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**Paper presented: Capacity Building for a Socially Responsible Cultural Heritage Tourism Development**

Dr Christina Koutra

ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship Awardee

Centre for Tourism Policy Studies

University of Brighton

Tel: (+44) (0) 7740827535

Email: [ck42@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:ck42@brighton.ac.uk); [chkoutra@hotmail.com](mailto:chkoutra@hotmail.com)

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/ssm/contact/details.php?uid=ck3>

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk>

## **ABSTRACT**

Cultural heritage tourism was the tool used by the government and developmental agencies for sustainable economic development and ultimately poverty reduction/alleviation and preservation of the cultural heritage in Elmina and Cape Coast, Ghana, Africa. The two castles and the fortress, - the Elmina or St Georges' Castle, Fort St Jago (Elmina), and the Cape Coast or Carolsburg Castle (Cape Cost) - left by colonialism during the 400 year transatlantic slave trade were the focus of both cultural preservation and economic development through tourism.

However, more than fifteen years later the economy does not seem to have been uplifted, benefits accrued from the tourism activity are distributed unequally and the sites are not properly preserved. A participatory approach to research indicated that was mainly due to, lack of [Corporate (Social Responsibility)] [C (SR)] identified among others in community exclusion in decision making; lack of business expertise; lack of promotion/marketing; lack of access to credit; lack of cooperation between stakeholders; weak institutions that are unable to be socially responsible and accountable to the local communities; and an inability to form partnerships and networks.

Evidence suggests that the present situation might be reversed should the governmental and developmental institutions' exercise [C (SR)] in the form of Capacity Building at four levels: social, human, physical and financial.

## **Introduction**

Cultural heritage tourism can be an important player within sustainable development and intercultural dialogue. Palmer (1999) argues heritage has developed into a significant pole of attraction for visitors in many places. Ashworth and Larkham (1994), note the developed countries of Europe have made the most use of heritage tourism and have devoted the greatest effort to understanding it. Similarly "...the less developed countries, in the world of traditions, cultures, religions, superstitions and distance from modernity, have the potential to be rediscovered as a source of symbols and new interpretations" (Ashworth 1993:15). 20% of all WBG projects involving an impact on a country's cultural heritage are concerned with the development of a tourism economy (Goodland & Webb 1987).

Increasingly, public policy planners use culture as a means for sustainable development. The UNWTO in its forecast 'Tourism: 2020 Vision', expects cultural tourism to become one of the five key tourism segments, and notes that growth in this area will present an increasing challenge in terms of managing visitor flows to cultural sites. Having also acknowledged the importance of cultural tourism as an engine of socio-economic development the UNWTO is seeking ways to employ cultural tourism in its action against poverty.

## **Capacity Building for a Socially Responsible Cultural Heritage Tourism Development**

Cultural heritage tourism is a combination of physical objects (for example, traditional buildings, artefacts, costumes, and art) and social customs (religious songs, dances, and festivals) that have been passed on from one generation to the other (Prentice 1993). Carter *et al.* (2000) note culture and heritage are of great significance to tourism development because they are considerable political, socio-cultural and economic forces (Henderson 2000) and therefore can benefit host communities and localities in the sense of economic gain, job creation (IIED & ODI 1999), marketing appeal, education, community interaction, and cultural exchange (Jones 2000).

It is common knowledge that many rich intangible cultural resources, such as folklore or customs, are found in poor and usually remote communities often located close to famous heritage sites. The challenge here is to combine them and integrate them into a tourism product and use it as a tool to reduce poverty, perhaps the only tool in such poor and remote communities. The role of tourism planning is to identify and adopt policies that could not only enhance their share of the cultural tourism market but that also contribute towards poverty eradication. Further, this might be a way for governments to reinstate their national cohesion (Brohman 1996; Henderson 2002) following a decline in a nation's sense of cultural identity, whilst gaining access to indigenous knowledge (Wall 1996). Local authorities have a role to play in cultural tourism management too, ensuring that the local poor get a fair share of the tourism activity in their community, and thus continuing their traditions. Brohman (1996) argues that this will be better achieved if there is integration of tourism plans and national cultural projects. Experiences in the past, especially in the developed countries, have indicated that improper use of cultural resources can lead to the acculturation of communities. Hence, planning in many developing countries within Africa and beyond should focus on respect for local values, traditions and beliefs, and on tourism as a means to the preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources.

Destination management is an important component of successful tourism development in both developed and developing countries because its purpose is to integrate all these elements needed by a destination (Welford *et al.* 1999); in essence, to be economically profitable, while minimising the socio-cultural and environmental impacts (Ritchie & Crouch 2003). In developing countries within Africa and beyond it is even more important because of the unequal distribution of benefits and lack of capacity in education, skills, financial support, and entrepreneurial support. With regard to education, Welford *et al.* (1999) argue it applies to both visitors and hosts alike because their irresponsible behaviour can lead to environmental destruction. Hence, Butler (1997) places an emphasis on the issue of controlling both parties (hosts and guests) to achieve sustainable development.

Therefore links between supply and demand are crucial for the development of both the formal and informal sectors. Welford *et al.* (1999) argue the role of intermediaries such as tour operators and tourist agents is to initiate and strengthen these links. Victurine (2000) states the existence of linkages can assist tourism not only at a national level but also at a community, grass-root level, thus helping poor people, including women, to make an additional living. By the same token, the extent of both these illegal operations and of poverty, could, be minimised if the poor had access to micro credit or micro finance. Despite the problems identified with micro credit schemes (Elahi &

Danopoulos 2004) - for example, the need for collateral, and the power relations involved - the availability of financial assistance through micro credit can be regarded as a facilitation mechanism to assist micro and small businesses to make a head start.

Awareness of the nature and function of tourism is also very important for tourism development and sustainability in many developing countries within Africa and beyond. In Uganda, a lack of experience in dealing with other cultures and a tendency by the industry to work in isolation from other businesses, have restrained tourism activity (Victurine 2000). Hence, Victurine (2000:222) contends that those involved in tourism have to know about the needs of the holiday makers because these will be "...Uganda's tourism goodwill ambassadors".

One of the issues that has not been given exceptional importance, or has been distorted (Calantone & Mazanec 1991; Echtner & Prasad 2003; March 1994; Riege & Perry 2000) is the role of marketing, although it is vital for the development of tourism in developing countries. So far its role has served the needs of the intermediaries or the policy makers perpetuating further the neocolonial image. However, Palmer (1994), on her research in the Bahamas, argues "...relying on the images of a colonial past, the tourism industry merely perpetuates the ideology of colonialism and prevents the local people from defining a national identity of their own" (1994:792).

Policy makers have to address the issue of employing a strategic marketing approach and converting it into competitive advantage (Riege & Perry 2000). Experience so far indicates that reliance on marketing communication alone (Faulkner 1993) is not sufficient to allow many developing countries within Africa and beyond to compete appropriately in the global market, especially against developed countries. According to Lane (2005), marketing should support local people in taking advantage of any opportunity available in the tourism sector. This is of vital importance, if it is to prevent people from outside the area from taking over.

Tourism is also a "...highly political phenomenon" (Richter 1989:2). In many developing countries the articulation of the interests of the poor majority is weak and their voice is hardly heard at all in local politics. Where local authorities are endowed with the legal powers to regulate the effects of tourism through planning controls and responsibilities for municipal services, they often lack the human resources to grasp the issues involved. In other cases, the community has little or no legal authority to deal with development and such powers are vested in central or provincial governments. The experience of local people in political decision making in most developing countries tends to be limited, not least because dominant groups locally or nationally deliberately keep them in a subordinate position. The issue of local community interests cannot, by itself, determine the desirability of a tourism project. But if social impacts are to be taken into account, and no undue weight is to be given to economic considerations, then local community interests are probably better promoted by slower development of widely dispersed, small scale facilities, than by massive integrated and concentrated ones (de Kadt 1979a, b).

CSR in tourism is an important element for sustainable tourism development and poverty reduction, however so far it has been carried out in the form of charitable contributions. However, there are many risks associated with charity. For instance, it can be used by a tour operator as lip service for ignoring sustainable carrying capacity levels (Kalisch 2002). Tourism professionals are also concerned that changing practices would bring competitive disadvantages (Forsyth 1995); sustainable tourism practices are seen as an obstacle to efforts to maximise profits, especially for tour operators who work on narrow profit margins. However, CSR practices can be used as an extra asset in the already available core business activities (Kalisch 2002). It can actually improve product quality, diversify the product and attract even more customers.

According to the WTTC (2002) the challenge for the implementation of CSR is identified by the fragmented nature of the industry, where the majority of enterprises are SMEs with low profit levels. There is a need for travel and tourism businesses to move beyond the present unplanned policy and to integrate environmental, social and economic sustainability within their core businesses in order to overcome this fragmentation. Therefore, it could be argued once more that what is needed is better management and direction in CSR.

### ***Cultural Heritage Sites***

This research took place in three World Heritage Sites, so I here discuss briefly the issues involved with that status. In 1972, UNESCO adopted the 'Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (Leask

& Fyall 2000:287) for the protection of sites identified by their exceptional worth for present and future generations (ICOMOS 1999; UNESCO 1972). Up to now, 644 cultural, 162 natural and 24 mixed properties in 138 party states are listed (UNESCO 2006). Evans and Smith (2000) note UNESCO has established management guidelines in its effort to preserve these sites, and to contribute to visitors' experience and ultimately to sustainability. However, Shackley (1998) brings attention to the issue that all 'World Heritage Sites' are different and therefore, there should be a balance between conservation and visitation. Consequently, policy formulation should address this uniqueness issue and consider the geographical location of the site in the global environment. Particularly in many developing countries within Africa and beyond, issues that have to do with good governance and democracy have to be considered, so that mismanagement and corruption may be avoided. Shackley (1998) notes that 'World Heritage Status' does not automatically mean an increase in tourists, as many issues such as marketing and access to the site can be deterrents.

According to Leask and Fyall (2000:287) signing the convention obliges the state parties to conserve their cultural and natural sites and in return the international community provides expertise, advice and financial assistance through the World Heritage Fund. "The convention provides a permanent legal, administrative and financial framework, for international cooperation in safeguarding humankind's cultural and natural heritage".

## **METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative, participatory approach (Chambers 1994) to research was employed of an epistemological and interpretive nature. The research was implemented in a period of five months mainly in the towns of Elmina and Cape Coast and partially in Accra, Ghana. The data used for the purpose of this paper are based on one to one interviews and focus groups discussions, but mainly on a series of open meetings with the local people as well as direct and indirect observation. The open meetings were organised soon after the researcher finished contacting the interviews. The rationale of open meetings is justified on the grounds that the purpose of the research was to 'hear the voices' of the local people; and hence the data were fed back to those participated in the interviews and other members of the communities who had a stake in tourism or they were interested in participating in it. The analysis of the data was based on the employment of the grounded theory since it was intended to induce a theory. Therefore the data are presented in the form of proposals thus complying with the grounded theory's requirements.

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this paper is to identify the local communities' people opinions with regard to their experiences on tourism development in their towns so far, in order to answer the following objectives:

### **Objectives**

To pinpoint the major issues that inhibits tourism development;

To identify the length of interest in the tourist activity;

To pinpoint the extend that the exercise of [C (SR)] through capacity building may contribute to poverty reduction;

## **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### **Lack of capacity building may lead to community exclusion, resentment and creation of negative attitudes with regard to cultural heritage tourism development**

People in the local communities were disillusioned by the state of tourism development in the area because predominantly only micro sellers benefited or those who had the financial capital needed to invest. People were keen to participate in tourism but they had no access to credit. There were many young men that had received training in artefacts but who remained unemployed because they lacked the capital to open their own business.

As a result, it was alleged that many of these young people 'hassle' tourists or resorted to crime in order to survive. A leading member of the communities characteristically said: "...there are a handful of people who are very notorious in the community and that has to be compacted because they are destroying the reputation of this town". However, the so called tourists' 'hasslers' in their defence said that this behaviour is due to their exclusion from any economic activity in the towns. It is worthwhile stating that quite a significant number of them made it clear that they didn't beg for money but they were hassling in order to sell souvenirs. Clayton (2003) notes social inclusion is paramount for

appropriate tourism development, and that governmental social policies have to reflect this, otherwise crime can become a deterrent to tourism development.

The tailors' group also claimed they contributed many things but needed official funding to increase their business. Direct observation also indicated that the main occupation of the locals is fishing and trading. The men are either fishing or hanging idle around. Access to credit could enable these men to start a small business. Elahi and Danopoulos (2004) define micro credit as a system, which grants small loans or credit to very poor people, and especially women (Remenyi & Quinones 2000; Yunus 1996), in order to generate income through self employment. Given also that it is women who predominantly trade in fish, vegetables, fruits or other household items; micro credit "...can transform women from beneficiaries, passive recipients of others' largesse, into clients, who participate in a long term reciprocal relationship with the institutions that serve them" Bennett (1992:58). Besides, targeting women means targeting gender equality and human rights that are very important in achieving the MDGs.

### **Sanitation and infrastructure maintenance as a factor to cultural heritage preservation and tourism development**

The infrastructure and superstructure in the local area is very poor and there is a big sanitation problem due to the proliferation of open sewers. The beaches are filthy and do not provide a nice sight to linger on. A leading member of the communities expressed his concern about the fact that nothing will change unless people change their attitude with regards to sanitation. He tried to encourage people to operate more hygienically, but people were reluctant to do so because the order did not come from the government. He constantly has to instruct people to clean the town, and deter them from littering the streets. He characteristically said "...I think the present sanitation is a hindrance to tourism development...the lagoon needs to be drained and the harbour [needs] to be maintained and modernised: but there are no money for that....tradition, formality and the way they operate limits them the way they do things and to change". Poor infrastructure however, can inhibit investment needed for tourism development. Barrett (2003) argues that there is a high cost involved in undertaking businesses in areas with poor infrastructure and therefore it becomes an issue that normally puts off foreign investors.

There is lack of toilet facilities and inadequate fresh water which jeopardised the lives of locals and tourists. The local food ought to be promoted but its preparation and presentation should be at the highest possible standards. It was also reported that people defecate and dump their litter around the castles and the beaches and therefore a note of warning was issued to those responsible by leading members of the community. There was acknowledgement that the sanitation problem is further increased by neighbouring regions which throw their litter into the rivers and the lagoon, where the current carries them all the way to Elmina. With regards to the castles' infrastructure the stairs at some points were broken, endangering tourists, the dungeons were damp and smelt of mould, and there were cracks in the walls. A local young man said "...if the castles don't get maintained they will collapse"

Past experience has indicated that lack of capacity can augment insecurity of livelihoods and ultimately lead to the degradation of the environment, which is very intense in urban environments due to "...inadequate water supplies, sanitation, drainage and solid waste collection" (Elliott 1999:138). Empowerment is the outcome of governmental policies that endorse responsiveness to the needs of poor people. Hence, emphasis should be placed on investing in human capabilities, participation in decision making, opposing gender discrimination, increased access to credit, investments, and infrastructural improvement (Cox and Healy 1998; Tosun 2006).

The exercise of CSR can bring direct positive effects to the communities because it will increase community support by improving the natural and cultural environment and the government-residents' relations, thus avoiding risks that would arise from, for instance, environmental incidents (Idowu 2004), and/or infrastructural incidents; thus, preserving the social and physical (castles-fort) capital which is required for sustainable cultural heritage tourism development.

### **Lack of awareness can create wrong perceptions with regard to cultural heritage tourism development**

Any development in the area that brought extra income was viewed favourably and even though many people in the area were not aware of tourism's economic benefits, they welcomed it as a source of charity and social exchange. "...the castles are for the white people and those from the Diaspora... they come take pictures ...sometimes they give

us some money or they fund local children” said a young person from the local communities.

CSR in tourism may be also carried out in the form of charitable contributions. However, there are many risks associated with charity. For instance, it can be used by a tour operator as lip service for ignoring sustainable carrying capacity levels (Kalisch 2002) and may undermine or mislead the real aim of tourism development in the communities which is linked to poverty reduction. Tourists themselves should also bear in mind their responsibility to the local people which cannot be solely denoted in the form of charity but in the form of contributing towards sustainable livelihoods for local people. The principles of sustainable and responsible tourism can be best applied in the context of human wholeness and that would be easier if there were more awareness of the nature and function of tourism. In this way, standards and limitations could be set defining where responsibility starts and where it ends. However, for this to happen, greater awareness is needed at both district and national levels (Crawford 2004).

The meeting with the tour operators’ associations indicated that the tour operators’ in the area believed they were at a disadvantage because of their small size and were unable to compete with the larger tour operators based in Accra. There was also reluctance to cooperate with them because of a lack of trust. However that leads to limited budgets and markets. Ellerman (2001) argues that economic growth depends to a large extent on entrepreneurial activity and economic, social and cultural changes. That is why Moscardo (2001) argue that it is also essential to include social skills, training and cultural awareness in the education of tourism professionals. Partnerships can bring assets to the businesses, such as disposable capital, expertise, market increase and contact with the tourism industry. Coote and Wandschneider (2001) also argue that in cases of high operational costs and inadequate marketing networks, the promotion of market linkages distributes flows of information and communication between producers, suppliers and buyers.

### **Acknowledgement, development and promotion of the cultural tourism product can lead to cultural heritage tourism development.**

Coordination of the activities of the drama and dance groups was requested and there was also acknowledgement of several other issues, including the fact that performances are for the interest of both Ghanaians and tourists. Currently the drama/dance groups perform only in funerals and local festivals at an amateur basis and it is a way for those performing to make an additional, occasional living. However, performances should be seen as professional activities but for that funding from the tourism board is needed; there has to be a product description and promotion of that through TV documentaries, local radio station, and internet. It was mentioned that even though in the communities there are several talented people, they are suppressed in social occasions and people from other regions are brought at times in the area to make performances.

Therefore, human resources’ training, both in the public and private sector and especially at the very top level would be a step in the right direction, since these people are the ones who make decisions that influence the tourism phenomenon. A thorough knowledge of planning, marketing, information, dissemination and evaluation advisers is essential for empowering tourism professionals to act effectively as culture advisers (Hunter 1995). Since in most cases foreign and local companies cooperate, it is essential to include social skills, training and cultural awareness in the education of tourism professionals (Echtner 1995). Only in this way they would be able to recognise and utilize the cultural tourism product and consider their responsibilities towards the environments in which they operate.

Further, the tour operators suggested that marketing was needed to promote the destination and that product development was of utmost importance but that lack of funding was the major obstacle. With regard to the tour operators there was a request that they should encourage tourists to tour the towns and buy local products. It has also been pointed out that for the communities to benefit tourists have to stay in the area for at least two weeks. Various trades were suggested such as tie and dye, souvenirs, and the printing of postcards. The fishermen themselves can become an attraction, i.e. show tourists how to fish or take them fishing in a canoe. Apprenticeships were suggested, with carpenters coming together and sharing ideas on how to benefit from tourism. There were a few fruit sellers outside the castles, selling mainly oranges and bananas, with a few souvenir sellers, however they did not try to capture the tourist market, preferring to sell to locals. The reason for this is that the tourists who usually come as a group rarely buy from the local sellers, and the backpackers are few and far between. By the same token, the tailors were concerned about tour guides not recommending them to tourists, instead promoting tailors from other regions.

Therefore, it is essential that investments are carried out in a way that will ensure the long term sustainability of the



sector. The importance of marketing again should be recognised for the promotion of the destination in a way that will not only eliminate the negative image but will put the communities on the world map for travellers. The right tourism product can only be developed if planners and developers are synchronised with the local communities, especially those at the grass-roots level, and the decisions taken are in harmony with values that reflect the culture and traditions of the society.

## CONCLUSION

All these challenges could probably only be met if cultural heritage tourism development was part of an integrated plan for development as a whole, accompanied by governmental policy and destination management that are based on principles of sustainability incorporated in the practices of CSR. Cultural heritage tourism can be sustained and ultimately contribute toward poverty reduction if pro-poor growth strategies are paired with an increase in equality. A holistic approach to tourism development will ultimately bring equality, empowerment, and community and gender participation, leading eventually to poverty eradication. In short it could be argued that the application of appropriate and socially responsible practices could assist towards a change in the way that cultural heritage tourism is designed at a policy-planning level and applied at an organizational level in the towns of Elmina and Cape Coast.

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