Environment Commission

Creating ethical practices in regards to Ecotourism

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Forum	Environment Commission
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Introduction

In the last few years, ecotourism has become increasingly popular as a form of travel aimed at exploring the natural environments of our planet, while at the same time trying to minimize environmental impact and support local communities. Ethical practices play a crucial role in shaping ecotourism and ensuring a sustainable and responsible approach to travel.

Ethical practices in ecotourism encompass a range of principles and actions aimed at minimizing the negative impact on the environment, promoting local community development, and fostering sustainability. These practices involve environmental conservation, respect for local cultures and communities, education and awareness, sustainable transportation and infrastructure, collaboration and stakeholder engagement, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Ecotourism includes activities such as hiking in protected natural areas, exploring national parks, diving in coral reefs and observing wildlife in their natural habitat. While this form of tourism can offer important benefits, such as encouraging conservation and generating revenue for local economies, it also poses potential risks to the environment and local communities.

To minimize the negative impact of ecotourism and ensure that benefits are distributed in a fair and sustainable way, ethical practices must be implemented. This includes respecting local culture and traditions, supporting community development and fostering environmental conservation. It involves striking a balance between providing unforgettable travel experiences and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the destination.

Creating these ethical practices can be done in several ways, such as using education from an early age to make it clear to children that there are indeed negative effects of vacationing and that it is not just fun. There are several ways countries can ensure that it is made clear that there are

actually negative effects, through media, for example. This will make people more likely to lean toward ecotourism vacations.

Creating ethical practices related to ecotourism is critical to ensuring that this form of travel is conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner. By applying ethical principles, we can ensure that ecotourism becomes a positive force in the preservation of our natural environments and the well-being of local communities. It is a mutual responsibility of travelers, tour operators, governments and stakeholders to embrace and promote ethical practices so that future generations can also enjoy the beautiful natural treasures of our planet.

Definition of Key Terms

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experience and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented (control, benefits and scale). It typically occurs in natural areas and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas.

Ethical practices

Ethical practices in ecotourism are the responsible and sustainable behavior aimed at minimizing negative impacts on the environment, respecting local cultures, supporting local communities, promoting biodiversity conservation and ensuring fair distribution of benefits, while promoting awareness and education among tourists and stakeholders.

General Overview

Effects of tourism

The tourism industry is growing tremendously worldwide. While there are numerous benefits to tourism, there are also negative effects. Tourism can have a positive impact on nature and protective areas. In fact, the economic revenues from tourism can be used to protect nature by

setting up nature parks. For low-income countries, the revenue and eventual profit made from a high percentage of tourism is very important. Many countries therefore depend on tourism.

But the actions of a tourist can also lead to degradation of the environment, culture and language. There may be great inconvenience to the public in the region or country of residence.There are also very many consequences in the form of waste, air and water pollution, CO2 emissions, recreational pressure and ultimately disturbance in nature. In fact, many people use an airplane to go to their vacation destination. This causes high CO2 emissions, which is bad for the climate and environment. A tourist needs accommodation, transportation, food and drink and recreational activities. With a large influx of tourists, this can lead to problems such as accommodation overcrowding, road congestion and pollution.
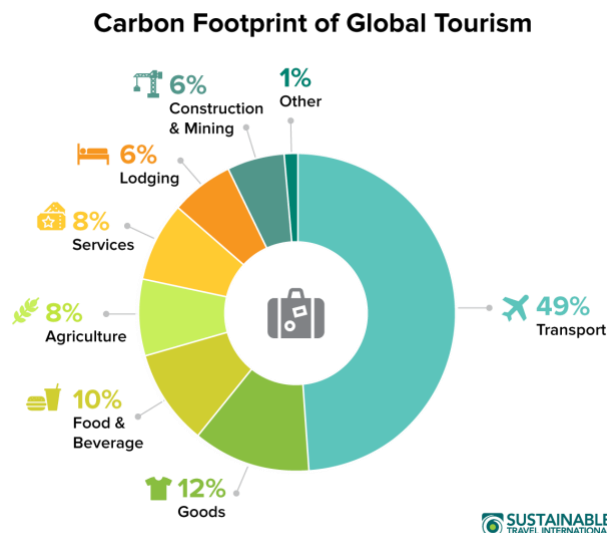
Carbon footprint of global tourism in the last decade, 20 April 2023, https://sustainabletravel.org/issues/carbon-footprint-tourism/.

Ecotourism

These are a few reasons that in the present and the future, there will be more frequent encouragement of ecotourism. Ecotourism is a term that is used to describe sustainable tourism. It is defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as "tourism that takes full account of current and future ecological, social and economic impacts on the climate and environment, addressing the needs of visitors, industry

and local people. By visiting sensitive areas with respect for the natural environment, tourists can help preserve and restore ecological value.

One of the main reasons ecotourism is considered positive is the conservation of natural resources. Ecotourism focuses on preserving natural ecosystems, biodiversity and protecting endangered species. By carefully treating the natural environment while traveling, tourists can contribute to the preservation of these valuable resources.

In addition, ecotourism provides economic benefits to local communities. It creates jobs, promotes local businesses and generates income from tourism. By encouraging community-based tourism, where the benefits of tourism go directly to local people, they can preserve and promote their cultural heritage.

By combining these benefits, ecotourism helps preserve natural and cultural heritage, encourages local development and helps promote a more sustainable way of traveling. It offers a chance to enjoy the beauty of nature while contributing to its protection for future generations.

Ethical practices of ecotourism

Implementing ethical practices of ecotourism leads to several positive consequences. First, it contributes to the conservation of natural resources, such as forests, water resources and biodiversity. By minimizing negative impacts on the environment, such as reducing waste and preserving ecosystems, ecotourism plays a crucial role in preserving these valuable resources for future generations.

Moreover, ethical ecotourism promotes respect and protection of flora and fauna. By making tourists aware of the need not to disturb wildlife, to respect mating seasons, and to abide by rules governing protected species and areas, ecotourism helps preserve vulnerable species and their habitats.

Ethical ecotourism practices also provide social and economic benefits to local communities. Creating jobs, stimulating local businesses and generating income that directly benefits local people, it strengthens the local economy and helps preserve cultural heritage. In addition, ecotourism promotes cultural exchange and understanding, giving tourists the opportunity to experience local traditions, crafts and lifestyles while engaging in respectful interactions with local communities.

Overall, ethical ecotourism contributes to a more sustainable approach to tourism. It offers not only the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of a destination, but also to actively contribute to preserving the environment, supporting local communities and promoting cultural understanding. By making conscious choices and embracing ethical practices, we can increase the positive impact of tourism and ensure a more sustainable future.

Major Parties Involved

Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, there has already been very much progress in ecotourism. They have been able to prove that economic growth and nature conservation are related. In Costa Rica, the benefits of ecotourism have allowed for a better environment and economic growth in the developing country. The main reason for the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica is the active participation of the private sector, the exceptional biodiversity and the interaction of the extensive network of protected areas.

International and national NGOs, local businesses, indigenous people and government organizations also play a major role in the success of the programs. Good ecotourism practices in Costa Rica have helped minimize the negative impacts of traditional tourism on the natural environment, create awareness, provide financial benefits to local communities and have helped build the environment. Costa Rica is thus a good example of what positive impacts ecotourism can have on a country.

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNTWO)

The UNWTO is a specialized United Nations agency responsible for promoting and developing sustainable and responsible tourism worldwide. The organization serves as a global forum for the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the field of tourism. UNWTO works with governments, the private sector, international organizations and other stakeholders to develop policies, guidelines and programs that promote sustainable tourism. The agency provides technical support, capacity building and advice to countries to promote sustainable tourism and engages in research and data collection to analyze trends and developments in the tourism industry. UNWTO seeks to promote economic= growth, inclusiveness, cultural preservation and environmental protection through responsible tourism.

Environmental organisations

Global organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the International Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) play a vital role in promoting ethical practices in ecotourism. They actively work to conserve ecosystems, protect endangered species, and raise awareness among the general public about the importance of sustainable tourism.

WWF, for example, collaborates with governments, local communities, and tourism stakeholders to advocate for ethical ecotourism practices. They provide guidance and support to ensure that ecotourism activities align with conservation goals and prioritize the well-being of natural habitats and wildlife. Through initiatives like certification programs and sustainable tourism guidelines, WWF strives to ensure a higher proportion of ecotourism follows ethical practices, particularly on a national level.

By fostering partnerships with local communities, governments, and other stakeholders, these organizations establish frameworks for responsible tourism. They emphasize the need to minimize negative environmental impacts, respect local cultures, and support local economies. Through their collective efforts, biodiversity is preserved, fragile ecosystems are protected, and sustainable development is promoted in ecotourism destinations worldwide.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
September 27th, 1970	Establishment of UNWTO
June 14th, 1992	UNCED convention in Rio de Janeiro and the General Assembly adopts the Global Code for Ethics for Tourism
September 25th, 2015	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is adopted by the General Assembly

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- The Rio declaration on environment and development, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26)

- Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, 28 February 2002 (A/RES/56/212)

- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015 (A/RES/70/1)

- Promotion of sustainable tourism including ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection, 14 December 2022 (A/RES/77/178)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Awareness and advocacy campaigns

The UNWTO and environmental NGOs, have launched awareness and advocacy campaigns to promote ethical practices in ecotourism. These campaigns are designed to educate the public,

policymakers and industry professionals about the importance of sustainable and responsible tourism and the potential consequences of unethical tourism.

The UNWTO's awareness campaigns aim to inform the public, policymakers and professionals about the importance of sustainable and responsible tourism, as well as the potential consequences of unethical tourism. They aim to raise awareness and encourage travelers to make responsible choices while traveling. By providing insight into the impact of tourism on the environment, local communities and cultural heritage, the UNWTO seeks to bring about positive change in travelers' behavior.

The UNWTO also targets policymakers and tourism industry professionals. They conduct advocacy to promote the development and implementation of policies and guidelines that support ethical practices in ecotourism. Through lobbying and advocacy, the UNWTO seeks to influence decision-making at the national and international levels. They seek to promote sustainable and responsible tourism practices and to bring about positive change in the way tourism is developed and managed. Through awareness campaigns and advocacy, the UNWTO plays an important role in promoting ethical practices in ecotourism. Through information dissemination, awareness and advocacy for policies and guidelines, they strive to make a positive impact on sustainability and responsibility in the tourism industry.

Possible Solutions

Education and awareness

Promote education and awareness campaigns targeting tourists, tour operators, local communities, and policymakers. These campaigns can focus on the importance of ethical practices, the impact of tourism on the environment and local communities, and the benefits of sustainable tourism. By enhancing understanding and knowledge, stakeholders can make informed decisions and actively participate in promoting ethical practices.

Sustainable development management

Promote sustainable destination management practices that consider carrying capacity, waste management, resource conservation, and infrastructure development. Encourage sustainable transportation options, green building practices, and the use of renewable energy sources. Sustainable destination management plans can guide development while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and local communities. By implementing these solutions, it is possible to create a framework for ethical practices in ecotourism. Through education, collaboration, certification, community involvement, monitoring, and sustainable management, the tourism industry can contribute to environmental conservation, support local communities, and promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

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