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Who Benefits from Community-based Ecotourism Development? Insights from Tafi Atome, Ghana

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ABSTRACT *The distribution of ecotourism's benefits plays a critical role in ensuring sustainable community support for ecotourism projects. This paper explores benefits that have accrued from an ecotourism project and examines the distribution process of these related benefits in Tafi Atome, a rural community in Ghana. Data were obtained from a study conducted between November and December 2010 in the community using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Findings from the study indicated that the benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary project to the community were communal and personal in nature. However, the monkey sanctuary's constitution, which stipulates the distribution and management of benefits, had not made provision for non-indigenous residents. It is therefore recommended that modifications be made to the project's constitution to address these inconsistencies in order to forestall conflicts in the community.*

Introduction

Community-based ecotourism (CBE) is a growing phenomenon throughout the developing world. It has been purported that through proper management, CBE projects can become efficient tools for dealing with the myriad socio-economic problems that bedevil destinations which depend on natural resources (Fransson & Gaerling, 1999 as cited in Neth, 2008). For most CBE advocates, the benefits associated with such projects including sustenance of rural livelihoods, empowerment of local communities and infrastructural development provide sufficient justification for further CBE developments (Campbell, 1999; Fennell, 2003; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Scheyvens, 1999; Strickland-Munro & Moore, 2013; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Weaver, 1998).

In spite of the arguments advanced in favour of CBE development, concerns have been raised about the distribution of benefits especially among local community members. Researchers including Simmons (1994), Joppe (1996), Hoggett (1997), Silk (1999), Sandbrook and Adams (2012) and Strickland-Munro and Moore (2013) have observed that because of the heterogeneous nature (comprising different power relations) of local communities involved in tourism development, benefit distributions are often skewed. Evidence

presented by Liu (1994), Akama (1996) and Sandbrook and Adams (2012) to this effect reveals that usually power holders in the communities, local elites, men, business owners and traditional leaders, influence the distribution of CBE's benefits to the detriment of others.

One fundamental principle of CBE is total community control over tourism development. Nonetheless, the socio-cultural, political and economic conditions prevailing within local communities can undermine this attempt at achieving all inclusiveness in tourism development and benefit sharing. Thus, even within the context of total community control, tourism's benefits may be unequally distributed. In order to ensure the widespread of tourism benefits, local communities must lessen or if possible remove all operational, structural and cultural limitations (Tosun, 2000) to benefit sharing. Again, measures must be put in place to deliberately engage all community members in decision-making processes. Gaining an understanding of the nature and distribution processes of CBE's benefits especially among community members is of extreme importance if sustainable community support for ecotourism development is to be achieved. In spite of the need for more investigations to be conducted into this issue, CBE researchers continue to provide limited information on the dynamics that influence benefit distribution among community members (e.g. Rowat & Engelhardt, 2007; Yacob, Shuib, Mamat, & Radam, 2007; Zapata, Hall, Lindo, & Vanderschaeghen, 2011). Additionally, the challenges that undermine the benefit distribution processes are often disregarded both in policy and in practice (Kiss, 2004; Strickland-Munro & Moore, 2013). Consequently, apathy, agitations and mistrusts among community members continue to plague the potential of CBE as a conservational and developmental tool (Blackstock, 2005; Jones, 2005). In light of the above, coupled with a dearth of information relating to tourism benefit distribution within the Ghanaian context, this study explores how local communities involved in ecotourism development distribute benefits that accrue to them. Through primary data collected from residents around the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary, Ghana, this paper seeks to find answers to the following questions: (1) what is the nature of benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary and (2) how are these benefits distributed among community members?

The motivation for this study is based on the growing reassessment of community-based tourism projects globally against the backdrop of scarcity of success cases (Kiss, 2004; Kontogeorgopoulous, 2005; Strickland-Munro & Moore, 2013; Zapata et al., 2011). Findings from this study will therefore provide valuable information to tourism planners in Ghana on issues which influence benefit distribution. This may inform how they design successive CBEs to ensure that access to the benefits accruing from such projects is widespread and not the preserve of a privileged few. Second, an examination of the nature of the benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary will provide an indication of the relationship between the nature of benefits and their accessibility to local residents. Finally, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on CBE's capacity to meet community aspirations within the Ghanaian and African context.

Nature and Distribution of Benefits

A substantial body of literature on ecotourism's impacts points to the fact that the development of ecotourism brings about benefits (Belsky, 1999; Jones, 2005; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Weaver, 1998). The benefits which can be simply considered as the positive things that ensue from ecotourism development cut across economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions. CBEs have created employment opportunities for local residents (Ross & Wall, 1999; Wallace & Pierce, 1996; West, 2006), contributed to the conservation and preservation of natural areas (Nature Conservation and

Research Centre, 2006; Rowat & Engelhardt, 2007; Stronza & Pêgas, 2008), and improved upon the quality of social lives of local communities through infrastructural developments (Scheyvens, 1999; Wearing & Larsen, 1996; Weaver, 1998).

Nevertheless, critiques of CBE elucidate that benefits are often minimal and periodic. As a result, they are not able to effectively influence local residents' social and cultural patterns of resource use (Kiss, 2004). Consequently, local residents go back to their old ways of doing things immediately after the incentives for tourism development dwindle (Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). In the Monarch butterfly reserve project in Mexico for example, many local residents went back to logging activities because the project failed to yield the expected employment opportunities (Barkin, 2003).

Local communities involved in tourism development are not homogenous entities (Dorsner, 2004). There are limits to what their involvement alone can achieve in terms of equity especially given the pre-existing socio-economic inequalities and power relations existing in these communities (Agarwal, 2001; Tosun, 2000). There are biases in the distribution of tourism's benefits on the basis of gender (Sinclair, 1997), education (Jones, 2005), ethnicity (Key & Pillai, 2006), proximity to attraction (Sandbrook & Adams, 2012), age (Leon, 2007), social networks (Jones, 2005) and elite domination (Tosun, 2000).

Available evidence suggests a continuous elite domination in projects that are supposed to be participatory (Katz & Sara, 1997). Botchway (2001) in his study on participatory projects in Ghana points out that the young, inexperienced and poorly paid project facilitators were often vulnerable to manipulation by powerful elites in the communities. Since these elites are in a more advantageous position than others in the communities, they tend to have greater access to benefits as compared to others. On the other hand, Rao and Ibanez (2003) and Mansuri and Rao (2004) argue that elite domination is inevitable in community-based projects especially in rural communities where the elites are often leaders who represent moral and political authority. These elites are often better educated, wealthy and better networked, and hence are in a better position to interact with outsiders who might get involved with the project. Hence, elite domination is necessary to ensure that the tourism industry continues to thrive. Key and Pillai (2006) traced some of the unequal distribution of ecotourism benefits to ethnic discrimination. Their study highlighted the potential of ecotourism development in reinforcing the subordinate position of some ethnic groups to others. Discrimination along gender was also recognized by Agarwal (2001) and Tabbush (2010). Their studies showed inequalities women suffer in terms of participating and having access to tourism's benefits. Agarwal (2001) noticed that in India, cash benefits were put to uses that precluded women such as youth club repair and purchasing community utensils and rugs.

Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary

The Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary was established as a CBE project in 1996 through collaborations between the Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC), United States Peace Corps—Ghana, Ghana Tourism Authority, Netherlands Development Organization (Ghana), with funding assistance from the United States Agency for International Development. The idea behind the project was “to develop environmentally and culturally sensitive locations in rural Ghana as tourism destinations in order to create opportunities for rural communities to earn income through the conservation of local ecosystems and culture” (Nature Conservation and Research Centre, 2006).

The sanctuary falls within the wet semi-equatorial climatic zone of Ghana with annual rainfall ranging between 1,016 and 1,210 mm. The rainy seasons are however very unpredictable. It is also within the forest savannah transitional ecological zone of Ghana, a zone

that is abundant in various natural resources suitable for nature-based tourism development (Hohoe Municipal Assembly, 2004). The sanctuary is home to over 200 Mona monkeys. The monkeys are revered by the residents of Tafi Atome because of the belief that they are messengers of their gods. The sacredness attached to these monkeys has ensured their protection and that of the forest reserve within which they live for over 200 years till date (Zeppel, 2006). The monkeys remain the main attraction for domestic and foreign tourists to the area. Hiking, home stay arrangements, guided community walks, traditional cloth weaving, traditional drumming and dancing are other tourism activities promoted in the community. A guest house is available for overnight stays and a souvenir shop available at the visitor reception centre. Tourism in Tafi Atome is administered by the local tourism management board which has a two-year tenure. The board is made up of representatives of all the clans in the community.

Methods

Preliminary investigations were conducted in August 2010 by the first author in Tafi Atome to ascertain the state of the monkey sanctuary and solicit permission from the traditional leaders to conduct the study. Subsequently, a community survey was conducted between November and December 2010.

Individual respondents for the survey were selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two suburbs of Tafi Atome, Tafi Atome No. 1 and Tafi Atome No. 2 (also known as Tomefa), were purposively selected. The former is where the project is situated while the latter is the largest of the three (3) migrant communities and closest to the sanctuary. The second stage involved the distribution of the sampled figure (317) between the two suburbs, Tafi Atome No. 1 (133) and Tafi Atome No. 2 (184). To ensure gender balance, the third stage proportionally allotted samples to both sexes in each community (Tafi Atome No. 1: Male = 68, Female = 65; Tafi Atome No. 2: Male = 94, Female = 90). The next stage saw the systematic selection of households from both communities. The sampling frame used for the selection was based on the most current communal labour attendance lists from both communities. These lists contained the name of households that had participated in the communal labour. A calculated sampling interval of three was used to select every third household on the list. In order for the sample to reflect gender balance, some individual respondents were purposively selected. Therefore, some female household members who were 18 years and above but were not household heads were selected for the study. Additionally, five key informants representing traditional rulers, fetish priests, youth, non-indigenes and local tourism management committee members were engaged.

The data for the study were primarily solicited through questionnaires administered to 317 household heads or their representatives who were 18 years and above and were resident in the community. However, after editing the completed questionnaires, 15 of them were discarded. Hence 302 questionnaires were used for the analysis. Semi-structured interview guides were also used. The questionnaires were sectioned into three. The first section explored the nature of benefits from the project. The second section measured respondents' perceptions about equity in benefit distribution along a 3-point likert scale (1 = Agree, 2 = Uncertain and 3 = Disagree) and the third section focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. A semi-structured interview guide was also used. Questions on the semi-structured interview guide were related to the distribution of benefits from the sanctuary.

Due to the low literacy levels in the community, the instruments were administered in the local language (Ewe) and translated into English for analysis. With the aid of recorders, interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interactions were informally done in the

homes of the respondents or places of their convenience. The consent of all respondents was verbally sought before the recordings were done. Interviewees have been assigned pseudo-names to ensure their anonymity and their positions have also not been included in this study. The relaxed atmosphere within which the interviews were conducted enabled extensive probing into the issues discussed.

The transcriptions from the interviews were manually analysed. Responses which were similar and related were grouped under themes. These texts were then analysed and used for the discussions in this paper. The chi-square test of independence was used to examine variations in respondents' perceptions on benefit distribution by their socio-demographic characteristics.

Background Characteristics of the Sample

In terms of native status, 58.6% of the respondents were non-indigenes while 41.4% were indigenes of Tafi Atome. Males dominated the sample (52.3%) as against their female counterparts (47.7%). Regarding educational level, only 20.9% of the respondents had attained high-school certificate which was the highest educational level recorded among the respondents. The entire sample had an age distribution of 35 years and below (53.3%), 35–55 years (33.4%) and above 55 years (13.2%) with the average age being 38.2 years. Regarding marital status, more than half of the respondents were married (58.9%) while 41.1% of them were unmarried. Average length of stay in the community was 24.1 years.

Nature of Benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary

Two main categories of benefits from the monkey sanctuary were identified; personal and communal (Table 1). Out of the 302 respondents contacted, more than two-thirds (87.7%) concurred that some benefits had accrued from the project to the community as a whole, while 37.4% gave indications of personally profiting from the monkey sanctuary.

With regard to the communal benefits, infrastructural development (75.5%) with funding support from revenue from the project (Table 1) was the most cited benefit. From the community's share of the revenue generated, two public toilets, a clinic and housing quarters for nurses, and a kindergarten block have been constructed. A number of electricity transmission poles have also been purchased to facilitate electrification of the community. When respondents were asked about their views on the role of the sanctuary in the community's development, one reported that "Because of the money being generated from the project, we (community) don't have to wait for government to come and build a clinic or bring electricity

Table 1. Nature of benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary.

Nature	Percentage
<i>Communal</i>	
Infrastructural development	75.5
Support from tourists/visitors	16.0
Increased environmental awareness	8.5
<i>Personal</i>	
Use of public amenities	81.5
Support from tourists/visitors	14.8
Employment	3.7

Source: Fieldwork (2010).

poles to us. When we complete the nurses' quarters and clinic, we know they will give us a nurse and we do not have to travel to Logba or Hohoe again when we fall sick."

Thus, the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary has provided the community with an important alternative source of funds for community development. This finding reaffirms earlier observations made by Weaver (1998) and Scheyvens (1999) that tourism facilitates infrastructural development for communities engaged in it.

Results from the study also point to other indirect benefits trickling down from the monkey sanctuary to the community mainly through philanthropic gestures by tourists (Table 1). Respondents (16.0%) recounted a number of times where tourists have made donations in the form of pencils, books and clothing to school pupils, and renovation of the school building. In addition, a scholarship scheme to support local residents through schooling or learning of trades such as hairdressing, dressmaking and auto-mechanic was instituted by a tourist.

Moreover, effects of ecotourism development on environmental conservation as alluded to by Rowat and Engelhardt (2007) and Stronza and Pegas (2008) were evident from the results of the study. The project according to some respondents (8.5%) had ignited collective action to conserve the natural environment on the part of the community members. This development may perhaps be attributed to either residents' increased environmental awareness as a result of participating in this CBE project (Stonich, 2000) or the community's economic gains from the project (Stronza & Pegas, 2008). Further investigations in relation to residents' increased environmental consciousness revealed the existence of bye-laws enacted to regulate residents' behaviour in relation to the project. The bye-laws prohibit hunting in the forest, bush burning or cutting down of trees, littering and dumping of solid waste in the forest reserve. On the other hand, the bye-laws gave directives for the creation of fire belts around the forest, regular planting of mango trees to serve as food for the monkeys and labelling of footpaths to aid movement in the forest reserve, all of which were being done as of the time of the study. Respondents' awareness of these bye-laws was exhibited through their explanation of what the laws meant, their usefulness and what could be done to any individual who violated any of them. For instance, a respondent revealed that "It is forbidden for anyone to hunt in this forest reserve. If a gunshot is heard, all the young men will immediately rush into the forest reserve to find the person who shot the gun, and I tell you, they will find the person." Another said that "If you are caught begging from tourists, you will be fined. Not even our children are allowed to beg from the tourists." Again, another respondent remarked that "They said we cannot approach the tourists when they come to the community if you do not work at the visitor centre. I also want to make friends with them but because I do not work there, I can't approach them."

Regarding personal benefits (Table 1), respondents reported employment, support from tourists and use of public facilities as their personal gains from the project. Prior to the development of tourism in Tafi Atome, farming was the predominant economic activity of the people. However, with the development of the monkey sanctuary as a tourism attraction, an important alternative source of employment has been created for the local residents. As of the time of the study, Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary had employed the services of ten locals to serve on the local tourism management board on a two-year basis after which opportunities would be given to others. Employment opportunities also opened up to five local tour guides, two receptionists and two attendants at the souvenir shop. Besides, home stay arrangements on offer in the community provided alternative income to households engaged in it. The community cultural troupe and local folklore narrators were also occasionally engaged to entertain tourists. As posited by Ashley (2000), the earnings from such employment have the potential of lifting households' living standards. One respondent

indicated that “If it has not been for this cultural troupe, I would have also left this village for the bigger towns to look for a job. This is because there is nothing here for the young people to do. Now because of the tourists, we also have something to do and get paid for.”

In addition, some community members have received various forms of support from tourists as shown in [Table 1](#). A number of young people were sponsored through schooling and apprenticeship by a tourist who had adopted the community. The sponsorship offered the beneficiaries a chance to select any town of their choice to learn trades or of school, thereby giving a number of the beneficiaries a chance to travel outside their communities. In addition, the philanthropist organized a tour of the UK by the community’s cultural troupe for a number of cultural performances. To the beneficiaries and their families, these supports were of considerable value.

Over three-quarters of the respondents (81.5%) as represented in [Table 1](#) perceived their use of public facilities provided through funds from the sanctuary as how they have also individually benefited from the project. To further buttress their position, one key informant stated that

if we are to share the money equally among all community members, how much can we give to everyone and will that money be enough for the person to use for anything? However the public toilet and the clinic can be accessed by all.

Another noted that “if they construct the kindergarten and my children are able to attend it, then it is I who has benefited”.

Distribution of Benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary

The distribution of benefits from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary was examined through the questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Results from the interviews suggest that prior to the enactment of a constitution to guide the management of the sanctuary, decisions on what to do with the benefits, especially revenue, was left to the traditional rulers and the local tourism management board. However, with the help of the NCRC team, a benefit distribution plan was drawn to address the problem. According to the new plan, revenue from the project was to be distributed as follows; 20% to landowners (since the forest reserve is on family-owned lands), 8% to the fetish clan (because the monkeys are regarded as messengers of the gods), 10% to be reinvested into the project, 2% to the district assembly, 5% to NCRC scholarship fund and the remaining to the community development fund. The local tourism management board was also obliged to render accounts to the community after every three months.

Notwithstanding these arrangements, respondents expressed divided views when questioned about equity in the distribution of benefits from the sanctuary on a three-point likert scale ranging over 1 = Agree, 2 = Uncertain and 3 = Disagree. The chi-square test was used to explore whether these views varied by the background characteristics of respondents. Out of the six background characteristics tested ([Table 2](#)), significant differences were noted among respondents’ place of residence ($p = .000$) and native status ($p = .000$). No significant differences were found in respondents’ perceptions about equitable benefit distribution by their sex ($p = .309$), age (0.510), marital status (0.720) and length of stay ($p = .249$) ([Table 2](#)). However, most respondents irrespective of age, sex, marital status and length of stay in the community disagreed on the equitable distribution of benefits from the project.

In terms of place of residence ([Table 2](#)), it was found out that while majority of respondents living in Tafi Atome No. 1 (64.6%) agreed that benefits were equitably distributed, those living in Tafi Atome No. 2 (74.3%) disagreed. A minimum percentage of respondents

Table 2. Respondents' views on equitable benefit distribution by their background characteristics.

	<i>N</i>	Equitable benefit distribution		
		<i>D</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Place of residence</i>				
Tafi Atome No. 1	127	26.8	8.7	64.6
Tafi Atome No. 2	175	74.3	17.1	8.6
		$X^2 = 19.91$ df = 2 $p = .000^*$		
<i>Native Status</i>				
Indigene	125	6.3	64.3	29.4
Non-indigene	177	74.6	18.6	6.8
		$X^2 = 32.54$ df = 2 $p = .000^*$		
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	158	66.5	15.8	17.7
Female	144	74.3	11.1	14.6
		$X^2 = 2.35$ df = 2 $p = .309$		
<i>Age</i>				
<35	161	70.2	12.4	17.4
35–55	101	68.3	17.8	13.9
>55	40	75.0	7.5	17.5
		$X^2 = 3.29$ df = 4 $p = .510$		
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Single	124	70.9	11.8	17.3
Married	178	69.8	14.6	15.6
		$X^2 = 0.52$ df = 2 $p = .720$		
<i>Length of stay (years)</i>				
<6	49	63.3	22.4	14.3
6–18	77	76.6	10.4	13.0
>18	176	69.3	12.5	18.2
		$X^2 = 5.40$ df = 4 $p = .249$		

*Significant at <.05.

Source: Fieldwork (2010).

from both communities (Tafi Atome No. 1 = 8.7%, Tafi Atome No. 2 = 17.1%) held a neutral view on the equitable distribution of benefits from the project.

With regard to respondents' native status, most indigenes were ambivalent (64.3%) regarding the equitable distribution of benefits from the sanctuary. On the other hand, about two-thirds of non-indigenous respondents (74.6%) expressed dissatisfaction with the distribution of the sanctuary's benefits. This may be linked to the fact that most non-indigenes were generally displeased with the location of the infrastructural projects. When respondents were asked what their sentiments were about the location of the tangible infrastructural benefits, one remarked that

All the public toilets are at Tafi Atome No. 1. We cannot walk all that distance just to make use of it. What happens if someone wants to attend to nature's call in the night? That is not all. The electricity poles brought to the community were all erected in Tafi Atome No. 1. That is why they (Tafi Atome No. 1) have electricity and we (Tafi Atome No. 2) don't.

These significant observations made in relation to unequal distribution of benefits based on respondents' location and native status are consistent with findings from studies such as Key and Pillai (2006) and Sandbrook and Adams (2012). In the case of Tafi Atome, the sanctuary and most of the tangible benefits from it are located in Tafi Atome No. 1. Hence, those living in Tafi Atome No. 1 appeared more disposed to it. Key and Pillai (2006) have alluded to the fact that tourism development within a community has the potential to reinforce or enhance the subordinate position of ethnic groupings within the community, a situation which may already be in existence. This seems to be the situation in Tafi Atome, where clear distinctions were made between the indigenes and non-indigenes in the community. A look at the sanctuary's constitution revealed that neither has provisions been made for the representation of non-indigenes on the local tourism management board nor any portion of revenue allocated to them. In spite of this marginalization, non-indigenes were obliged to participate in all communal labour gatherings

Issues on clan conflicts were also linked to the unequal distribution of benefits from the sanctuary. Some respondents felt some particular clans were benefiting more from the project than other clans in the community "if you do not belong to the Chief's clan, you do not get anything from the monkey sanctuary. Those boys who are working at the visitor centre are all from that clan". Another respondent was of the view that

since the monkeys are gods and we are the fetish clan, we should have a lot of say in how the sanctuary is managed but that is not the case. The other clans are getting more from the project than us but when the rites for the gods have to be performed, they call upon us.

The dissatisfaction expressed in relation to the distribution of benefits may be based on perceptions. However these perceptions have become so entrenched that they cannot be ignored. Portraying of the traditional rulers, local tourism management board and indigenes as being more advantageous in accessing the benefits brings to the fore the issue of power which is capable of ensuring that the "powerful" derive more while the "powerless" gain less. The resultant effect of such unequal distributions is the withdrawal of support for the project by aggrieved parties and this also weakens the trust and cohesion in local communities (Jones, 2005).

Conclusion

Globally, the debate on the efficacy of ecotourism development in rural communities continues. In the midst of that, many ecotourism projects are still being implemented especially across the developing world. The focus of this paper is to examine tourism benefit distribution dynamics in Tafi Atome.

Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that ecotourism development does bring benefits to the local communities involved. Evidence from Tafi Atome indicates that the monkey sanctuary has mainly generated collective benefits for the community. It has stimulated infrastructural development, provided alternative employment opportunities and increased environmental consciousness among community members. This adds credence to and advances the notion of ecotourism advocates who support the achievement of conservational and developmental goals through tourism (Sebele, 2010; Stronza & Pêgas, 2008). The collective nature of majority of the benefits from the monkey sanctuary will ensure that most residents access them.

Second, ethnicity can provide a basis upon which people can be discriminated against in benefit distribution. Findings from the community imply that indigenes of Tafi Atome have more access to the benefits accruing from the monkey sanctuary as compared to the non-indigenes. It was revealed that more opportunities were created for indigenes to be directly

employed in the management of the project. In addition, no percentage of the revenue generated was allocated to the non-indigenous residents even though they were in the majority. This is indicative of power issues and how they affect benefit distribution within local communities (Hoggett, 1997; Liu, 1994).

Community involvement in tourism development is solely not enough to ensure that benefits are evenly distributed to community members. The social and cultural systems that govern local communities play very vital roles in guaranteeing that benefits reach community members. Findings from this study point to the fact that the marginalization of non-indigenous residents in the community results from the community's social systems which do not encourage the participation of non-indigenes in community decision-making processes.

From a planning perspective, a number of lessons can be drawn from the case of Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. Total community control does not necessarily ensure equitable distribution of benefits among community members. Tourism developers have often ignored local community dynamics when developing tourism (Kiss, 2004). Therefore tourism stakeholders must be mindful of the power groups that exist within local communities and find a balance between their needs and the project's objectives. This will help minimize cases of exclusion of "powerless" groups from benefiting from these projects.

If benefits from ecotourism projects are communal in nature, access to a wider portion of the host community is assured. Managers of CBE projects should consider the provision of social amenities using revenue from these projects. Through this, local residents can easily identify with benefits which have accrued and also profit from them.

Feelings of exclusion from the project's constitution expressed by non-indigenous residents have implications for the project's sustainability. Their continuous exclusion can become a source of conflict in the long run. To prevent this, changes need to be made to the project's constitution to allow for the representation of non-indigenes on the local tourism management committee.

A key principle of ecotourism is community involvement in tourism development. It is therefore encouraging to know that the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary is owned and managed by the community. In order to address the internal problems associated with this community-based project, the local tourism management board must be transparent in its work in order to gain the confidence and trust of the entire community.

This paper re-echoes the need for a careful examination of the distribution of ecotourism benefits especially within host communities. The success of tourism in any community is not dependent on any single person but upon the entire community. Hence, the benefits that accrue from tourism development should be accessible to all devoid of any limitations.

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