

Using Contingency Valuation Approaches to Assess Community Benefits through the Use of Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site as a Tourism Attraction

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Abstract : Heritage as an asset can be used to achieve cultural and socio-economic development through its careful use as a tourist attraction. Cultural heritage sites, especially those listed as World Heritage sites generate a lot of revenue through their use as tourist attractions. According to article 5(a) of the World Heritage Convention, World Heritage Sites (WHS) must serve a function in the life of the communities. This is further stressed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) charter on cultural heritage tourism which recognizes the positive effects of tourism on cultural heritage and underlines that domestic and international tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, conservation should thus provide for responsible and well-managed opportunities for local communities. The inclusion of communities in the world heritage agenda identifies them as the owners of the heritage and partners in the management planning process. This reiterates the need to empower communities and enable them to participate in the decisions which relate to the use of their heritage divorcing from the ideals of viewing communities as beneficiaries from the heritage resource. It recognizes community ownership rights to cultural heritage an element enshrined in Zimbabwe' national constitution. Through the use of contingency valuation approaches, by assessing the Willingness to pay for visitors at the site the research determined the tourism use value of Great Zimbabwe (WHS). It assessed the extent to which the communities at Great Zimbabwe (WHS) have been developed through the tourism use of the WHS. Findings show that the current management mechanism in place regards communities as stakeholders in the management of the WHS, their ownership and property rights are not fully recognized. They receive indirect benefits from the tourism use of the WHS. This paper calls for a shift in management approach where community ownership rights are fully recognized and more inclusive approaches are adopted to ensure that the goal of sustainable development is achieved. Pro-poor benefits of tourism are key to enhancing the livelihoods of communities and can only be achieved if their rights are recognized and respected.

Keywords : communities, cultural heritage tourism, development, property ownership rights, pro-poor benefits, sustainability, world heritage site

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