

ECOTOURISM CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Ecotourism has emerged as a form of tourism along with people's need to withdraw in nature and natural areas, to visit and know who enjoy or not a national or international protection status. In broad terms we can say that ecotourism means traveling most often in developing countries to relatively undisturbed natural areas for study, leisure or voluntary assistance (volunteer) who considers himself flora, fauna, geological forms and ecosystems from area and the people who live nearby, their needs, culture and their relationship with the earth. Along with the development of ecotourism worldwide recognition came and benefits of this form of tourism as a mechanism for optimal utilization of tourism resources and landscape.

Ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism, the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature and local traditions related to nature, must fulfill the following conditions: conservation and nature protection, use of local human resources, character education, respect for nature, awareness of tourists and local communities minimum negative impact on the natural and socio-cultural environment.

In the present context the contribution of ecotourism will be especially economical with great social and economic effects. Ecotourism paradigms - new existential philosophy of local communities and tourists arrived in these areas will be the starting point for generating new approaches to these activities, both in terms of economic development, and sustainable development. Deciphering them will help develop models of existence, to change the mentality and building foundations for the upward evolution of rural communities.

Key words: ecotourism, rural communities, sustainable development

Rural areas are rich in ecological and cultural diversity. The size and complexity of rural communities makes it difficult to generalize regarding the issues or values, even though there are some common characteristics.

By definition of environmental concerns with rural priority. The village green, is the concept that economic, social and biological life primarily means of subsistence, from food, clothing and ending with how the environment meet the highest nature.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For a long time in their existence, rural communities were based on the abundance of natural resources. But in the twentieth century, major technological changes, political and economic transformation brought about a profound agricultural, industrial and other renewable resources, rural communities which led to dependence on them. Despite these changes, there are still many reasons for optimism. Resilience and self-determination are two features that characterize many rural communities.

In order to achieve a comprehensive analysis of the role of ecotourism in developing rural communities

have made an analysis of key natural resources of the Romanian rural area, and in the end to formulate some measures to support the development of Romanian villages through this activity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For rural areas, the fast rate of change brought with it not only challenges but also and opportunities. In some ways, helps to achieve sustainable change which is inevitable, and to do so in an economically responsible way environmentally, and socially equitable.

The most successful communities struggling to use local skills and values while adapting and adopting new ideas and technologies locally.

With changes in agriculture, rural communities trying to better organize locally. Community development allows residents to extend infrastructure such as municipal services, housing for the population, community facilities and diversify their economic base without undermining rural values.

Tourism, especially ecotourism, provides tools and resources to help rural communities to

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continue its path of sustainable development. Ecotourism is a form of tourism where the main motivation for tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature and local traditions related to nature and which should meet the following conditions:

- The preservation and protection of nature;
- Use of local human resources;
- Educational character, respect for nature;
- Minimum negative impact on the natural environment and socio-cultural.

Local rural communities were affected by the evolution of history in last decades. They were added during the centralized economy and then

transition to a market economy. All this has made the villagers to be between temptations / forcing the departure of urban areas in many cases leading to the uprooting events. Last fifteen years have restored the village in the center of many of the concerns of politicians, theorists and practitioners. Wider Europe also raises problems and questions for economic and social development of local rural Romanian. These uncertainties come in a time when we are increasingly convinced of the need for sustainable development, responsible for perpetuating economic development, ensuring the satisfaction of society needs without endangering future generations.(Nistoreanu P., 2005).

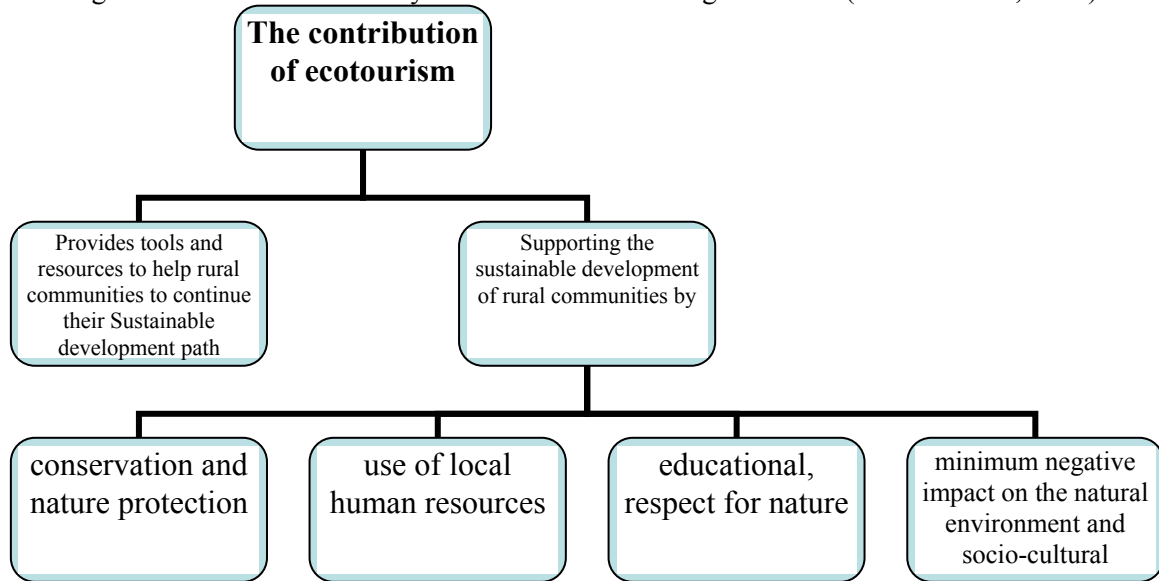


Figure 1 Ecotourism contribution to sustainable development of rural communities

There are now currently major concerns for sustainable development, tourism and ecotourism, from:

- A number of providers (owners of boarding houses, custodians of natural monuments, national parks and natural administration, stud owners, craftsmen and folk artists etc.).
- Local, regional and national.

We estimate that currently do not develop sufficient local rural ecotourism activities; exception consists of a valuable tourist areas, especially where practical, rural tourism and agrotourism. In this respect we consider that the European experience can be of real help.

Ecotourism paradigms, European and global should be used as an example and as a factor for sustainable development of rural communities in our country. Meanwhile European socio-economic models for sustainable development of rural communities can be applied in our country, in the context of EU accession and integration. From this point of view we believe that success can be used with existing experience in countries such as Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and

Britain. In these countries in addition to practicing these activities are relevant associations of providers, concerns the training institutions, research and education including education (master and doctorate), and the administration of the local community itself.

The local authority developed, however, are practitioners of ecotourism in North America, South Australia. The European experience is comparable, and rural communities more successful organization.

Ecotourism activities, in addition to anchoring and sustainable area, is in step with economic integration and development and generates structures needed to support transition. This is because the actual contents of ecotourism can be found infrastructure, rural development, urban development, the use of unconventional forms of energy and clean technologies, which lead to protect and improve the environment.

In the sense of a growing number of specialists, theorists and practitioners of the field, is emerging in ecotourism some common goals and

economy, namely: (Conferința pentru Performanțele Turismului Global, 1992).

- Industry of any kind and once again the tourist must not degrade the resources, but to be developed in such a manner as to protect the environment;

- Economic activities to ensure long-term benefits, resources, local communities and industry in the form of preserve the resources or scientific benefits, social, cultural or economic;

- The need to provide direct experiences that involve and educate tourists;

- Involvement of environmental education in all categories of "actors" local communities and non-governmental organizations, businesses and tourists before, during and after consumption of tourism services;

- Encouraging the unanimous recognition of the intrinsic value of resources;

- Recognition of the idea that resources are still limited and need-oriented management acceptance replace their circuit;

- Promoting the idea of association and collaboration between several "actors" (partnership), which can be governmental and nongovernmental organizations, businesses, scientists and locals.

- Need support and promote moral and ethical responsibility, and attitudes directed towards preserving and protecting natural and cultural environment by all agencies, all concerns and orientations.

The fact is that the sustainable development of ecotourism activities in local communities involves a number of socio-economic benefits, namely (Manea G., 2000):

- triggering jobs locally (directly in tourism or related sectors);
- stimulate the local economy through infrastructure development and tourism services (accommodation, food, transport, recreational facilities, products and services guide craft, souvenirs);
- stimulate the rural economy by creating or increasing demand for agricultural products needed to ensure tourism services;
- boost infrastructure development, which benefits local people equally; stimulates peripheral regions by insertions of capital;
- stimulates improving intercultural relations in a region
- Tourists often seek to know the traditions and customs of an ethnographic regions and the host

community is thus encouraged to revive folk traditions;

- under normal development, tourism development can lead to self-financing mechanisms that can benefit managers of protected areas as a tool for conservation;

- support conservation activities, by convincing governments and the public on the importance of natural areas.

Development of villages and ecotourism areas should bring direct income farmers and all citizens of the village and local government to directly use the local budget to protect ecotourism resources.

In the concept of sustainable development, ecotourism is the factor that ensures preservation of unspoiled natural resources and rural lifestyle, customs and traditions, in a word of traditional culture made available to tourists. This form of tourism is a multi-activity, it represents more than a holiday spent in the countryside, in nature. Jurisdictions in general to natural and sensible diet is a factor of attraction manifested more strongly in the international market, particularly in developed countries. Country Living provides active rest, the increasingly rare in urban areas.

Ecological tourism in the village can become a cultural ambassador educational tool for progress constantly and cost-share of the village.

This can be achieved by:

a) going in a weak agricultural production;

b) prevention, that decompressing cities rising unemployment;

c) separation of urban society to generations born and raised in concrete blocks and resume their contact with the earth;

d) the major contribution to raising the general civilization of a large population groups, given the peasants, who are more isolated, especially by improving sanitary conditions, social behavior and cultivate aesthetic taste.

CONCLUSIONS

Through ecotourism it can be assured the enlargement of traditional economic activities, without marginalizing them or substitute for the local economy and not be subject to external influences and internal changes. Tourism activities carried out under the banner of ecotourism opportunities specific local population and tourism industry being forced to use natural resources in a sustainable manner and appreciate natural and cultural valuable objectives.

Given that ecotourism is a niche form of tourism, but still very dynamic, given the

environmental regulations adopted in our country, the economic, social and cultural benefits that tourism can bring to local communities, but also negative effects on growth chaotic, uncontrolled of tourism can generate, place ever more frequently the problem achieving a sustainable ecotourism development plan.

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