Chapter 7

Peace Promotion Through Volunteer Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been recognized as a social force that can promote international understanding, cooperation, and global fraternity among all people of the world. Volunteer tourism, as an expanding form of tourism, is becoming one of the promising tools to strengthen these values. However, the research on this topic, is so far limited. Therefore, the aim of the chapter is to analyze how volunteer tourism can promote peace and find out how the connection of tourism and volunteering through creating specific improvements in education, healthcare, environmental preservation, and community empowerment contribute to principles of peace. Following the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the chapter highlights the connection of tourism and peace, as well as the role of volunteer tourism in peace promotion. Based on the AIESEC case study, it examines the demand and supply of volunteer tourism projects aiming at implementing the SDGs.

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INTRODUCTION

International travelling promotes understanding and trust among people from different backgrounds. This line of thinking has brought up to surface the concept of peace through tourism. As tourists are many times peace messengers, they play an important role in peace promotion. This kind of promotion is many times more effective than diplomatic meeting and official government conferences, as peace in many developing countries is promoted between local inhabitants, tourism creates job opportunities and is a major factor of household income.

One of the expanding and promising forms of tourism is volunteer tourism. International volunteer tourism brings together people of different generations, heterogeneous cultural and religious backgrounds and diverse communities. On the basis of mutual understanding, volunteers and communities meet their human, environmental and social needs, demonstrate their attitude towards respect for the rights, dignity and culture of other countries, and promote equality of opportunities.

The connection between peace and volunteer tourism is so far under-researched topic. Therefore the aim of the chapter is to analyze how volunteer tourism can promote peace. It is the authors’ attempt to find out, how can the connection of tourism and volunteering through creating specific improvements in areas such as education, healthcare, environmental preservation and community empowerment contribute to principles of peace.

The Connection Between Tourism and Peace in the Scientific Works

The increasing focus on the topic of tourism and peace has been observed in the empirical studies since the late 1980’s as the reaction on two conferences concerning this theme. International Tourism – Passport to Peace (1987, Ireland) and the First Global Conference: Tourism – A Vital Force for Peace held by The International Institute of Peace Through Tourism (IIPT) in Canada, 1988. Tourism is a significant vehicle for promoting understanding and trust among people in the world. The debate on the relevance of tourism as a force for peace is based on numerous studies (Table 1).

D’Amore (1988) sets out the ways in which tourism might contribute to a better understanding between nations. He argues that people and nations have to recognize the role of international travel in promoting understanding and trust among different cultures and as a force for world peace. Open and sustainable tourism can be a force for peace, with causal mechanisms operating both at the individual and state level. Open tourism refers to the ease and extent to which tourism flows within and between countries allowing the exchange of money, ideas, and cultures. Open tourism can
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