent of exports) and growing (WTO, 2002). Tourism is also identified as the only major service sector in which developing countries have consistently recorded trade surpluses relative to the rest of the world (Neto, 2003).

Some writers argue that, besides its economic contribution, tourism can lead to ecologically and socially sustainable development (Amuquandoh, 2009)). It is suggested that tourism can act as a catalyst for conservation and environmental protection because: it is generally non-consumptive and has less impact on natural resources than most other industries; it is based on the appreciation of natural and cultural assets and has greater motivation to protect its resource base; and it can provide valuable revenue and economic incentive to conserve resources which would otherwise be used in more damaging activities (Doswell, 1997). Socially, tourism is credited for its potential impact on employment; income redistribution and poverty alleviation; contribution to native craft revival, festivals and traditions; and improvements to the physical and social infrastructure, enhancing overall health and social welfare (Mbaiwa2003).

Skepticism surrounds tourism as a development option for Third World countries. The sources of the cynicism are: the fundamental principles of sustainable development cannot be easily transposed onto the sector thereat; there is doubt about the perceived multiplier effect and the uneven distribution of benefits; very little of tourism revenue actually remains in the local economy because of “leakages” (average is 40 to 50 percent of earnings); tourism components are dominated by players in the developed world; foreigners own tourism within the destination country; socio-economic inequities are exacerbated by existing patterns in the tourism destinations; and employment opportunities promised by tourism have not been realized in many developing countries (Gossling 2003; McLaren, 2003; Sharpley, 2000).

Public policy making in Africa

A policy is a set of decisions or courses of action deliberately taken by a person, group, or government concerning the methods of accomplishing some purposive or goal within a specified situation (Anderson 2006). Public policy should ideally aim at serving the interest of the generality of the population rather than sectional interest and should do so by the best possible means.

Smith (1973) suggests that it is the context within which policies are designed and implemented which is of critical importance. Most good policy formulation requires considerable research and inputs from those who are affected by it and who are implementing it at the grassroots or impact level (Elliot, 1997: 101). Contact and awareness are vital for the efficient management of policy development and implementation. This is particularly true in tourism because of its diversity within the private and public sector (Dodds and Butler, 2010: 37). Lickorish (1991) and Krippendorf (1982) argue that a more integrated role is required for tourism policy. Other

scholars (Sharpley, 2000; Briassoulis, 2002) are, saying that the key to successful policy design and implementation is in eliciting local participation. Pridham (1999) proffers that there has been a problem with tourism as a policy priority for several reasons, including ambiguity or irrelevance of higher level policies to local levels. For this reason, local involvement is fundamental to the planning and management of destinations (Ryan, 2002). A similar view is offered by Jackson and Morpeth (1999: 37) when they assert that local involvement is critical and that 'local government needs to articulate the concept of community empowerment'. The thrust of policies at the international and national levels will alter as they are reinterpreted and implemented at a local level and each country or destination should hammer out a workable definition for sustainable tourism development in order that a bottom-up and top-down consensus approach can be achieved. This means for a sustainable tourism development policy in the Lake Bosomtwe basin to work decision makers at the national and district levels should discuss and agree with destination communities and implementing agencies on the main lines of actions to follow. This is because inclusiveness and participation is regarded as a formidable pillar in modern democracy, and it is critical to active citizenship (Woodford and Preston, 2011). The benefits of participation in public policy making are: a means to reverse the growing democratic deficits; fosters citizenship, and community capacity; and promotes responsive and effective decisions; enables the public to contribute to decisions; and enhances social goals (Barnes et al, 2007; McAvoy, 1999).

I argue that these benefits of citizen participation can only accrue if participation is characterized by discussions and exchange of arguments in which individuals justify their opinions and are ready to modify their stands. Discussants have the capacity to analyze issues, discuss problems, and offer plausible solutions to them. This has the potential to stimulate free public reasoning, equality, inclusion of different interests, and mutual trust. Unfortunately, these characteristics seem to be lacking in participatory processes in Africa including Ghana.

Even though a majority of African leaders, like their counterparts in much of the Third World, in theory, say they act in the name of the people and democracy, in practice, the level of popular participation in policy making has been generally limited compared to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (Turner and Hulme, 1997). In Ghana, there are fewer participants in the policy-making process, and the official channels for participation are more restricted (Ohemeng, 2005). Such restriction can lead to the adoption of nondemocratic forms of mobilizing power including violent challenges to the government (Turner and Hulme 1997, 70). Gulhati (1990) makes a similar point when he proffers that in sub-

Saharan Africa, the typical contemporary regime has revolved round the person of the ruler. A varying mix of patronage and coercion secures compliance, while factional struggles and regime uncertainty are endemic (Turner and Hulme, 1997). Policies circles as a result are therefore narrow (Turner and Hulme, 1997).

Even in the current democratic dispensation in many African countries the political space has not widened up for people to participate in decision making including tourism policy making. At best, their role is limited to voting for office bearers, and even this role is being undermined by the incessant rigging of elections that has characterized political life in most African countries.

Ghana Tourism Development Policy of 2006

This Policy is prepared in the context of Ghana's Vision 2015 of achieving a middle level income status and becoming the leading tourism destination in Africa. The key pillars are the national vision of attaining a per capita income of \$1,000 by 2015 as well as the mission and mandate of the Ministry of Tourism. This Policy Document has six main elements and provides clear and user-friendly guidelines for the implementation of a national and international tourism development strategy in Ghana. It is designed to be consistent with the promotion of effective and efficient private sector-led growth of tourism industry. The fundamental principle is the high level of public-private sector partnership with government providing the conducive and stable macroeconomic, socio-political, and ecological environment that will attract private sector response. It is envisaged that Ghana's tourism sector development will be achieved through the use of the strategic instruments across the following key thematic areas: product development; tourism resources and management; quality and standards; marketing and promotion; tourism financing; and tourism investment. The rest are human resources development; tourism education and awareness creation; security, safety and privacy; regional and international cooperation; and tourism research and management information system (Ministry of Tourism, 2006).

This Policy Document provides broad policy guidelines to be the basis of development and implementation of concrete projects and programs by the key stakeholders, namely, national government (other ministries, departments and agencies), local authorities (for example district assemblies), the private sector, civil society organizations as well as communities and traditional leaders. The overall approach to tourism development in Ghana can be referred to as responsible and sustainable tourism – promises to pursue economic viability, ecological sensitivity and cultural appropriateness in the development of the industry.

Background of Lake Bosomtwe Basin

Lake Bosomtwe is an inland lake located about 32 kilometers south of Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It lies in a deep circular crater surrounded by very steep hills which rise to a height of over 366 meters below sea level. The floor of the crater is over 152 meters below the level of the surrounding streams which discharge into it. The crater is about 19 kilometers in diameter. The lake itself is about 91 meters deep at the center. The land between the crater rim and the lakeshore can be divided into three sections: the forest clad hills with a very steep gradient; the middle gentle slope; and the low flat land immediately surrounding the lake.

Lake Bosomtwe abounds in tourism resources such as natural environmental heritage, historical heritage and cultural heritage. The lake itself can be used for swimming, cruising, racing and other water sports. Its marine life can also be scientifically studied since some of the species are endemic to the lake. The origin of the lake presents an interesting area of research inquiry since conflicting accounts have been given. Some people argue that the lake came into being through a volcanic eruption, while others believe that it resulted from subsidence, meteor impact and volcanic gas explosion followed by subsidence. The lake basin also abounds in flora and fauna - mammals, reptiles, amphibians, antelopes, cats and birds some of which are endemic to the lake Bosomtwe basin. The forest clad hills are siren resorts; they are good for game, sightseeing and climbing for exercising purposes or for sports. The local residents in the lake Bosomtwe basin are skillful craftsmen and craft women who craft a lot of traditional products and souvenirs. Other cultural heritage of the lake Bosomtwe basin are music and dance, architecture, traditional shrines, beliefs and practices, Ghanaian cuisine, and traditional village life.

Tourism development policy and Lake Bosomtwe basin's practice

The aim of the study is to determine whether tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe basin is occurring in accord with the key tenets of the Ghana Tourism Development Policy of 2006. Specifically the paper investigates whether tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin is economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. These dimensions are examined in turn below.

Economic impacts and community well-being

Tourism can become a major contributor to economic development if it is strongly linked with the other sectors of the domestic economy. Thus, tourism can be a major instrument for compelling national and regional development, generating employment, earning foreign exchange, improving balance of payments and bringing about infrastructure development that will

benefit visitor and locals (Glasson *et al*, 1995). In the lake basin, tourism was evidenced to have some economic development gains as well as costs.

a) Income generating activities

The development of tourism in the Lake Bosomtwe basin has brought about the creation of income generating activities and employment for the residents. Unlike some very small countries, island economies and least developed countries where many inputs needed by the tourism industry must be imported, an appreciable proportion of the inputs are produced internally in Ghana. For example, opportunity has been afforded for the production of non-traditional foodstuffs by local farmers in the lake basin. Other economic activities that have been spurred by the tourist trade include wayside shops, hotel business, eating and drinking bars, tour guiding as well as art and craft works.

When some shopkeepers were asked about their trade, 80 percent said they were doing reticent business. They revealed that they made an average of GHc70 to GHc80 per trader per day. Ninety percent of the traders said their earnings are small compared to their responsibilities as parents. They lamented that despite the emerging tourist trade business was sluggish because their expectations of reaping huge profits has not yet materialized. On their part, farmers revealed that income they received daily from the sale of farm produce ranged from a low of GHc20 to GHc40 per person per day and a high of GHc70 to GHc90 per person per day. However, some frustrated market gardeners said they earned next to nothing because the hoteliers import groceries from Kumasi.

The craft industry is also benefiting from the tourist trade in the lake Bosomtwe basin. The products here include baskets, mats, paintings, sculptures, pottery and beads, just to mention a few. They revealed that the trade is quite modest because they made between GHc100 and GHc110 per person per day. Healy observes that income accruing from souvenir production promises a new source of earnings to resident populations (Healy 1992). He argues that village tourist resorts are unlikely to find advantages in manufacturing per se rather they are more likely to find advantages in constant innovation of articles bought by tourists, and the promotion and marketing of them (Healy 1992). But one native Lake Bosomtwe basin craft trader lamented that, ‘non natives have hijacked our trade and the benefits that accrue from it’ (Abonu craftsman, 2013). Thus, Healy’s statement speaks to the case of non native souvenir dealers in the basin but not to native craftsmen. Again this evidence does not meet the sustainable tourism development policy’s expectation that, the trade will generate substantial economic benefits to destination communities.

These findings show that the development of tourism in the lake basin has failed to integrate and leverage the agriculture, manufacturing and retail trade sectors of the local economy. Consequently, the tourism trade in the lake basin has tended to rely on goods produced elsewhere in Ghana or outside the country. Similar weak linkages between the tourism industry and other sectors of destination economies have been noted in South Africa, the Gambia and Botswana (Must, 2010; Okech, 2010). This means tourism development in the lake basin has not yet become economically efficient, thus it cannot sustain itself without outside economic influence. In other words, without strong linkages between the tourist trade and the other sectors of the local economy multiplier effects cannot be created to spur both the growth of the tourism trade and the local economy.

b) Revenue to local government

The local governments under whose jurisdictions the lake basin lies also obtain revenue from the tourism in the lake basin. The BDA used to run two chalets on the forest clad hills overlooking the lake basin before they were converted into residential accommodation for staff. Revenue from the chalets from 1995 to 1997 showed that the BDA made a total of ₵3,050,000 (BDA, 1998).

In addition to the revenue that accrues from the chalets the BDA also levies entry or access fee on tourists at the gateway to the lake basin at Abonu. Adults are charged GH₵6 while children are either allowed free passage or are asked to pay a token of GH₵1. The number of tourists welcomed per week averaged over a year ranged from 60 in 2003 to about 100 in 2013. The yearly revenue that accrued to the BDA from this period showed that it is possible to marshal funds from tourism to accelerate the socio-economic development of not just the lake basin but the entire district. From 2003 to 2013 there were a total of 41,244 arrivals which resulted in a total of GH₵247,464 to the BDA. The revenue from the access fees collected is even higher on holidays such as Christmas day, Easter holidays and Independence Day. On such occasions an average of 1200 holiday makers are welcomed at the lake basin. This implies on a holiday the BDA can make up to a tune GH₵7,200.

It is expected that part of the revenue accruing to local governments from tourism in the lake basin will be reinvested in expanding, upgrading and maintaining infrastructure and facilities as well as environmental and heritage conservation. However, this is not the case as some lake residents decried that no investment in conservation and infrastructure has yet been made by the BDA. This state of affairs is inimical to the sustainability of tourism because if attractions are not conserved and protected they will deteriorate to a point of irreparability.

c) Employment

One of the main impetuses for developing tourism in the lake basin is its potential to create employment for the local people. The extent to which employment is generated is a function of the degree of linkages between tourism and other sectors of the local economy. Tourism in the Lake Bosomtwe basin has prompted the development of tourist facilities such as camps, lodges and hotels as well as transport and retail businesses. Since tourism development is at its infancy in the lake basin, only five hotels have so far been established and are operational. These hotels, as mentioned earlier, are all located at the gateway community of Abonu and employ a total of 98 people distributed as follows: Lake Point Hotel (25); Paradise Hotel (22); Bay View Company Limited (17); Lake in Hotel (13); and Wild Wined Hotel (11). The employees work mostly as cleaners, kitchen hands, cooks, watchmen, waitresses and grounds men, with a few in self created positions as tour guides and interpreters. Other tourism related employment is found in the entertainment industry as well as retail trade. Indirectly, tourism creates employment in agriculture for the requirements of the visitors. Also, infrastructure development such as road and hotel construction provides many short term jobs. For example, during the construction of the 40 km Kumasi-Kuntanse-Abonu road a total of about 102 jobs were created in capacities such as driving, drill press operation, security, asphaltting and bitumen laying, carpentry, masonry, welding and supervising (BDA employee # 2, 2013).

The linkages through employment tend to spread the benefits of tourism in the lake basin. However, these linkages are weak due to a number of reasons. These are: local employees are unskilled and lowly paid; tourism businesses are wholly owned by non locals and they reap disproportionately large chunks of the benefits from the trade; and there are leakages out of the local economy due to imports from other parts of Ghana or outside it. For example, even though all the five hotels in Abonu are owned by Ghanaians none of them is a native or resident of the lake basin. The literature often highlights the inequitable distribution of tourism benefits as the chunk of these accrue to foreigners at the expense of citizens (Gossling 2003; McLaren 2003). This study has revealed another dimension of the inequitable distribution of the benefits – disproportionate benefits accruing not to foreign nationals but to Ghanaians who are non natives of the lake basin at the expense of locals. Thus, if tourism development is to be sustainable it must also address intra-citizen distributional inequity at destinations.

d) Tourist expenditure

The value of tourism to an economy is reflected in tourist spending at the destination. For international tourism, this commonly covers all tourist expenditure in a country including foreign tourist spending on transportation in a country and their purchases but excluding payment to international carriers in respect of journeys to and from the country visited (Burkart and Medlick, 1981). For other destinations, expenditure covers that incurred at the destination but not expenditure on the journey to and from the destination. When the total expenditure at a destination is divided by the number of arrivals or by the number of tourist days and nights, the average expenditure per visit or per day or per night is obtained (Burkar and Medlick, 1981). While global estimates of tourist expenditure provide general indications of the value of tourism to an economy, visit and daily averages provide general indications of the type and quality of the traffic to a destination (Burkart and Medlick, 1981). This method for tourist expenditure computation is followed in the provision of tourist expenditure statistics in this study.

The proportion of the 50 tourists interviewed and their associated expenditure distribution during their stay in the lake Bosomtwe basin are: 8 percent (US\$20 to US\$70); 18 percent (US\$71 to US\$80); 10 percent (US\$81 to US\$150); 64 percent (US\$250 and US\$400). The bulk of their expenditure went into accommodation and this was followed by food and beverages, and then souvenir. For example, Paradise Hotel charges GH¢40 per visitor per day. It welcomes an average of 50 tourists per month, and assuming each tourist stays for one day, this implies the average earning of the hotel on accommodation is GH¢2000. The figures for Lake Point Hotel, Lake in Hotel, Bay View Company Limited and Wild Wined Hotel are GH¢2700, of GH¢1200, GH¢1700 and GH¢800 respectively. But as the operatives of the hotels attest, some tourists stay an average of 3 days, meaning the earnings on accommodation are much higher.

On souvenir, the tourist expenditure ranged from a low of GH¢20 to a high of GH¢100. According to the tourists the souvenir they bought included beads, drums, flutes, baskets, bangles and bracelets among others. This evidence shows that the souvenir industry has a lot of potential for raking in substantial revenue to the local economy. However, the industry faces two major challenges which threaten to debase its economic contribution to the lake basin's economy. The first is the importation of cheap synthetic replicas of handiworks from China which offends the authenticity of the products and their cultural import. The second is the keen competition from non-locals of the lake basin that brings in the souvenir at much reduced prices from other parts of the Ashanti Region. To increase the gains from the souvenir industry to residents of the lake basin measures have

to be put in place to skew the allocation of quotas in favor of native lake basin souvenir makers. Synthetic replicas of the handiworks should also be banned from entering the country.

Part of the profits from the tourism businesses are re-spent in the lake basin because the hotels for example, buy some of their foodstuffs like maize, cassava, yam, plantain, fish, vegetables and fruits from the local farmers.. However, items they import include long grain rice, liquor, apples and grapes as well as soft drinks. Some detergents and hotel furnishings consisting of upholstery, television and radio sets, CD players, refrigerators, deep freezers, vehicles, and vacuum cleaners are imported. However, as one lake basinresident observed, ‘the proportion of income generated and re-spent in the basin is miniscule compared to what is leaked out in the form of profits repatriated by the non native business operators’. This evidence does not meet the expectation of the tourism policy that, the trade will garner substantial economic benefits to destination communities.

e) *Poverty reduction*

Poverty reduction has become an essential condition for peace, environmental conservation and sustainable development (Roe and Goodwin, 2001). Tourism has been identified as one of the relevant tools for reducing poverty (Ashley *et al*, 2001). The World Tourism Organization argues that tourism can be harnessed as a significant vehicle for the alleviation of poverty. If managed and developed in a sustainable fashion from the economic, environmental and socio-cultural dimensions, the WTO contends, tourism can play a major role in the improvement of living conditions for local populations in different destinations. This belief is predicated on the notion that tourism: can be developed in isolated locations where other activities would be impossible; its growth is constant; it is labor intensive; it is inclusive of women and the informal sectors; it is based on natural and cultural assets of the poor; and it is suitable for poor rural areas with few other growth options (Mensah and Amuquandoh, 2010; Ashley and Roe, 2002).

Despite the presence of the above mentioned characteristics in the Lake Bosomtwe basin for tourism to alleviate poverty, poverty remains a major developmental challenge. One of the main reasons for this, as the interviews with the resident respondents revealed, include the weak linkages between tourism and the other sectors of the local economy. Other reasons are the ownership of tourism businesses by non locals of the lake basin; unskilled and lowly paid positions occupied by residents in hotels and other tourist reception facilities; non participation of residents in tourism development decision making; and the local power structure which puts a few local elites in privileged and influential positions to the neglect of the

mass of the population. The employment of respondent locals in the tourism businesses are distributed as follows: hotels (10 percent); market gardening (8 percent); souvenir makers and traders (12 percent); and tour guiding and interpreting (2 percent). Yet, they have not been able to lift themselves out of poverty because they earn very little from their occupations. For example, an Obo resident said that, ‘I work as a cleaner in a hotel but the person who supervises my work is a non resident who receives more than ten times what I earn because I am considered unskilled’.

Protection of natural environment

Through secondary information, observation and interviews with key operatives, the development of tourism in the Lake Bosomtwe basin was found to have created environmental awareness particularly among key industry players and also promoted initiatives at establishing or demarcating areas as protected zones. However, it was also found that far greater negative environmental consequences attended the development of tourism in the lake basin.

a) Environmental awareness

When local residents were asked why there was the need to protect the natural environment, 41 percent said irresponsible and uncontrolled tourism development will sow the seeds for the industry’s own destruction. For this reason there was the need to protect the natural environment. They added that tourism can kill tourism, destroying the very environmental attractions which visitors come to the lake basin to experience. Forty eight percent indicated that nature protects itself and there was not much the human hand could do in that regard. The remaining 11 percent queried that it is the tourism businesses and the local governments (BDA and AEDA) who reap the benefits of the tourism trade in the lake basin and they should be answering the question and not the local residents.

The respondents who indicated that tourism can be a source of its own destruction if its development is not controlled appreciate that environmental protection is urgent for tourism sustainability. And that the effort at protection should be a shared responsibility among all key stakeholders – tourism businesses, local population, municipal authorities and visitors. The majority who said nature protects itself is indicative of the fact that environmental protection is not of concern to them and if it were, it should be the responsibility of other stakeholders and not local residents. This underscores the fact that the Ghana Tourist Authority and the municipal authorities need to intensify environmental education in resident communities in the lake basin. Without all stakeholders accepting responsibility for environmental protection, and without investment or

expenditure on environmental protection and conservation the tourist attractions in the lake basin cannot be sustained.

b) *Impacts on vegetation*

Local authority and lake basin resident respondents revealed that although the number of tourist arrivals is not particularly high (about 60 to 100 overnight visitors per week averaged across the year, the basin is extremely over crowded during public holidays like Easter, Christmas, Independence Day, Republic Day and May Day The overwhelming numbers of tourists during these festive occasions create problems of efficient monitoring of tourist activities by government officials especially the BDA, and the GTA. This has led to the creation of illegal roads by tourist vehicles in some environmentally sensitive areas such as shrines and cemeteries. The creation of illegal roads negatively affects vegetation and reduces the scenic beauty of the lake basin. A BDA employee stated that during the Christmas and Easter holidays in particular an average of 250 vehicles visit Abonuper day. However, the figure might be higher if account is taken of supply trucks and official vehicles. The actual number might reach 270 vehicles per day. This author personally counted 70 vehicles on December 26, 2013. The creation of illegal roads is aggravated by attempts by tourists to quickly reach camps and tents generally concentrated in small areas in various parts of the lake basin.

The concentration of camps and tents within a small radius points to the failure of municipal authorities and the GTA to establish a sound management plan for tourism development in which the radius between each facility is determined according to the ecological impacts of such facilities in the lake basin. The creation of many illegal roads and trails also indicates municipal authorities' failure to implement the country's rules and regulations in controlling traffic and numbers in environmentally sensitive and protected areas. Trampling of vegetation also occurred due activities like dancing, sitting, walking and planting of heavy equipment like generators. According to Hector (1996), recreational activities can have immediate, direct impact on the species composition of vegetation. This is especially true of ground layer vegetation and particularly as a result of trampling – almost invariably this involves a decrease in species variety (Hector, 1996).

c) *Noise pollution*

Noise travel through air and is measured in ambient air quality level. Noise is measured in decibels. Experts argue that continuous noise levels in excess of 90 decibels can cause loss of hearing and irreversible changes in the nervous system. The World Health Organization (WHO) has fixed 45 decibels as safe noise level for a city (WHO, 2000).

In Ghana permissible ambient noise as set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for residential areas requires that during the day noise levels should not be above 55 decibels and 48 decibels at night (EPA, 2008). According to a BDA employee, in the Lake Bosomtwe basin noise pollution is caused by over 250 vehicles which travel to and from the gateway community of Abonu on holidays alone, with lesser numbers on average 80 vehicles on other days. Noise pollution also arises from concert and music bands that are organized to grace such festive occasions in the lake basin. Noise also generates from the roaring of engine boats on the lake which are being used as commercial cruise boats and operate many trips a day.

The cumulative noise produced from the different aforementioned sources on holidays exceeds about more than three folds the ambient noise levels for residential areas of 55 decibels during the day (EPA employee #1, 2013). The consequences of such excessive noise levels for the health of the people of the Lake Basin and wildlife should therefore be of concern. Local residents were therefore interviewed on what they thought the perceived or real impacts of noise on their health were. Respondents between ages 35 and 78 years (62 percent) reported that they probably have much reduced hearing abilities since they now have to turn on the volume on their radio or television sets to higher levels in order to hear and follow the program. This evidence ties in with Moszuski's who found that noise is known to cause learning disabilities and deafness (Moszuski, 2011).

A minority 13 percent revealed that diseases such as hypertension, heart attack and stroke as well as deafness which were rare before the advent of tourism are now beginning to emerge. This finding is consistent with the claim of Stansefed and Crombie (2011) and Kempenet *al* (2006) that there is a possible association between environmental noise exposure and hypertension. Exposure to acute noise influences the body's compensatory mechanics to stress (causes the arteries to constrict, increases blood pressure), and may contribute to heart attack (Maschkeet *al*, 2000; Babisch, 2002).

There was consensus among respondents that noise pollution from motor boats disturbs and causes reduction in population especially of infants in birds, mammals, and reptiles as well as waterfowls. Respondents particularly pointed to the dramatic reduction in the crocodile and waterfowl population in the Lake Bosomtwe. Mathew and Roodt noted similar impacts in the Okavango Delta in Botswana (Mathew, 1982; Roodt, 1968).

a) Impacts on water resources

Lake Bosomtwe is a completely enclosed meteorite impact crater which has no outflow for its water (Amuquandoh, 2009). Given the enclosed

nature of the basin, it is susceptible to pollution by some of the tourism related activities, especially with the introduction of mechanical vessels on the lake. The advent of power-driven vessels has led to problems such as oil spillage and discharge of fuel, which hitherto were not seen in the lake. (Amuquandoh, 2009: 224). The new generations of vessels that are presently plying the lake are significantly different from the traditional canoes used for fishing. Given that the water in the lake basin does not circulate and mix with other running water bodies, any pollutant entering it may not disperse or dilute, but will build up to the point of irreversibility (Amuquandoh, 2009).

The springing up of hotels, lodges and camps in the lake basin each with its separate septic tanks and sewage collection receptacle is likely to increase the potential for ground water pollution. In the adjoining local communities such tanks are unavailable except “pit latrines”, which have not been integrated with septic tanks in the tourist hotels.. One of the known consequences of rapid tourism development in the lake basin is the overload of waste water and sewage infrastructure especially during the peak holiday season. This has led to the discharge of waste and sewage effluent into groundwater with consequent contamination of drinking water and the lake itself. The propensity for contaminating the lake is probably linked to the popular view that it is one of the water bodies that are reservoirs of natural pollutants (Amuquandoh, 2009). This is a perception but it is strengthened by the fact that the lake has been associated with intermittent dull detonations and sulphurous odors (Jones et al, 1981). According to an American research tourist, the water table in the lake basin is high and the soils are sandy with high permeability. Thus, pollutants can seep down the soils to greater depths. The water table in the lake basin is usually about 1 to 3 meters below the surface during the raining season. Consequently, discharge of effluent into groundwater is unavoidable. Effluent discharge is associated with algae growth in the shallow waters at the outer rim of the lake at Abonu. Similar algae bloom is reported in the Okavango Delta in Botswana where septic tank drainage releases nitrate into ground water, and contamination by faecal bacteria and possibly pathogens occurs where groundwater is a meter or less beneath the surface (NRP, 2001).

b) *Preservation of cultural heritage*

In the Lake Bosomtwe basin attempts have been made to bring the cultural dimension into the tourism product mix. For example, the handicraft industry is beginning to flourish with locals now engaged in basket weaving, leatherworks, sculpture and carvings just to mention a few. Traditional music and dancing have also become prominent with a number of traditional dance groups forming and performing to the amusement of visitors. The pouring of libation and the performing of shrine rites, as local respondents revealed,

have been revived and given a fresh impetus. However, informal interviews with hoteliers and local people of the lake basin point to the fact that the development of the tourism industry has also brought about negative socio-cultural impacts. Some of the adverse consequences identified included crime, western influence on local language, cuisine and dress especially on the youth. Glasson et al (1995), claim that socio-cultural impacts of tourism in destination areas are identified in changes in traditional ideas and values, norms and identities of the local people. These changes are starting to affect the Lake Bosomtwe basin, meaning tourism is not only associated with positive effects in the area but also negative consequences, making urgent the need to control them in order to minimize the adverse effects.

Product quality and tourist satisfaction

Some effort has been made to improve product quality in the lake basin although some challenges remain. Indicators of product quality improvement include the number and type of tourism attractions, products and visitor infrastructure; the quality of accommodation, food, transport, hospitality, and safety. As has already been mentioned earlier, the Lake Bosomtwe basin has both natural and cultural resources for tourism promotion. Efforts at developing the lake basin into an attraction predate Ghana as an independent nation state. It started in the colonial period in 1918 when a rest house was built near Abonu by Captain Blantyre (the then British Commissioner for the Ashanti Protectorate) for the exclusive use of British officials during their duty tour of the area (Amuquandoh, 2009). This initiative has been given a fresh impetus in the last two decades resulting in the setting up of tourism related facilities and services in the basin. To determine the factors that push tourist to visit Ghana and the Lake Bosomtwe and to know their satisfaction level with the quality of services and experience, a number of questions were posed to them. Their responses to the questions have been summarized here.

When asked about the accommodation type they stayed in, an overwhelming majority of the tourists (78 percent) said they were staying in prime hotels (3 to 5-star hotels) for 3 to 14 days. Most of these high class tourist reception facilities are under the ownership of multinational and foreign investors including Holiday Inn, Golden Tulip and Western Premier Hotel. In terms of the motivation to visit, a greater proportion of the tourists (64 percent) said it was principally the rich and diverse historical and cultural attractions that influenced their travel decisions in favor of Ghana. It can be argued that these motivational characteristics derived from the marketing strategies adopted by overseas tour operators particularly when marketing developing world's destination like Ghana. Advertisements featuring in print and electronic media market Ghana as a country rich in

historical and cultural attractions such as forts and castles. These monuments constitute the key planks in the historical tourism resources because of the infamous International Slave Trade with which they are associated. As a country that is home to the bulk of European forts and castles, Ghana has a comparative advantage in the “roots” tourism market. But Ghana does not have monopoly over roots tourism because Senegal’s Goree Island, on which is located a major castle; also attract impressive numbers of African-Americans annually (Akyeapong, 2008). Little effort has been made in selling Ghana as a country with different kinds of nature-based attractions. The tourists were then asked to state what they liked most on their trip and 48 percent of them named the friendly character of local residents. Other elements the tourists mentioned included the experience of village life, the warm and pleasant weather and the sandy tropical beaches.

It is therefore exciting to find that although initially most of the tourists said they decided to visit Ghana because of historical and cultural attractions, they mainly stated the hospitality of the local people and the natural attractions as the visit’s attributes they liked most. It can therefore be surmised that Ghana’s rich and diverse nature-based attractions like the natural Lake Bosomtwe with its pristine environment with rich flora and fauna and the hospitality of the people in the basin, have great prospects for tourism development.

The tourists had a range of ranking for product quality from below average (the lowest rating) to excellent (the highest rating). On the whole, a convincing majority of 70 percent indicated that they received value for money in terms of services provided in the hotels, distinct cultural attractions and tranquil and green lake environment. Attributes that were assessed below average included transport infrastructure and the level of cleanliness of the local communities in the lake Bosomtwe basin particularly the gateway villages of Abonu and Adwarfo. This is not surprising given that all the communities in the lake basin are unplanned settlements which lack basic social infrastructure facilities like places of convenience, water, and waste collection systems. The striking thing is that these local settlements adjoin the comfy tourists hotels that are better served with those facilities. Abject poverty and general deprivation is so profound that it is usually easy to discern the difference between the lifestyles of tourists and tourism business operators, and the marginalized local populations. This disparity causes resentment among local residents and this can boil over to open hatred.

Discussion

This study set out to investigate whether tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe basin has proceeded in accord with the Ghana Tourism Policy of 2006, which has sustainable tourism development as its goal.

Sustainability, as indicated earlier is predicated on three core values which are: social equity; economic efficiency; and ecological sustainability (Sharpley, 2010; Angelson *et al*, 1994). These values were interpreted in the form of assessment criteria which included: economic impact and community well-being; protection of the environment and cultural heritage; and improvement of product quality and tourist satisfaction. The evidence shows that the objectives of the Lake Bosomtwe tourism development policy as a reflection of the aims of the national policy have largely not been achieved. This section discusses the issues involved in the mismatch between tourism policy and practice in the Lake Bosomtwe basin.

As mentioned earlier, economic efficiency seeks to maximize the use of natural resources to meet human needs and to optimize human welfare within the limits of existing capital (Serageldin, 1993). Evidence from the research indicates that tourism in the Lake Bosomtwebasin has compelled the development of infrastructure and the provision of social facilities to some extents. Nevertheless, the tourism industry has failed to enhance agricultural production, the handicraft and manufacturing sectors as well as retail trade. This has led to the bulk of the goods consumed by the industry either being sourced from South Africa, Western countries like Britain and the Netherlands or are brought into the basin from other parts of Ghana. The other finding from this research is that tourism in the lake basin has generated revenue although a disproportionately large part of the revenue accrues to private non-local hoteliers and to a limited extent, local governments like the BDA in the form of taxes and rent, rather than to the local communities on which tourism resources are located. Unfortunately, there have been no attempts at addressing the inequity in the distribution of benefits through for example, community-based tourism programs.

Because tourism businesses in the lake basin are all owned by non-local Ghanaians and for the fact that the lake itself is an enclosed meteorite crater, its environment has the characteristic of enclave tourism. There are socio-economic and environmental impact attendant on enclave tourism. At such destinations the pursuit of short-term economic return takes precedence over environmental concerns (Carter, 1991; Prosser, 1994). When the resources at such destinations are depleted, however, businesses and tourists migrate to other pristine settings where tourism is booming and the degradation starts all over again (Butler, 1980; Prosser, 1994). This makes ecological sustainability a very crucial measure to implement to prevent the negative environmental consequences of tourism at destinations like the Lake Bosomtwe basin. Ecological sustainability preaches that the use of renewable natural resources should not be faster than the rate at which the natural process renews them (Serageldin, 1993). The welcome of mass of people particularly on public holidays to the lake basin, the various breaches

of sustainable tourism development laws and regulations, and the mismatch between tourism development preferences of municipal authorities and those of local communities, have resulted in visitors and tourist activities impacting negatively in forms such as the creation of illegal roads, noise pollution and water contamination. These negative environmental impacts warn us that the lake basin's environment risks being hugely degraded if measures are not taken to control tourism infrastructure, tourists and tourist activities. The measures that can be adopted include carrying out existing management plans and designing a comprehensive land use and integrated management plan for the lake basin. The management plan should be developed in a way that will ensure that the use of tourism resources in the lake basin benefits the present generation while simultaneously not destroying the chances of future generations to benefit from the same resources. Certainly, the Lake Bosomtwe basin does not have an integrated management plan so there are fears that carrying capacity levels might be witnessing undue pressure in some areas.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that there benefits of tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe basin. These include the creation of jobs, development of local infrastructure, springing up of new income generating activities and earning of tax revenue by government, among others. Notwithstanding these benefits, this study has shown that there is a wide gap between tourism policy objectives and actual performance. The findings are: tourism development is ad hoc, haphazard and seemingly unsustainable; local communities are excluded from tourism decision-making; linkages between tourism and other sectors of the local economy are weak; locals perform unskilled and lowly paid tourism jobs; benefits from tourism accrue largely to foreigners non local Ghanaians; and environmental degradation and cultural trivialization are evident. These together have exacerbated poverty in local communities with the consequent disenchantment and despondence among local residents which may boil over into resentment and even conflict.

One of the ways of remedying the situation is to democratize tourism policy making to include hitherto excluded parties, particularly local communities. This can be done through the establishment of community-based tourism programs that look short term but that ensure sustainability like the Lower Casamance in Senegal and the Okavango Delta in Botswana (Mbaiwa, 2003; Mbaiwa and Stronza, 2009). Such a program has already been established in some destinations in Ghana like the Tongo Hills and Tenzug Shrines in the Upper East Region, The Tagbo Falls, Afadjato and Tafi-Atome in the Volta Region and the Kakum Park in the Central

Region. These community-based tourism programs were developed as part of a collaborative effort of USAID to establish fourteen ecotourism sites country-wide under the Community-Based Ecotourism Project (CBEP). The project was funded by USAID and jointly implemented by the Nature Conservation Research Center, Ghana Tourist Authority, US Peace Corps, Government of Ghana and the various project committees (Segbefia, 2008). These projects are community owned and are operated income generating ecotourism activities in the rural areas of Ghana. While these are laudable projects that should be replicated nation-wide, they face considerable challenges. For example, artisans and shop owners under some of these projects complain of keen competition arising from cheap synthetic replicas of their handiworks coming from abroad. In addition, most small tourism businesses especially from rural areas do not have individual or cooperative resources to promote themselves or their community as a tourist product. Moreover, external funding of the projects implies community preferences might be subordinated to those of the donors. What is needed is to gain control and to ensure sustainability of the projects by getting communities to design programs which skills requirements match their skills set and which use local resources that can be obtained at little or no cost. These projects can embrace leatherwork, curio shops, and community tour operations, as well as cultural tourist activities that may entail the provision of traditional accommodation, traditional dishes, music, dances and canoe safaris.

Second, it is important to institute training and development in a broad range of skills, including management, vocational and technical as well as information technology. This should not be limited to the formal education system. Although formal education is clearly crucial, it may often be more beneficial and more cost-effective, in practice, to concentrate on informal training either on-the-job or through programs well designed to meet predetermined objectives and targeted at specific types of individuals. In order to minimize financial leakages caused by the engagement of foreigners, especially by multinational corporations (MNC), it is important for governments and the private sector to collaborate in the development of policies and strategies to develop indigenous capabilities (see Dieke, 1992). For example, if the state offers the right incentives, MNCs could design training programs for their Ghanaian employees abroad or organize in-service training for them. Finally, negative environmental impacts can be mitigated by enforcing laws and regulations governing protection, conservation and preservation of tourism resources as well as encouraging tourists, government and NGOs to fund conservation initiatives and step up environmental protection education.

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