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Shared Prosperity through Tourism: How to Create Productive Employment Opportunities for All?

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Title: Shared Prosperity through Tourism: How to Create Productive Employment Opportunities for All?

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Abstract:

Introduction

In January 2016, the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were officially adopted by world leaders. Unlike their predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs include a specific goal to reduce inequalities (SDG 10). Economic growth alone has proven to be insufficient in reducing poverty since not all people are included in the growth process nor do they benefit equally from it (Bourguignon, 2004). When growth bypasses the poor or other marginalized groups, it may even increase inequality. Growth that is not inclusive can be both a danger to social and political stability and a threat to the sustainability of the growth (Ali & Son, 2007). The realization that growth itself is not sufficient to reduce poverty has led policy makers to look for alternative strategies. The inclusive growth concept is the latest approach used by international institutions to improve living standards in the developing world. Inclusive growth can be defined as growth coupled with a decline in inequality. The fundamentals of inclusive growth are based upon providing the poor with productive employment opportunities, either self- or wage-employed.

The focus of this research is the need to gain a better understanding of how tourism can contribute to an inclusive growth strategy in developing countries. In order for tourism to be supportive of inclusive growth, it has to create productive employment as well as economic opportunities for entrepreneurs, while also ensuring equal access to these jobs and opportunities. Identifying the constraints to inclusive growth through tourism development will support these goals.

Method

The research is exploratory and involves a literature review on studies related to growth and inequality within a tourism context. The findings are applied to the tourism sector in Macedonia.

Findings

The main constraints to equal access and benefits of tourism include unequal access to education, infrastructure, finance, information, and regulatory systems. Disparity within countries related to tourism development can be divided into regional, gender, ethnic, age, and socio-economic inequality. Regional disparity of road networks is the main constraint to inclusiveness of the tourism sector in Macedonia.

Conclusion

A tourism sector development strategy solely focused on increasing tourism growth or one that merely addresses the role of tourism in reducing poverty or inequality is not always successful. In order to achieve inclusive growth on a national or regional scale, both strategies need to be addressed concurrently. It is therefore important to identify and prioritize those constraints which are considered most binding to achieve both goals.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study adds to the literature on tourism and inequality and fits the current need of developing

countries to identify and subsequently prioritize their need for policy intervention.

References:

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