

Promoting the Culture Sector through Job Creation and Small Enterprise Development in SADC Countries: The Ethno-tourism Industry

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Box 1. Trademarks

A trademark is a marketing tool used to support a company's claim that its products or services are authentic or distinctive compared with similar products or services. It usually consists of a distinctive design, word, or series of words, usually placed on the product label. This mark does not have to be new in itself, but its application to a specific type of product or service must be. As long as registered trademarks are periodically renewed protection is without time limit.

In a larger sense, trademarks promote initiative and enterprise worldwide by rewarding the owners of trademarks with recognition and financial profit. Trademark protection also hinders the efforts of unfair competitors, such as counterfeiters, who use similar distinctive signs to market inferior or different products or services. The system enables people with skill and enterprise to produce and market goods and services in the fairest possible conditions, thereby facilitating international trade.

Cultural heritage and trademarks

In many countries, such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Peru and South Africa, traditional handicrafts and artworks are highly marketable products that can be a lucrative source of income for traditional communities. Some customers are attracted by the ethnic origins of such products and may be willing to pay extra when they are convinced of their authenticity. Therefore, trademarks could have a useful role to play, especially those groups and communities that are concerned about reproductions falsely attributed to such groups or communities.

A kind of trademark that exists in the laws of some countries is the certification trademark. Certification marks can be used by small-scale producers to guarantee to customers that goods are genuine in some way or another. Certification marks indicate that the claims made by the traders have been authenticated by an organization independent of the individual or company making or selling the product. This is likely to be a regional trade association that has registered its own collective mark. In the United States, the Intertribal Agriculture Council licences use of its annually renewable 'Made by American Indians' mark for the promotion of agricultural or other Indian-made products that have been produced and/or processed by enrolled members of recognized tribes. Trademarks, labelling and also independent certification are used in India for marketing Darjeeling Tea, for example.

Box 3. Tour operator encourages the local community to build ethno-tourism product in Zambia

Robin Pope Safaris operates in the South Luangwa National Park. Some guests on these safaris expressed a desire to learn more about the lifestyle of the local people. As a result, the enterprise assisted the local community to establish an ethno-tourism product. RPS now only conducts marketing on behalf of the village. In this case, RPS was responsible for the beginnings and participated in production of the product but does not benefit from income generated.

Box 4. How one stakeholder is benefiting from ethno-tourism in South Africa

Golden originates from the Eastern Cape. He has worked in the mines, as a gardener, and as a curio vendor. He now makes artificial flowers from cola cans. Although he is extremely talented, he was not able to market his product until Enver Malley from Grassroute Tours met him and included him in Grassroute's "Beyond the rainbow curtain" ethno-tour. Now not only do tourists on the tour purchase his flowers, but the resulting exposure has made him famous and he has an enormous market for his flowers, such that his earnings may now supersede those of the tour company. This is an exceptionally successful example of stakeholder benefit from ethno-tourism.

Box 5. Hosting foreign visitors: Urban youth rediscover their cultural roots

Kaya Lendaba is a successful ethno-tourism venture situated 75 kilometres from Port Elizabeth in South Africa. The product consists of a re-created village depicting the three major ethnic groups in South Africa – Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho. Huts have been built in the styles characteristic of each of these ethnic groups. The tour includes discussion about the traditional greetings, ceremonies, cuisine and cultural values of each group. Tours are conducted by youths between the ages of 18 and 25 years. These youths come from different parts of the country but are all urban, unemployed and working in order to raise money to continue their studies. Asked for their comments on the value of this ethno-tourism product, they unanimously agreed that through working at Kaya Lendaba, they had rediscovered their cultural roots and had developed a new-found respect for their heritage. They said that it had helped them to benefit from positive features of both the modern urban and the traditional lifestyles.

Box 7. Historical value versus economic viability

Mwinji Cultural Village in Zimbabwe is so remotely situated that only the most dedicated and interested tourists manage to reach the village. As a result, it is not economically viable but is of enormous cultural value. The village, 250 kilometres from Victoria Falls, is believed to be where King Lobengula sheltered during his escape after the fall of his kingdom in Bulawayo. History has it that this last King of the Matabele people was hosted by the local

Tonga Chief, Pashu and then took refuge in a nearby cave. In addition, the village hosts several annual cultural events including a Tonga funeral memorial service, a rain-making ceremony, a healing ceremony, a male rites-of-passage ceremony and a cultural festival.

4.3 Specific-country context

South Africa

South Africa, the tourism giant of the subregion, receives the greatest volume of tourists of all the SADC countries. The country has excellent communications and transport infrastructure as well as a strong international marketing presence. The South African Government has expressed support for entrepreneurs in the tourism industry who have been historically handicapped through South Africa's apartheid past. The country possesses many tourist attractions and ethno-tourism is yet another product that can add value to the South African tourism industry. For example, the Zulu nation is internationally known through the heritage left by Shaka, as well as literature and films made about Shaka. Similarly, the Xhosa nation has become simultaneously familiar and intriguing to foreign visitors through the repute of Nelson Mandela. Often, tourists are motivated to visit South Africa because it is a newly independent democracy; many have followed the history of the liberation struggle and are familiar with the pivotal role that the city of Soweto played. All these ethnic features in South Africa highlight a potential for ethno-tourism. In varying degrees, entrepreneurial initiatives have already explored these opportunities.

Zimbabwe

Until recently Zimbabwe had a very strong tourism industry and education system. It has a very good transport infrastructure and relatively good communications infrastructure. In spite of these developments most of the population have close links to their rural roots. As a result, many people have traditional knowledge but are also capable of communicating this knowledge to foreign visitors.

A Zimbabwean case study

Baobab Cultural Tours is based in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Baobab Cultural Tours has been operating for six years in conjunction with the Monde Village community, which is the closest rural village to the tourist destination of Victoria Falls.

Baobab Cultural Tours recognized the market potential for ethno-tourism and also had a clear policy of community participation and involvement. After obtaining grass-roots support for the venture from the community, Baobab Cultural Tours helped the community draw up a deed of trust and open a bank account. They entered into a verbal agreement whereby the Monde Development Trust would earn a royalty on every tourist who came to the village. A local guide was appointed who, together with Baobab Cultural Tours, helped design the tour and decide on content.

Baobab Cultural Tours then advertised the Monde Village Tour locally, regionally and internationally using various media including personal visits, brochure distribution, electronic mail, international travel shows, travel magazine advertising, web site, etc.

The tour was then sold both directly by Baobab Cultural Tours as well as by various travel agents and sales points. Baobab Cultural Tours took responsibility for collecting tourist consumers and transferring them to the Monde Village, where a local guide guided them.

Baobab Cultural Tours maintained quality control via questionnaires to tourists as well as by accompanying the tours.

In the six years since its inception, the major changes have involved:

- increasing community involvement and benefits by making the Monde Development Trust a shareholder in Baobab Cultural Tours;
- the directors of Baobab Cultural Tours have become trustees on the Monde Development Trust;
- appointing and training (in-house) new guides from the village, as a result of the original guide stealing large amounts of money from the village.

Baobab Cultural Tours explains its success in terms of its geographical location close to an international tourism attraction (the Victoria Falls), which provides a “captive market”. Accelerating interest in different ethnic cultures is another contributing factor.

The authenticity of the product is considered a draw-card – this is a common response and particularly pertinent in that the most economically successful ethno-tourism ventures are not authentic.)

Its weaknesses are perceived as a lack of regulation and lack of commitment by the village, resulting in rampant piracy and competition, which does not benefit the community.

Political instability in Zimbabwe in particular and in the subregion in general is perceived as the major threat to the industry, since the industry is dependent on foreign leisure arrivals and is therefore extremely sensitive to negative publicity.

As is apparent from the observations presented above, the key players in this industry throughout southern Africa are the tour operators and lodge-owners. They invariably control the beginnings and the production links of the value chain. Very often they also control circulation, delivery and audience consumption.

The tour operators and lodge-owners wield the greatest control in the value chain because they are involved in the greatest number of links. They are also invariably the go-between for the production link and the circulation link (if they do not control both of these).

Malawi

While Malawi has a well-established tourism industry, this has always been based upon beach and lake leisure holidays. Ethno-tourism has begun very recently in Malawi.

There are a few examples of private sector initiatives and the Government is strongly supportive of growth of this sector. The private sector initiatives are varied and include village visits, traditional-style accommodation and cultural museums.

As part of the Government's objective to diversify the country's tourism product, it is actively promoting the sector by developing cultural villages in each of the three districts in the country. Each cultural village will depict the lifestyle of the unique ethnic group indigenous to that district. While the Government has undertaken to finance construction of these villages, a representative cites lack of funding as a constraint to this development.

Some of the lakeside hotels have entered into agreements with local villagers, whereby cultural troupes come to the hotels in order to entertain guests with traditional cultural performances.

Zambia

Zambia has a rapidly growing tourism sector. There are already several established ethno-tourism enterprises. As tourism grows there will be potential for more. Zambia has the greatest ethnic diversity of all the countries in the SADC region, providing a large variety for different examples of ethno-tourism.

Namibia

Namibia has an excellent road and communications infrastructure and a healthy tourism industry. It is also home to two well-known cultures that have a long uninterrupted history and a strong, well-maintained cultural identity. These are the Himba and San peoples. The greatest opportunity that Namibia has is the commitment of its Government to encourage tourism, to ensure that participation is accessible to all of the population and that the benefits from tourism are widely spread. To this end, the Namibian Government is committed to assisting historically disadvantaged communities and is working closely with a large array of NGOs involved with tourism.

Tanzania

Tanzania has a healthy and growing tourism industry. There are two established ethno-tourism ventures, but there is room for more. Some of the players in the industry express frustration at what they perceive as mixed messages from the Department of National Parks regarding cultural tourism, at times encouraging and at other times discouraging private sector involvement in ethno-tourism.

Informal examples of cultural tourism arise where private sector tour operators lease land from communities. These operators often afford their tourist clients the opportunity to spend time with the local fishers or in the local market or village. For these purposes a local guide is employed on an ad hoc basis. This is perceived as part of the lease agreement and a few spin-off benefits do accrue to those few who obtain employment or rent out their boats to tourists. However, there is no attempt at skills transfer.

Botswana

Botswana is a popular tourist destination and has an intriguing cultural heritage. The tourism in this country is very narrowly focused on wildlife and this influences the tourist profile. The presence in the country of San people, many of who still practice the “old ways” is an opportunity to initiate a form of ethno-tourism that is attractive to the tourist profile, in combining interpretation of the San culture with practical tracking, hunting and gathering experiences.

Box 8. Loss of tourist spending to foreign and regional tour companies

“Mauritius ... is heavily import-dependent whilst tourism in Zimbabwe and South Africa relies very largely on local supplies. About 10 per cent of spending goes to the foreign agent and around 40 per cent to the airline (often national). Of the rest, almost all is local in South Africa and Zimbabwe, with about one third going abroad in Mauritius.”

Box 10. Multi-jobbing. A Zimbabwean combines agricultural work with ethno-tourism and wood carving

Bishop Ncube has been guiding the Monde Village Tour in Zimbabwe for almost 12 months. He explains that the soils in his home area are extremely poor and can only produce sufficient food for subsistence. There is no surplus for generation of cash. He is therefore involved in two additional income-generating activities apart from agriculture. The first is carving wooden curios for sale to tourists and the second is conducting guided tours of his village. Three jobs in one day? He says there is no conflict of time between these three jobs. The guide work is shared with another guide with whom he alternates tours. This provides flexibility when necessary so that they can exchange duty hours. During the ploughing season there is no conflict with village tours, because ploughing begins at 04h00 and finishes by 07h00. The tour only begins at 08h45.

He would like to guide tourists full time if there was sufficient volume of tourists to make this a viable and consistent source of income.

Box 11. Ethno-tourism from the critics' perspective

“Global tourism threatens indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights, our technologies, religions, sacred sites, social structures and relationships, wildlife, ecosystems, economies and basic rights to informed understanding; reducing indigenous peoples to simply another consumer product that is quickly becoming exhaustible.”

Source: Pera, L and D. McLaren (1999) Globalization, Tourism and Indigenous Peoples: What you should know about the world's largest “industry” The Rethinking Tourism Project MN USA.