

Role of Ecotourism in Sustainable Development: A Case Study of Karpaz, North Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the challenges of modern development and understanding the benefits of sustainable development and ecotourism in rural development. The analyzed data were collected from the villages in Karpaz region, North Cyprus.

The potential of sustainable tourism is developed social, environmental and cultural life, therefore tourism is very important for the global economy and also for the economy of the countries. Unfortunately, as tourism expands challenges also arise and these significant problems are related to mass tourism. After 1980s Alternative tourism is started to be discussed and sustainable tourism came to the agenda of the tourism researchers and consultants. After these debates Ecotourism started to be practiced and implicated as sustainable tourism development.

Since 1960 tourism was the main sector of economic development of Whole Island, although the tourism was developed as mass tourism with huge negative impacts. The implications of the big hotels disturb the environment also disturb the seashore. After the separation of the Island into two communities in 1974, tourism in Northern Cyprus rapidly diverted to the mass tourism and casino. After a long period of time in 2006 government started to deal with soft tourism such as nature tourism and heritage tourism through local community in Karpaz region.

Ecotourism is a new concept for TRNC and particular for Karpaz region, therefore local population does not have enough knowledge about ecotourism's benefits and upcoming natural challenges as well as the positive contribution to the economic,

social and cultural life. During the research, the contributions have been noticed especially on women and ensure the women participation in economic and social life. Ecotourism increases the awareness among locals to protect the environment for future generation. Eco-tourism in Karpaz is a viable rural tourism development plan with so much potential in the near future.

Keywords: Sustainable development, eco-tourism, benefits and challenges, Karpaz, Northern Cyprus.

ÖZ

Dünya turizm örgütü,27Eylül gününü,tüm dünya için turizm günü olarak ilan etmiştir.Bu arada Birleşmiş Milletler, sürdürülebilir turizmin , Ekonomik, çevresel,sosyal ve kültürel önemini vurguladı.

UNTWO verilerine göre,2016 yılında 1235 milyon turist seyahat etmiş bulunuyor.Bu dünya nüfusunun 1/6 denk gelmektedir.Turizmdeki bu hareket dünya ekonomisine günlük olarak 3.2 milyar dolar katkı sağlamaktadır.Turizm ayrıca dünyadaki toplam iş hacminin 1/10 oranını üretmektedir,ayrıca dünya gayri safi hasılasının %10 oranını üretmekte,dünya ticaret hacminine de %30 oranında katkısı vardır.

Yukardaki rakamlardan görüldüğü gibi turizm global ekonomi ve ülke ekonomileri için çok önemlidir.Dünya turizm endüstrisi geliştikçe sorunlar da çoğalıyor.Bu sorunların önemli bir kısmı Mass turizmden kaynaklanmaktadır.Özellikle 1980 yıllarından sonra alternatif turizm şekilleri tartışılmaya başladı.Mass turizme karşı alternatif turizm şekli olarak sürdürülebilir turizm gündeme gelmiştir.Turizmde yeni arayışlar ve araştırmalardan sonra,Ekoturizm, Mass turizme alterntaif , yeni bir turizm şekli olarak uygulanmaya başlamış,Sürdürülebilir turizmin önemli bir ögesi olmuştur.

Bizim ülkemiz Kıbrıs, ada olmasından dolayı turizmde her dönemde önemli bir destinasyon olmuştur.1960 dan beri Kıbrıs uluslar arası turizmde yerini almıştır.Turizm kıbrıs ekonomisi için önemli bir ekonomik sektör olmuş ve milli geliri artırmıştır.Geçmişte kıbrıstaki turizm mass turizme dayalı olduğu için çevresel açıdan önemli tahribatlara neden olmuştur.Bu örneklerden en bariz olan Maraştaki plansız

olarak inşa edilen devasa otellerdir .Bu büyük oteller sahillere büyük oranda tahribat yapmış, ve çevre kirliliği yaratmıştır.

1974 savaşından sonra,iki toplum ayrılmasına rağmen turizm önemini korumuş ve KKTCnin öncü ekonomik sektörlerinden biri olmuştur.İlk dönemlerde KKTC turizmi mass turizme dayalı olup büyük ve plansız oteller inşa edilmiştir.Bazı acenteler ve turizm operatörleri yakın geçmişte alternatif turizmin önemini anlayıp ilgilenmelerine rağmen ana turizm şekli halen mass turizm ağırlıklıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sürdürülebilir gelişme, ekoturizm, faydalar ve sorunlar, Karpaz, Kuzey Kıbrıs.

DEDICATION

To my Family and Friends

My mother Mediha Emin and in loving memory of my father
Kemal Emin.

Hope to Encourage my son Irmak Emin, my daughters Sedef
Sultan Emin,Zehra Emin.

To my little granddaughters Nil and Su.

To my sister, Mrs. Gülsen Kirsal and My brother in law Mr.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Money Fond
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Cyprus
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WCED	World Commission Environmental and Development

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1970's when UNESCO presented the concept of Biosphere Reserve, many issues arose as a result of the contrast between sustainable development and looking after nature. In the recent past, ecotourism and sustainable development have raised serious concerns for local communities. Natural tourism can be a learning experience for tourists not only across Europe but, also in the whole world (Mondino, 2017). At the beginning of the 19th-century modern tourism developed various concepts such as green tourism and hospitality (Patil, & Deshpande, 2017).

Maignan & Ferrell (2004) identified green tourism and ecologically approachable tourism as some of the strategies for increasing the level of social responsibility in order to reduce environmental impacts and minimize harmful impacts on the environment. The researcher's further note that eco biological practices can be implemented by engaging in environmental protection programs, purchasing locally produced materials and energy saving capital equipment, recycling and reducing waste. Furthermore, planning for long-term future sustainable development and stakeholder's involvement also assists in sustainable practices and management.

Although Ecotourism arises as a strategy for sustainable development, Mondino, (2017) states it is still faced with challenges. And this has mainly been because of a lack of education of the local people on environmental issues and the advantages of

sustainable practices in a destination. Additionally, some governments have failed to plan and develop policies to regulate the ventures and/or have not implemented their programs. The chapter, therefore, provides the idea behind the research, its purpose, and its significance. It starts with an introduction and provides the research background as highlighted in (section 1.1), followed by the personal rationale to conduct the research in (section 1.2), and then the research aim and objectives given in (section 1.3) with the main focus being on Karpaz, North Cyprus as a case study. Key research questions are presented in (section 1.4), the significance of the study discussed in (section 1.5), followed by a summary of methodology to research in (section 1.6) and a detailed outline of the thesis (section 1.7).

1.1 Background of Study

Although the positive socio-economic benefits are necessary for a country and/or a tourist destination, the welfare of its inhabitants is also equally important. Comfortable lifestyles and a good standard quality of life are essential and expected for residents in a tourist destination. Governments and/or authorities in most destinations have endeavored to ensure a balance between economic gains and socio-economic benefits for the locals. Sustainable practices in tourist destinations mostly have been used to also ensure comfortable living is experienced and achieved for the locals. Sustainable development in destinations has been used to create awareness of upcoming danger and has been used as a positive step towards the protection of natural resources and/or natural development (Irina-Ramona, 2016).

Day by day the world is changing and these changes are sometimes not positive. For example, the environment has been impacted on negatively due to a vast amount of development. In addition, erosion and land degradation have been experienced in some

areas. This is bad for the community and a destination in the long run. Karpaz, North Cyprus as a tourist destination has not been any different. Although developments have been welcomed and there has been an influx of tourist arrivals in the area, sustainable practices had to be implemented to protect and conserve the area. These can be seen as an effort to conserve natural resources and protect the community in the area. Community-based programs on sustainable development practices have been birthed (Farmaki, Altinay, & Yasarata, 2016). Although development is generally good, it has also not always been a blessing to humanity as sometimes it has been a cause of the destruction of the ecosystem and humanity has faced challenges in every arena of life.

Tourism is the main industry in Cyprus although tourism activities do not always positively impact on the ecosystem. In 2006 Della et al. referred to the Island of Cyprus as being diverse in fauna, flora, climate, geography and rich nature. In other words, it is blessed with a variety of natural resources. Therefore, tourism should be eco-based, but, in reality, eco activity is only practiced by a few businesses which are operating sustainable principles (Irina-Ramona, 2016). The Island should be concerned about sustainable tourism in order to protect its natural resources and motivate tourists to visit the natural tourist destinations (Bojanic, Warnick, & Musante, 2016) as a means of accomplishing the aims of sustainable development as they relate to the soil, air, water.

Ecotourism attracts more tourists than artificial tourism sites do (Becken, & Simmons, 2002). Natural tourism offers tourists an enjoyable time with nature and more of a personal experience with natural scenery where there is insignificant development. In the Karpaz region, development activities have been carried out as a natural transformation with a reduction of arable land, deforestation, unplanned construction

and maximize gains (Ciftcioglu, 2015). As well as it is essential to focus on social life, environmental impacts, economic policies and government regulation of development this may have an impact on nature and destroy ecotourism (Bojanic, Warnick, & Musante, 2016).

1.2 Personal Rational to Conduct the Research

I plan to retire in the year 2018. I have always been interested in environmental matters, and have a strong desire to make an impact on the protection and conservation of the environment. Working for the government in the customs offices based at the Famagusta Port alerted me further to the need for sustainable practices, due to the many problems encountered. Famagusta port has so much history embedded in it and stands as a cultural asset to the country, however, due to a lack of appropriate planning and a lack of insight on conservation strategies, this important historical and culturally important artifact has turned into an industrial port. As a result, it has become a source of pollution into the city, thereby depleting the resource, despite this having the potential to be the source of a possible future threat to the residents living in the area. As an environmental activist, and, with the help of my colleagues, a union was set up with the intention of curbing pollution and other likely environmental degradation effects as well as fighting against these unfamiliar conditions. I presently stand as the president of the union which has been running for 4 years at the time of this research. Being exposed to the union has enlightened me further.

Looking at the present political, economic and social systems of Northern Cyprus, it is certain that good business practices are needed to protect the environment and its many species, humans included. I learned that for a good environment, sustainability and strategic plans are needed. Then our union became a part of the Cyprus

Environment Platform. This Platform comprises there approximately 40 organizations which consist of unions, the association of biology and the association of doctors. We organized many activities to prevent pollution and ensure a sustainable environment for our country. The most important of these struggles was our fight against the petrol tanks that an international company tried to build in the sea around Büyükkkonuk village which is an eco-village.

Our union was very active during this struggle, we organized the villagers, convened meetings and we even participated in some TV programs. After all these efforts we succeeded in blocking the petrol tanks project that an international company was planning to build in the sea. Unfortunately, the current government supported the dirty industrialized project. The pressure of people and the environment platform struggle made the government cancel the project. It was a good present for us when the prime minister of that period announced that the project was canceled at ecotourism celebrations in Buyukkonuk village. These experiences as an environmentalist affected me a lot and raised my consciousness about the environment and nature of my country.

As I was considering what more I could do for my country and for the region where I live, the Karpaz region, I achieved a scholarship for eco-tourism education in Estonia. This was a great opportunity for me. In 2014 I went to Estonia for eco-tourism education. I spent 4 months in Estonia as a guest of the Estonian Eco-tourism Association. I learned a lot practically and theoretically in Estonia.

In this period I came to understand that my country North Cyprus needs more consciousness about the environment, strategic plans for sustainable development and

sustainable tourism. For example, the rate of forestation in Estonia is 50% and in North, Cyprus is 15%. Still, the governments have no plans to improve forestation and conserve the environment. Unfortunately, the destruction of the environment and deforestation are both increasing. The governments are supporting mass tourism which is destroying the environment. The government of North Cyprus is not committed to the necessity of eco-tourism which is the increasing trend of tourism. Eco-tourism is community-based, conserves the environment and contributes to the local economy. Ecotourism includes aspects of the social, cultural and economic.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of research serve as a guideline for the researcher and help to bring out the desired intention and outcome of the research. As such the main aim of this study is to identify the role ecotourism played in achieving sustainable development and assess the impacts of ecotourism in Karpaz- North Cyprus. The objectives of the study are:

- To assess the socio-economic, cultural and environmental effects of ecotourism.
- To ascertain the state of ecotourism in Karpaz – North Cyprus.
- To determine the current challenges of ecotourism and sustainable practices in Karpaz.
- To evaluate the current progress and state of ecotourism plans in Karpaz
- To assess the potential and prospect of ecotourism in Karpaz, North Cyprus.
- To find out the willingness of stakeholders (business investors and local residents) to adopt ecotourism and sustainable practices.
- To find out the stakeholders' perception of ecotourism and sustainable practices.

- To find out the stakeholders' strategic development plans for ecotourism and sustainability.
- To produce recommendations that may enhance ecotourism and sustainable practices in Karpaz – North Cyprus.

1.4 Research Questions

The study raises with some questions relevant to the topic .Research questions provided in 15 questions in English and Turkish language, because some of interviewees were Native Turkish. Translated was checked by who knows Turkish and English language. The main question is to find out the role of Eco-tourism in Karpaz.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Although ecotourism is already in place and being practiced in Karpaz, the current ecotourism cooperatives and ecotourism associations are not functioning well. There is a need for them to function well and achieve maximum results. As such, assessing the impacts of ecotourism and sustainable practices will have a number of benefits for the industry and its several stakeholders. The study may assist the stakeholders to find out about the challenges faced by the village with regards to ecotourism and sustainability. Furthermore, it may also assist the stakeholders in formulating strategies to curb the negative effects of ecotourism.

The study may also bring to light the potential and prospects of ecotourism and sustainability practices in Karpaz. Understanding the various concerns and issues of the stakeholders (businesses and local residents) may assist in the formulating of new strategies to enhance the current ecotourism practices. The study's findings may help enlighten new businesses and organizations interested in enforcing ecotourism and

sustainable practices in the region. Additionally, future researchers may use data findings of this study as a secondary data source.

1.6 Methodology

The study uses primary and secondary data sources. Primary data can be defined as first-hand information, while secondary data may be referred to as extant information from other sources which may be helpful in solving current research problems (Parasuraman, 2004). In the case of this research, secondary data sources will include reports, journals, and textbooks.

For the purposes of this research, a qualitative approach will be adopted for the investigation of this topic. Guided by the research questions of the study, semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data. The respondents will be selected through purposive sampling technique. Interviews will be done with the locals, business enterprises, members of ecotourism associations and cooperatives in Karpaz. The cooperatives in Karpaz are an important tool to be used in this research study to gather information on the challenges and insights of ecotourism in Karpaz. Such as the Buyukkonuk Ecotourism Association.

Associates of this association may be interviewed to gather information as well as an assessment of their documents. In fact, with the aim of bringing some changes and collaboration to the local community, action research strategy will be adapted to conduct the research. Thus, what lies at the core of this research is the aim to close the gap between studying an issue and engaging in social-political action to influence the issue (Neuman, 2016).

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis comprises of 5 chapters. Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the study, this describes the background of the study and discusses the aims and objects of the research. It also provides brief information on the significance of the study and the proposed methodology. The literature review is given in chapter 2. The literature review is a collection of data from other researchers on the same subject matter. It gives an understanding of the origins of Ecotourism and sustainability, its importance and the general challenges faced in its implementation.

Chapter three is an outline of the method used to gather information on the research problem, sampling methods used, the data collection process and it also gives an outline of the questionnaire structure. Chapter 4 then follows with the results of the study and finally chapter 5 which is the discussion of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Many islands benefit from tourism through the creation of employment and additional income. However, tourism can cause environmental degradation on an island; moreover, it is well known that the economy and the environment can impact on each other (Briguglio, 2017). Therefore, sustainable development and ecotourism are associated with maintaining a balance between a sustainable environment and economic development. In this situation, the government may control an island's tourism through rules and proper investment by the public and private sectors (Gowreesunkar, Van der Sterren, & Séraphin, 2017).

After the second world war, international tourism accounted for approximately ten percent of global GDP, at the same time, many islands rebuilt their economies (McElory, 2003) and Cyprus started to restructure its economy (after the colonial period) based on the advantage of natural attractions such as an exotic image, sandy beaches, and a pleasant climate (Farmaki, Altinay, & Yasarata, 2016). In 2009 Das and Sharma discussed what was required to make the tourism sector sustainable and gainful; namely, it should fulfill the diversity of the environment as well as enrich local residents and provide economic and social welfare to gratify all stakeholders.

Scholars describe island economies as being dependent on tourism to generate foreign exchange, which is associated with developments such as airports, seaports, transport, hotels, restaurants and public infrastructure (Briguglio, 2017). These economic development activities have an impact on the environment, therefore this chapter provides information on extant literature on sustainable development in (section 2.1) followed by the history of sustainable development in (section 2.2) the rationale for sustainable development in (section 2.3) the impact of sustainable development on the ecology (section 2.3.1) and the economic impacts on sustainable development in (section 2.3.2).

Ecotourism is described in (section 2.4) followed by the background of ecotourism in (section 2.5) the types & principles of ecotourism are addressed in (section 2.6) the benefits and challenges of ecotourism are referred to in (section 2.7) a case study on sustainable development and ecotourism efforts in Karpaz in (section 2.8) an introduction to the history of Karpaz in (section 2.8.1) a discussion on Karpaz ecotourism in (section 2.8.2), references to Karpaz ecotourism sites in (section 2.8.3) the impacts of ecotourism in the Karpaz region (section 2.8.4) and, finally, the challenges of ecotourism in (section 2.8.5).

2.2 Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development is centered on three important factors which are satisfying human need, social equity and respecting environment limits (Holden, Linnerud, & Banister, 2017). In other words, it aids communities or destinations to respect their environmental surroundings for long-term consumption. The term ‘sustainability’ was first noted in the mid-19th century (Redclift, 2005). The word matches the German word ‘nachaltig’.

In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development formally defined sustainable development as a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (James, 2015). In similar contexts, the Bruntland Commission (1987) sees sustainable development and practices as progress that encounters the requests of the current deprived, conceding the capability of future generations to encounter their own requests.

The above definitions highlight one main goal of the concept of sustainable development, that is, the need to preserve the environment for present day and future consumptions. It denotes that future generations, through sustainable practices should be able to appreciate resources in their most natural state. Supportively WCED (1987) concludes that sustainable development aims to control the consumption and management of renewable resources for use and further consumption by future generations. In order to achieve sustainable development practices Urry, (1995) suggests an increased awareness and consciousness of global environmental issues.

Sustainable development is a way to increase consciousness of environmental standards and it assists as a device for the funding of the fortification of natural zones and as a way to raise their commercial rank. Progression in the tourism sector can assist rural economies, provide financial supports, environmental conservation, improve infrastructure and protect the culture of a community. This way can be an alternative to heavy industry and a good choice for sustainable development in the long term. (Bennett, Lemelin, Koster, & Budke, 2012).

Hall, Daneke & Lenox (2010), denote that the concept of sustainable development entails the use of renewable resources and that non-renewable resources should be

recycled and or reduced in order to prolong their viability. By so doing resources are preserved for future generations. Sustainable development as such tries to bring a balance between the social, economic and environmental objectives. Its main aim is to eradicate poverty and it aspires to have both the present and future generations enjoy resources in their most natural form.

Robinson and Boniface mentioned that plenty has been done to conserve heritage properties and connected natural environments from the extremes of unexpected and clumsy tourism development (Robinson & Boniface, 1999). In 1993 Bramwell commended a progressive method designed to decrease the pressures and resistance produced by the difficult connections between the tourism industry, tourists, the environment and the host communities so that the long-term size and worth of both natural and human resources can be preserved (Cited in Liu, 2003).

2.3 History of Sustainable Development

As highlighted earlier in the discussion, the concept of sustainable development arose in the mid of 19th century. It was a hot topic in several conferences and summits, where influential people from around the world met to discuss issues affecting the globe. Included were issues of poverty, increasing inequality, environmental and human health degradation. Sustainable development tried therefore to find ways and means of eradicating these burning issues and save the globe (Paul, 2008).

Sustainable development was first discussed in 1972 in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and later gained popularity in 1987 through a report (The Brundtland Report) produced for the United Nations by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987). In other words, sustainable

development started with public strategies next to the declaration of the Brundtland Commissions report on the worldwide environment and improvement. Also, the notion of ‘sustainability’ looked to occur mostly inside citation, after the ‘Earth Summit’ which took place in Rio 1992.

The Commonwealth of Australia in 1992 further expounded and laid down sustainable development objectives which serve as the guideline to the concept. These objectives are to “enhance individual and community welfare by following a path of economic development that safeguards the welfare of future generations; (II) Provide equity within and between generations, and; (III) Protect biological diversity and maintain ecological processes and life support systems” (Cited in Anderson, & Minor, 2017). The quest for sustainable development and practices was a way to reduce and manage pollution (Redclift, 2005).

At the beginning of the 21st century, there was a hype of promotion on preserving resources, replacements of some reserves, promotion of cleaner environmental goods and facilities (Huber, 2000). ‘Social capital’ is used as a label for the atmosphere of public struggle which is a label which often minimizes political fights and has the approval of the World Bank (Bebbington et al., 2004). There can be no worldwide metric to relate and swap the actual ethics of nature between altered groups from different cultures and hugely altered grades of political and economic power opposed to the evidence of the international economy (Redclift, 2005).

In 1987 Redclift stated that people should understand the limitation of world natural resources and control their lifestyles between economic development and sustainable development (Cited in Redclift, 2005). Steffen, Richardson, Rockström, Cornell,

Fetzer, Bennett, & Folke, (2015) stated that, in order to maintain the ecosystem, it is urgently necessary to apply a paradigm to develop a human society which integrates the social system, the ecosystem, the environment and economic development. In a nutshell, the concept of sustainable development according to Hall et. al., (2010) came as an effort to promote equal distribution of economic growth benefits and also that resources were significantly becoming fewer due to a high rise in development.

2.4 Rationale for Sustainable Development

With the increasing developments in the world, society and communities have been affected negatively; there has been a severe negative impact on the environment. Pollution has been rife (air, water, garbage, sound), with issues such as global warming, climate change, loss of biodiversity (Murphy, & Price, 2005) threatening the environment and its inhabitants. The tourism industry has been a major source of development to economies in order to boost tourism and attract new tourists.

According to Altinay & Hussain, (2005) the connection of tourism with the environment is multifaceted; therefore it contains many events that can have opposite environmental effects. Although generally positive, tourism also bears negative effects on what the concept of sustainable development tries to achieve. With the high rise of tourism growth, the concern has been that new forms of sustainable development practices may not be seen as positive from the perspective of some of the stakeholders in tourism (e.g. social and environmental associations, international agencies, national and local governments, tour operators, and tourists (Mowforth, & Munt, 2015). James (2015) acknowledges the need for a balanced approach to maintaining nature, therefore the need for sustainable practices awareness instilled in people. Hurlturk & Hahn (2016) suggested more pressure be mounted and communicated to the various

stakeholders in tourism to provide information about the community and ecological preservation to the people.

Research also highlights that the negative influences of tourism development could extinguish the environmental properties, and hence the need for tourism again to generate valuable possessions on the environment by donating fortification and preservation to the environment (Altinay, & Hussain, 2005). The main concern of sustainable development is to make sure that the upcoming generation will receive a similar opportunity to sustain and achieve their desires. What is named intergenerational fairness, refers to the need to confirm that every generation has the right to obtain impartial access to the same natural resources (Alliance, & Larson, 1998) and project developing actions should sustain the ecological route because the increase in population will increase demand if economic development takes place (Loorbach, Avelino, Haxeltine, Wittmayer, O'Riordan, Weaver, & Kemp, 2016).

2.4.1 Ecological Impacts of Sustainable Development

According to Yigitcanlar & Teriman (2014), with the extension of the settling of urban residents, the growth of transportation systems and industry, the quality of natural resources has been affected negatively. For these reasons, the notion of sustainability has become the most important policy for governments.

The globalization changed the world's visions, thoughts, yields and other features of culture (Martens and Raza, 2010). All of these changes are a great threat to the environment, not only from climate change and untenable energy systems but also mass urbanization can result in lack of governance and socioeconomic disasters (Rana, 2011). In order to reduce the damage of human activities on the environment, an ecological strategic plan is very important (Clini et al., 2008). Human well-being and

the environment are under threat from the excessive use of chemicals in farming and dangerous left-overs produced by building and manufacturing actions (Jenks & Jones, 2010).

Moreover in 1997 Schwela mentioned the damaging of the environment caused by air pollution which is associated with energy manufacture, traffic pollution, and industrial activities. Air pollution creates nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and carbon oxides which are very dangerous for human wellbeing. These chemicals cause respiratory diseases, heart illnesses, lung cancer and some other significant health problems (Anderson, & Minor, 2017). These environmental problems are the major problems for urbanization in recent years. Researchers and city planners started to search for sustainable development and found some solutions to these environmental problems (Birkeland, 2008).

In 1996, the UN-HABITAT II conference was held in Istanbul. This conference produced a Habitat Agenda, which was signed by 171 countries to show their commitment towards ensuring a better living environment for their citizens. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was agreed in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Kyoto Protocol is an environmental agreement that contains legally binding emission targets for industrialized countries to achieved (Böhringer and Vogt, 2004).

In 2009 Downton stated that, “the eco-city, or Eco polis, is the next, and perhaps most important step in the evolution of urban environments’ sustainability: built to fit its place, in co-operation with nature rather than in conflict; designed for people to live whilst keeping the cycles of atmosphere, water, nutrients and biology in healthy balance; empowering the powerless, getting food to the hungry and shelter to the

homeless” (Yigitcanlar, & Dizdaroglu, 2015). An ecological method called Howard's garden theory applied to urban planning, and, suggested the bringing back of a green environment fenced by green belts (Wong and Yuen, 2011).

According to the environmental restoration experience, vacant lot renovation is based on four diverse features: (1) site selection, (2) the approach to restoration, (3) specific plantings, and (4) project follow-up and monitoring. The beginning of a restoration project lies in selecting a site, which can be challenging due to limited land availability in cities (Németh & Langhorst, 2014). As stated by Ndubisi, (2002), “Human ecology approach uses information about the reciprocal interactions between people and their biophysical environments to guide decisions concerning the optimal uses of the built and natural landscapes. More specifically, the interactions focus on how people affect and are affected by their environment, and on how decisions concerning the environment affect people” (P- 146). Although the success of restoration is still debated it, actually depends on a combination of ecological, economic and social perceptions (Wortley et al., 2013).

2.4.2 Economic Impacts of Sustainable Development

The goal of human expansion whilst keeping nature sustainable is the principle of sustainable development to provide economic progress by ecological service and natural resources (Krausmann, Schandl, Eisenmenger, Giljum, & Jackson, 2017). The economy is needed by the environment and society, moreover, the unsustainability of environmental and social systems is related to increasing financial activities. (Broman, & Robèrt, 2017). Murray Bookchin who is known as an Eco-anarchist has a viewpoint which is social Ecology and dialectic naturalism. In 1989, he claimed that the environment and humankind have an organic connection (Kossoff, 2015).

The environment can be defended by technology, four aspects were offered by Weizsacker et al (1997) to decrease the resources that are used in an economy and an alteration in energy use from fossil fuels to renewable sources has great support from people (Anderson, & Minor, 2017). In 1999 Bossel stated that the great concern of our world is the environment and a sustainable ecosystem, as, in several parts of the planet, environmental conditions are declining as a result of economic development (Cited in Duran, Gogan, Arlene, & Duran, 2015). The idea that growth is the way to develop environmental worth (claimed by capitalist economics) was more widely debated after The Limits to Growth report (Anderson, & Minor, 2017).

These variations will enhance the market opportunities for companies and maintain income and environmental stability; ultimately new technologies will deliver more economic and social benefits for people and also conserve the environment (Anderson, & Minor, 2017). An aspect was claimed by Daly & Cobb (1989) which is a mixture of solid sustainability through market reform that contains social, environmental and economic outlays. In order that capitalism should conserve the environment and increase living values, the universal interventions from organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF must be measured (Howarth, & Kennedy, 2016).

Furthermore, Monbiot, (2000) asserted that the environment and the economy took the primacy in most discussions. While social and economic development are mentioned for firming contribution and application, and the economy is the decision maker for environmental and civilization policies, the international companies decide and govern policy including that of governments (Zhu, & Hua, 2017).

2.5 Ecotourism

Ecotourism is related to sustainability, and, is a good example of applying environmental management (Blamey, 1997). It is nature and community based, and, it cares for nature and aims at creating a sustainable economy and improving ecology. It can be defined as the exchange of experiences, collaborations and the preservation of nature (Kim, 2017). According to Karst (2017), ecotourism associates with human connections with a desire to protect the environment and preserve its culture, and, as such, it can be understood as an inter-human affair.

Bluwstein (2017) however, views ecotourism as an approach to sustainability, which contributes to communities, and is a strategy that requires planning and protection. As a strategy, ecotourism contributes to the local community and to local production, motivates native progression and is also important for biodiversity preservation (Snyman, 2016). Snyman (2013) state that ecotourism is, for example, important in rural economies due to its ability to create socio-economic progress, conserve the environment and biodiversity. She further argues that ecotourism can be a solution to unemployment woes in communities and that creates training programs which enhance the skills of people. Moreover, Snyman (2013) addressed that ecotourism is indeed related to human relations and their welfare (Cited in Bluwstein 2017).

Given the above speculations, there have been various arguments on the most accurate definition of the term ecotourism. For example, Blamey (1997) likens ecotourism to nature-tourism, while Tickell in 1994 saw it as travel to enjoy the diverse natural resources worldwide with a sense of preservation of the environment. The Ecotourism Society would not agree any less with the above notion as they are associated with

responsible travel to natural areas which conserve the environment while improving the welfare of locals (Western, 1993).

Ecotourism has also been seen as a sustainable form of tourism that nurtures, appreciates and conserves environmental and cultural understanding (The Ecotourism Association of Australia, 1992). In their broadness and varied definitions and views (Buckley, 1994; Blamey, 1997) agree that ecotourism is nature-based, environmentally educated and sustainably managed and highly supports the quest for the conservation of resources. From a more recent update as well as to sum up on the varied definitions of the term ecotourism we can allude to the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2015) which states that ecotourism may be defined as responsible travel to natural areas concerned with environment conservation, local people's well-being and sustainability and involves interpretation and education.

2.6 Background of Ecotourism & its Significance

The concept of ecotourism came into question in the 1980s, as a solution to sustainable practices in tourism. Prior to the Brundtland summits, conservation and environmental protection were of no concern to the people or to varied stakeholders in tourism. Tourism activities were mainly business centered without an insight into their impact. Following sustainable development processes suggested by the Brundtland committee, Ecotourism arose as a tool to alleviate the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

According to Kirkby, Giudice & Turner (2011), Ecotourism can be seen as a form of alternative tourism or a type of sustainable development, because it aims at preserving the environment while supporting local life and observing the values of the local

peoples. It was introduced as an alternative form of tourism to counteract the concept of mass tourism which destroyed the environment and had lots of negative impacts on nature associated with it (Sezgin & Gumus, 2016). It is good in that it supports the local communities through the development and production of local small medium enterprises and also provides for the education of the people on conservation and preservation of the land and culture (TIES, 2015). As highlighted in the discussion, it is a form of responsible tourism good in that it is eco-based and it helps create environmental sustainability, social justice, economic development and ecological knowledge.

Ecotourism has therefore benefited both the locals and the visitors. Tourists have benefited from enjoying tourism in its most natural state (Lee, 2007). Ecotourism by nature involves visiting untouched or conserved wild nature and as Honey (2000) states visitors enjoy the authenticity of a place while also providing a positive impact on economic progression, thus allowing the admiration of local cultures and liberation for civil rights. It is also significant in that it provides memorable and valuable experiences for the visitors (TIES, 2015). Ecotourism is also good in that it helps conserve the environment and maintains the ecosystem and also improves the social lives and culture of the local people.

Local people benefit from ecotourism practices in various ways, first of all, quality of life may be improved for residents through job provisions. Economic benefits may be experienced for a long time due to their abilities in preserving nature for the enjoyment of tourists. Skills and attitude of the locals may be enhanced as well through interaction with the tourists (Xu, Mingzhu, Bu, & Pan, 2017).

2.7 Types & Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is accepted as an important part of nature-based tourism, although there are other types such as agro-tourism, conscious tourism, and responsible tourism (Sezgin, & Gumus, 2016). Nature Tourism involves traveling through and the enjoyment of the natural world and it regards the promotion and protection of natural and human communities (WDFW, 2009). According to UNWTO in 2010, nature-based tourism is a vital part of tourism which ensures short-term awareness of nature and eco-tourism experiences for visitors. In other words, it can be concluded as conscious tourism (Cited in Sezgin & Gumus, 2016).

Ecotourism has two main characteristics namely the inputs (e.g. flora, fauna and culture of a location) and outputs which are concerned with assistance for the social destinations and specific locations (Buckley, 2010). As such Ecotourism is sometimes referred to as agro-tourism which is concerned with rural farm communities as tourist attractions and aims at protecting endangered rural farm communities in disadvantaged countries.

Rinkesh (2009) denotes the principles of ecotourism as a form of responsible travel are, minimizing physical, social, behavioral and psychological impacts, building environmental and cultural awareness and providing positive experiences to both locals and tourists. Furthermore, it aspires to provide financial benefits to the residents and private sector businesses, to deliver unforgettable experiences to visitors and is designed to operate in low-impact facilities.

2.8 Benefits and Challenges of Ecotourism

Although bestowed with challenges, Ecotourism as a sustainable development strategy benefits communities in various ways. To begin, with ecotourism promotes environmental awareness to both locals and visitors (Yamada, 2011). This knowledge is built on conserving the environment for the long-term benefit of both the visitors and the locals. According to Powell & Ham (2008), sustainable ecotourism fosters preservation of the environment, evenhandedness, education and welfare in economies, meaningless destruction of nature, improved social equity and education of ecology issues which are very important to this strategic sustainable development tool.

In simple terms, ecotourism promotes the preservation of resources which enhance the admiration of nature and also creates positive socio-economic and political impacts in a destination (Ferdinand & Jamarber, 2011). NASCO (2008); Walpole & Thouless (2005) also agree that establishing successful ecotourism policies economically assists and contributes to the locals and local communities and that it helps eliminates locals' bad habits for the long-term enjoyment of resources.

According to Powell, Kasahe & Kharuxab (2017), ecotourism has greatly benefited evolving countries; it has become a much-welcomed solution for unemployment woes in these destinations and has seen an increase of development of tourism facilities. Such as transportation facilities, construct new roads, shopping malls, and hospitals to provide the benefit to the locals. However, it has also been argued that ecotourism practices sometimes cause unemployment (Nasar, Shelly, Bibi, Colbeck & Butler, 2015).

Ecotourism has come with restrictions for the locals in an effort to conserve and preserve resources, for example, there are some instances where locals have benefited from local activities such as fishing, farming, and hunting, wherein fostering ecotourism has stopped those (Nasar et al. 2017). As such there have been debates on how to balance and support the local economy around the protected areas. On a different note managing ecotourism and maintenance comes with its own challenges (Bruner et al., 2001; Myers et al. 2000), for example, efforts to bring awareness to locals and even visitors sometimes may be hectic and demanding. Furthermore implementing the plans involve lots of money, hence destinations may suffer the loss of income which may cause slow or no development in the rural places (Nasar et al. 2015).

2.9 Sustainable Development & Ecotourism in Karpaz

Below is the figure 2.1 of Karpaz Peninsula where ecotourism can be best practiced and existing conditions can be improved for a long term sustainable development.

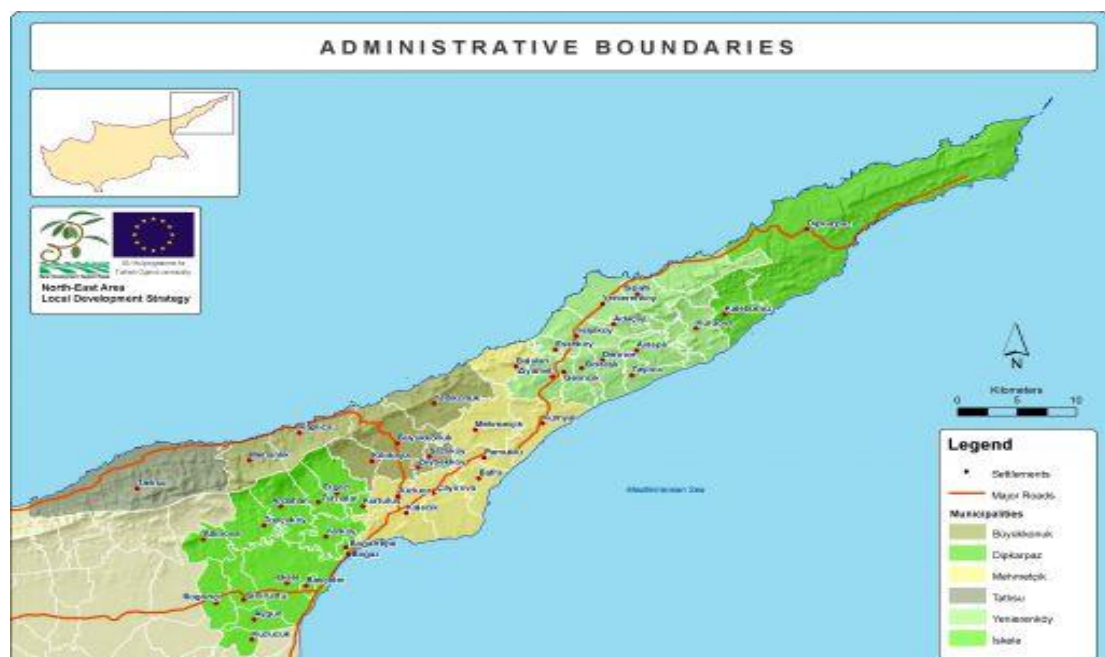


Figure 2.1: Map of Karpaz 1 (Source: Tourism Ministry)

2.9.1 Karpaz History

The Karpaz region is a unique destination in Cyprus and the world. The geographical feature of the region sometimes known as the Karpaz Peninsula or Karpasia makes it a unique tourist destination and attraction. The peninsula is a long, finger-like in nature and shape attraction that marks the tip of the island in Cyprus. It is about 80km in length and covers about 898 square km, making up 27 % of the territory of Northern Cyprus. It is still a less populated, un-spoilt landmark and hosts a number of tourist attractions such as historical sites (Kantara Castle, Apostolos Andreas Monastery, ruins of the ancient city of Karpasia and Apendrika, Ayias Trias Basilica to name a few). It prides itself on having over 46 sandy beaches suitable for nestling thousands of loggerheads and green turtles. The region is also known for its famous wild donkeys known to be a symbol of Cyprus. The donkeys are a part of an activity currently taking place in the region aimed at preserving them.

In a nutshell, the Karpaz region is a unique place where you can listen to the call of your heart. Resources in the region are still untouched, untarnished and are a piece of paradise with the best blue barks around the barks ecological environment, expansive sandy seashores, a rich heritage and historical background. Its un-spoilt nature and most natural resources make it one of the best destinations for ecotourism. The Karpaz region is a very important tourist destination especially for ecotourism because the peninsula has a variety of flora, fauna, antique archeological locations and ecological structures including marine ones.

The symbolic loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) noted earlier is also one of the few animals under the protection regulations of the region. Amongst the species found on the island, there are about 100 varieties of fish

and marine life, 8 marine mammals, 13 land based flying mammals, 21 species of reptile and a huge number of wild donkeys which are an important issue and an interesting product for nature tourism (TRNC Tourism ministry).

After 1974 it was agreed that the donkeys be set free from domestic use; the beginning of preservation and conservation of these donkeys. Since then the donkeys have been living in the wilderness off watch and use of human activity. The donkeys have become an attraction in their own right, as many tourists visiting the area have been vastly fascinated by sighting them. Because they are naturally tame animals, they have also warmed up to the tourists. Furthermore, the peninsula is rich with sea flora with about 300 species. And it is rich in ecology, with natural reefs, sandy coasts, ancient stone quarries, a perfect destination bestowed with many natural resources, hence the quest for sustainable tourism and ecotourism development.

The Karpaz region is also rich in biological and cultural diversity; amongst the Turkish and Cypriot settlers, are other people from Anatolia and the original human habitats of the peninsula. The most dominant culture in the place is the mosaic which has enriched the social and cultural life of the region. The Karpaz peninsula with its wild nature, untouched environment, beautiful sandy seashores, historical and cultural heritage is very suitable for tourism and could be one of the best places for ecotourism. Ecotourism could be applied as a rural development plan by the government because ecotourism is community-based and it will help support the local economy while conserving the environment in the process (TRNC tourism Ministry).

2.9.2 Karpaz Ecotourism

Cyprus is a divided island and has great opportunities for tourism, most especially for ecotourism. The Karpaz region in North Cyprus as highlighted earlier is well known

for its natural environment, unspoiled nature, ecological richness and unique places that are suitable for ecotourism (Gunsoy & Hannam, 2013). Mass tourism has been argued to be one cause of the destruction of the environment, hence the need to develop sustainable practices. And such was the case with the Karpaz region and Cyprus as a whole, the reason the TRNC government in 2007 introduced a sustainable tourism policy for the region (Gunsoy & Hannam, 2013).

As with any other plans and or policies for development, an implementation may be problematic for several reasons such as lack of funding, lack of communication, lack of community and private sector commitment to name a few. In the case of the TRNC policy for sustainable development and tourism in Karpaz, implementation was a problem as the previous and most favored policy advocated mass tourism (Tosun, 2001). Although Mass tourism had and has massive positive benefits associated with it for a destination, as would be the case with Karpaz in Cyprus, it, however, causes the destruction of the environment rapidly and in the long run, it will affect the economy and social events (Scott, 2012).



Figure 2.2: Karpaz region (Source: Tourism Ministry)

Prior to the policy announcement and implementation in 2006, the TRNC government began a rural development project, where some places within the region had to be protected. For example, the village Rizzo Karpaz now known as the Dip Karpaz was established as a pilot eco-village (Scott, 2012). A move supported by the British Foreign Commonwealth, which then later introduced a similar concept in the southern region of Cyprus, having noted a few positive turnarounds for the region from the pilot eco-village.

Since 1960, right after Independence, the tourism industry has had a historical importance for the nation, and because of Karpaz's natural resources, ecology, and uniqueness, the region has been pointed out as good for ecotourism and worth preserving for the enjoyment of future generations. Ecotourism practices in this region have also been a way for the government to assist the locals. Scott, (2012) indicated that all ecotourism projects in the region are supported by the government and the city tourism organization (Private and Public sectors running the projects).

Having known the benefits of sustainable practices, to date the locals have borrowed and implemented sustainable business ideas. This is characterized and noticed in the few eco-restaurants and guests houses that have been built in the region since the introduction of Ecotourism and sustainable practices in the region. The first act of ecotourism was started in 1990 with a guest house; the Karpaz Arch House was implemented to support sustainable development and ecotourism with the aim of preserving culture, heritage and the character of the village. To date, there are two villages supported by the government running as eco-villages; Buyukkonuk and the Dipkarpaz Establishment.

2.9.3 Ecotourism Sites in Karpaz

As a government policy to protect the natural resources of Karpaz, the government announced in 2006, the Buyukkonuk and Dipkarpaz villages as eco-villages. With the aid of the European Union (EU), some educational programs were initiated to bring awareness to the communities on the benefits of sustainable practices. The first step to acknowledging this development was the TRNC government's involvement in the activity, hence full support for the exercise.

Buyukkonuk Eco Village

Buyukkonuk village whose ancient name is Komi Kebir is the first village the government selected as an eco-village in North Cyprus. Ecotourism was introduced in this village as an alternative to mass tourism. The main aim of the start of ecotourism in this village was to contribute to the local economy, support local production and preserve the environment. The intended plan was to increase the awareness of villagers on the ecology of the region, support local production and establish a rural development plan (TRNC Tourism Ministry).

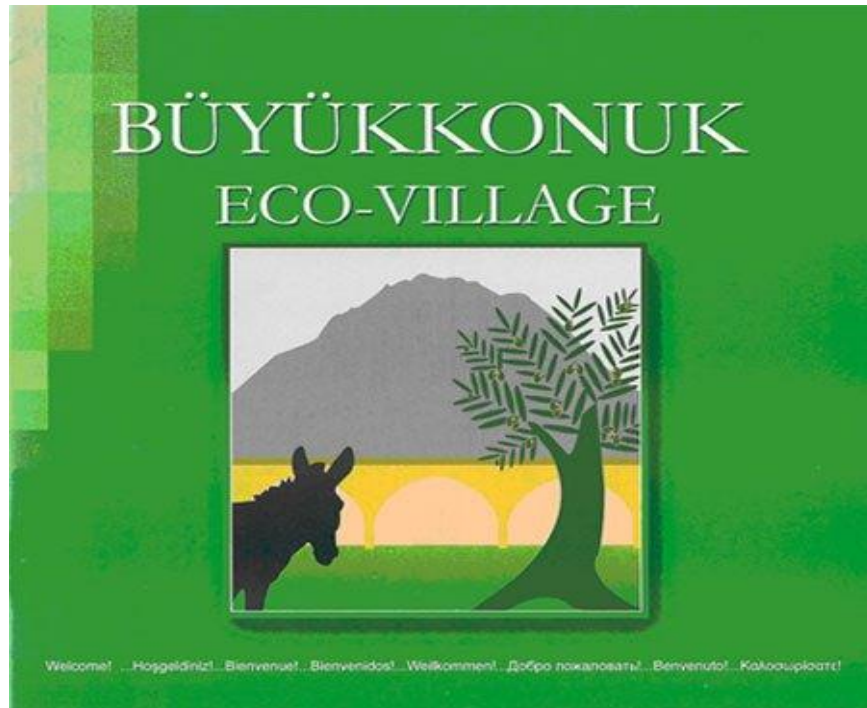


Figure2.3: Buyukkonuk Eco Festival (Source: Tourism Ministry)

The village Buyukkonuk is situated right at the beginning of the Karpaz peninsula, and it has fertile flatlands. Local products comprise of crops, wheat, barley and several more types of vegetables. The region includes local trees such as carob and olive trees as well as mulberry, cypress, almonds, and figs, a number of projects in line with ecotourism and sustainable developments have been introduced in this village. For example, the project has seen a restoration of an old house rebuilt as a tourist accommodation center. No major new developments were made as the project tries as much as possible to keep everything in their most natural form. With the help of the USAID funding, the projects have been successful; a Plaza has been sustainably developed in the region as well.

Sustainable development without the involvement of all stakeholders and importantly the community tend to fail, hence the collaboration of the municipality and commitment of the villagers union in the Karpaz region. For better management of

activities in this village, a committee was set-up by the villagers and organized the ecotourism facilities. As a way to bring awareness to the general population, the pioneers of the project in the committee began with special Eco days where they mobilized and encouraged ecotourism behavior. The project has to date grown such that each year ecotourism is celebrated annually.

The annual Ecotourism festival is open to visitors also, such that they are given an opportunity to pick carobs, pick their own olives and enjoy the press of olives at the local olive mill. Prior to becoming an eco-village, the locals were involved with agricultural activities, however, with the rise of sustainable development, the indigenous people are now involved with ecotourism. Unfortunately, the development process has negative impacts on the environment and is destructive towards the environment, and towards the species of the ecosystem (Aslan, 1993). Rapid development is the major cause of smog, and, mass tourism is also an important factor in the destruction of the environment (Aslan and Aktaş, 1994).

Dip Karpaz Village



Figure 2.4: Dipkarpaz Church (Source: Tourism Ministry)

Dip Karpaz (Rizokapazo) is one of the oldest settlements on the island. This goes to the Lusignan baronies. It has a rich heritage such as Karpasia and Aphendrika. There are some historical churches (such as in the above photograph) which are very important for heritage tourism. Historical sites such as the Church above and the Arch house are good examples of eco-tourism activities in the Karpaz region. Sustainable development practices in the region saw the restoration of old buildings.

In Karpaz Peninsula the national park is located which is very significant ecologically diverse area, also very rich as historically and archeologically. The national park includes exceptional flora and fauna, many kinds of birds, famous wild donkeys which are allowed to rove free. EU has labeled the national park as a protected area according to the regulations of EU. The region has about 100 exceptional species of flora, also the beaches are very important for the nesting of Loggerhead (*Caretta Caretta*) and Green Sea (*Chelonia mydas*) turtles. In the national park, there are the area Kastros which is accepted as the first settlement of humans on the island of Cyprus.

The regulations of EU, the environmentalists, the TRNC environment platform are struggling to conserve the area which is very important for nature tourism. These areas are attracting a lot of tourists and create to the local economy. Dipkarpaz in ancient history is pointed at the largest settlements of the Peninsula and is also mentioned as the gateway of Karpaz. In the old days, it was also an important place of production for tobacco and carob. Still, the buildings that were used as warehouses are remaining. These buildings can be used for heritage tourism.

Today the village is quite which is dealing with farming and agriculture. The villagers started to deal with ecotourism, although there are some challenges such as the lack of

interest from the government, residents are trying to improve and spread ecotourism to the whole village. The village is multicultural, still, some Greek population and peoples from different places of Turkey are living in this village. This can be an advantage for ecotourism implication. There are approximately 15 guest houses which are trying to implicate ecotourism.

The Revaklı ev guest house is one of them which is implicating ecotourism well and has regular visitors. Although the guest house hasn't any support from central and local governments the owners are struggling and achieve some progression. The guest house can be a good instance, which has an organic garden and serve to the visitors' vegetables and fruits freshly. Another guest house Castle Karpasia, which is a good place dealing with ecotourism, is successful in attracting foreign visitors. The owner is using the facility of booking.com and promotes his business on the internet. He is elected as the first by booking.com as attracting the most tourists.

2.9.4 Impacts of Ecotourism in Karpaz

The initial stages of sustainable practices and the introduction of eco-tourism activities in Karpaz awakened the local people and associations to the importance of ecotourism. Ecotourism requires that the community fully participates in the development, and though necessary this was a challenge for the locals in the area as it began. Before knowing the benefits of sustainable development and ecotourism, the locals were reluctant to participate. However, in time and with the help of the eco-tourism days, villagers began to see the importance and started cooperating. Ecotourism days brought awareness to the villagers through education and then the locals began to see the effects of production and income increases on the activities (Esenyel, 2013).



Figure 2.5: Karpaz Ecotourism (Source: Tourism Ministry)

Sustainable practices improve the local destination's economy through an increase of local income. As such, this was the case with the Karpaz region. Locals in the region benefited from an increase in job opportunities and business opportunities (Esenyel, 2013). Business opportunities were presented to the locals and investors as seen in the building and restoration of some buildings. Local villagers' lives were improved as through the promotion of ecotourism they were given an opportunity to trade their local artifacts to the tourists.

In other words ecotourism promoted local talent, for example, women are encouraged to basket weave as well as crocheting and knitting to sell to the tourists. As the business investors benefited, the standard local person also benefited. The eco days, for example, is one activity where locals maximized on the show to make sales of their local productions (Gunsoy, & Hannam, 2013). For example whence locals have benefited from is the case of Revakli-ev quest house which is an organic producing vegetable and fruit farm (Esenyel, 2013). Revakli-ev is an eco-farm which has opened its doors to the eco day's festivals. Furthermore, through its formation, it has created jobs for the local persons, hence benefiting the local business investor and the local

villagers. Generally, the Karpaz region's culture has been enhanced as locals have been motivated to preserve the few resources they have.

As an ecotourism center, there has been a huge positive impact in the region from a socio-cultural, economic and environmental perspective. For example, one research pointed out that locals' lives were improved as prior to ecotourism practices, people mainly stayed in their homes, however afterward there were so many activities that kept them outside their homes – a welcome gesture (Esenyel, 2013).

2.9.5 Challenges of Eco-Tourism

Ecotourism is community-based, and its effective implementation is entirely dependent on it being accepted by the locals. An area like Karpaz with all its undisturbed ecology, unique nature, is a target for massive developments from both the private and public sectors, however this can be a problem for the local who in most cases bear the consequences of wrong and or poor planning (Cooper & Hall, 2008; Debeş, 2011; Gunns, 2002). This was the case with the Karpaz region as sustainable development and ecotourism practices were introduced in the region (Debeş, 2011).

Furthermore, the TRNC initially had been more in favor of mass tourism, however, on the realization of the negative effects of this form of tourism, a reverse was made, however not well understood to some major players and stakeholders in the region (Scott, 2012). It took some informative and educational activities in the region to bring the different stakeholders together to agree to work towards the promotion of Ecotourism.

Despite having won the battle to override the Mass tourism policy in favor of ecotourism, the plan drafted on the new policy still presented some challenges. Although ecotourism has been welcomed in the region and works effectively, there are still some

conflicts with the locals who still claim to not have seen many financial benefits despite part of their social lives having been improved (Esenyel, 2013). One of the main reasons to promote ecotourism or sustainable tourism is the preservation of the local culture, however there have been some disputes over this, as research notes that the major population in the region is immigrant, hence the real locals suffer suffocation and a disability to preserve and promote their own culture (Yasarata, Altinay, Burns, & Okumus, 2010).

Another major problem in the promotion of sustainable development in the region and country as a whole has been mainly political; associated with the governance of sustainability programs in the region (Alipour & Kilic, 2005). The authors further note issues such as communication and marketing as major problems in policy making and planning, a case no different to Karpaz' shortfall (Yasarata, Altinay, Burns, & Okumus, 2010). The literature mentions developing countries such as North Cyprus, where sustainable development and sustainable tourism plans are hindered by political issues, political concerns, private sector benefits, and local communities (Altinay, Var, Hines, & Hussain, 2007).

In other words, conflict arises between the government, the locals and the private sector, each assessing their benefits in the cause. This has not been any different with sustainable development and ecotourism practice in the Karpaz region. For example, as highlighted earlier, although the locals accepted the venture and were happy with it a financial benefit had not yet been fully realized – one likely possible threat to the development in the near future.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative approach to research was undertaken by the researcher. The whole aim of this research was to develop an in-depth analysis of what was happening in relation to the role ecotourism played in achieving sustainable development and the impacts of ecotourism in the region of Karpaz in North Cyprus.

3.2 Qualitative Approach

As Neuman (2016) points out qualitative research enables the researcher to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior through participatory means. Thus, it was very important for the researcher to go to Karpaz, met the people who lived and worked there to collect data from the perspective of these individuals, studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that these people bring to them (Neuman, 2016) – the main principles of qualitative research. Simply, the researcher was interested in finding out how these people make sense of their experiences in detail.

3.3 Action Research

The main research strategy adopted in this research was action research. “Action research is applied research that treats knowledge as a form of power and abolishes the line between research and social action” (Neuman, 2006:25). This research is an applied research because what lies at the core of this research is the desire to blending

acquiring new knowledge with using this knowledge to achieve a specific purpose (Neuman, 2006). As Neuman (2016) pointed out “in action research, we do not remain detached. We close the gap between studying an issue and engaging in social-political action to influence the issue” (p. 25).

Thus, the aim was to incorporate the popular knowledge and concerns of ordinary people, to improve lives of the local community by empowering them and bringing social change and raising public awareness. Simply, what motivated this research is the strong desire on the behalf of the researcher to make an impact on the protection and conservation of the environment in Karpaz as a result of the development of ecotourism in the region. Further, the researcher was motivated by the desire of helping those ecotourism enterprises which were struggling and uniting all of the Eco-tourism cooperatives and associations in KKTC.

3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

As a tool for gathering data, a semi-structured interview technique was used. Semi-structured interviews are very useful when one is collecting information in detail and depth from the perspective of the individuals on the experiences, feelings, perspectives, and opinions of people (Neuman, 2016). Before the interviews were started, an 'interview guide' was developed. This was a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation (Altınay and Paraskevas, 2011). One of the main advantages of semi-structured interviews is that the researchers have a number of open-ended questions prepared in advance but also has the flexibility to ask further questions during the interviews (Altınay and Paraskevas, 2011). Each interview was started with explaining the aims of the research and asking their permission to record

their voices. The interviewees were further reassured about the confidentiality of the interview.

3.5 Sampling

The study adopts a non-probability sampling strategy, a purposive sampling also known as judgmental and or subjective sampling. This type of sampling is handy when researchers desire to reach a desired targeted sample quickly (Crossman, 2017). There are a number of purposive sampling methods; however, this research study adopts the critical ease sampling methods, thus choosing to focus the study on Karpaz, a region in North Cyprus. Using this form of sampling, respondent's from the residents of Karpaz, ecotourism association and business entities in Karpaz are selected to provide information on the issues of ecotourism and sustainability. Respondents were asked mainly on their assessment of the current ecotourism practices, progress, and potential of ecotourism, impacts, challenges, and recommendation of strategies to improve the current state.

In fact, since the researcher is a resident in the region, an environmental activist and as the president of the union and a member of Cyprus Environment Platform (comprises of approximately 40 organizations which consist of unions, the association of biology and the association of doctors), the respondents were very much part of the research process. In fact, this was a collaborative process where the research participants were involved in the problem definition and study implementation. In fact, the research participants actively helped to design and conduct the research study.

3.6 Research Experience

Interviews were done with the local residents, local eco-tourism business enterprises, members of ecotourism associations and cooperatives in Karpaz and KKTC (see table

1 below). Each interview lasted about one hour. Since the interviewer was and is in close contact with the majority of the respondents, there were continual collaboration and building of knowledge between the interviewer and the research participants. The personal documents from these associations and cooperatives were also used as part of data collection process.

In total, 10 respondents were interviewed in detail. The table 1 below provides the demographic characteristics of the respondent.

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Respondent

Respondents	Position
Respondent One	President of Buyukkonuk Ecotourism Association
Respondent Two	Founder and Leader of EcoTourism Movement
Respondent Three	President of KKTC Ecotourism Association
Respondent Four	General Secretary for Karpaz Ecotourism Cooperative
Respondent Five	President for Karpaz Ecotourism Cooperative
Respondent Six	Local Resident and Guest House Owner
Respondent Seven	Local Resident and Guest House Owner
Respondent Eight	Local Resident and Ecotourism Entrepreneur
Respondent Nine	Local Resident and Ecotourism Entrepreneur
Respondent Ten	Local Resident and Ecotourism Entrepreneur

Each interview was recorded with the permission of the respondents and was later transcribed verbatim. Transcribing is used to assess interviews, according to Bailey's (2008) study, to transcribe is to interpret data which allows for a closer observation of

data and this leads to noticing unanticipated phenomena. The confidentiality of the respondents was also assured at the beginning of each interview.

Chapter 4

RESULT AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the presentation and analysis of the study findings. The qualitative semi-structured interviews technique enabled the researcher to record the personal experiences of eco-tourism and its impacts in Karpaz, in the lives of the subjects as expressed in their own terms and from their own perspective. The interviews were aimed at exploring the existing ideas and concepts by penetrating into interviewees' explanations, beliefs, rationalizations, understandings, feelings, and thoughts about the phenomenon. A total of ten interviews were conducted with local ecotourism entrepreneurs, members of local and national eco-tourism associations and members of local eco-tourism cooperatives in Karpaz region.

4.2 Respondents' Understanding of the Phenomenon

In order to understand the extent of the respondent's knowledge of the issue of sustainable development and ecotourism, the respondents were asked to explain what they understand about sustainable development and ecotourism? Out of the ten respondents, six of them had a general understanding of the term sustainable development and ecotourism. The ones who were not so clear were the entrepreneurs. Even though not all of the respondents were able to clearly define these concepts, the majority of the interviewees, nevertheless, understood ecotourism as a sustainable development concept or to be somewhat linked to it. In most cases, they cited

ecotourism as the best example of sustainable development and also noted it as a form of responsible tourism which needed the cooperation of all involved.

4.3 Perceptions of the Current Situation of Ecotourism in Karpaz

There was a mixed bag of thoughts when the respondents were asked about the current situation of ecotourism in their village and the Karpaz region. Overall, they believed that the more established villages such as Büyükkonuk, Dip Karpaz, and Mehmetcik, that have been practicing ecotourism for a long time, although have some challenges mainly relating to finance, were doing well. However. They believed that they had more challenges and problems.

“We have small local organization and we have not enough money to promote our organization, as well as we do not have any support from the authority. Besides that our biggest problem is marketing our place to the world as an eco-base tourism.” (Respondents 3)

The other interviewees (mainly local Eco-tourism Entrepreneurs) cited that although they have heard about sustainable practices and have tried to implement them, because of the financial challenges they have, they have not been able to fully go ahead with these ecotourism projects. However, few local Ecotourism Entrepreneurs acknowledged that they have only a vague knowledge of Eco-tourism and still need further education in order to start the projects at full length.

4.4 Ecotourism Challenges in Karpaz

When the respondents' were asked about the challenges facing ecotourism in their village and Karpaz, the respondents had a lot to say. They all believed that those villages which have been practicing eco-tourism for a while had good rural development. They claimed that they all have heard about these practices and want to also do the same. However, they said that the National government neither protects nor effectively promotes eco-tourism in this region. In fact, respondents believed that

more effort is being put towards the promotion of mass tourism in the region and the country. Mass tourism has been the focus in North Cyprus for the past couple of years due to the belief that financial gains from mass tourism can aid the economy.

According to respondent 1:

“.....there is no environmental policy, plan or map to show and designate the tourism areas, the industrial areas. The tourism areas need protection, plan to develop the nature. Furthermore, the specialist should make the report according to the aim of designated areas and sustainable development. But there is no plan, no concern from the Government, therefore, how can a development plan be applied.”

Members of the eco-tourism cooperatives and associations believed that although the government has decided to reduce mass tourism on paper, this has certainly not been the case in practice. Although, some laws and policies have been passed on promoting ecotourism, they believe, this is only on paper and there is not much practice of it. Respondents noted that there was no environmental policy to guard these activities or clear indications and directions of how sustainable development can be affected.

All responses believed in the role the government needs to play in promoting sustainability in the region. Respondents felt that they needed the help of the government to market the concept for them. They said that even though few operations do receive tourists in some months in the year, the business is not enough to sustain them. They pointed out how new venturers investing in sustainable tourism businesses have borrowed money from the banks to develop their projects and paid due taxes to the government. However, they see a bleak future due to lack of marketing of the region and the country as a whole.

There were also concerns about the protection of the natural resources. They believed that in this region, the land is still seemingly undisturbed and in its most natural state, without much damage to the environment. However, they are worried about its long-term protection.

“...Well we have members from villages of Karpaz dealing with ecotourism. They are small enterprises. But, we haven't enough money to promote our enterprises. And the groups are not supporting us. Our biggest problem is marketing. We can service to groups of 20-30 members, although ecotourism is based on small groups.” (Respondent 3)

These concerns arising as there seems to be more interest in promoting mass tourism and gambling in the country. Another concern by one respondent was the issue of accessibility. This interviewee mentioned that Karpaz is far from the other big cities in North Cyprus where most tourists visit and there is no adequate transportation in the country. Respondent 4 pointed out:

“...the infrastructure is weak, transportation is weak and we need more facilities to attract more visitors. The place is good but not good enough, after a few days the visitors get bored”

In other words, some of the respondents felt that some form of development in terms of infrastructure (e.g., roads and buildings to mention a few) is needed. They also believed that more eco-friendly activities could be introduced in the region, as the history of the area alone and some local farming activities are not enough to entice the visitors and keep the businesses going.

There were also concerns over the extent of knowledge on ecotourism in the area. They pointed out that, although some of the residents and businesses heard of the concept of eco-tourism and even some are practicing it and bought the idea, there is still a need

to educate the people of the region further on the concept of eco-tourism and its benefit.

Respondent- 4 said:

“..... The movement is not understood yet, we need to explain it more. Since ecotourism has social and economic aspects we need to explain the benefits of the movement more.”

One interviewee noted that the local municipality does not know about ecotourism and had no plans for it. He also pointed out how the government has resorted to helping the more established tour operators and leaving the small enterprises to strive alone. In other words as one of the interviewees noted: “there is a lack of interest from the government” (Respondent 2, 4, 7).

4.5 Impacts of Ecotourism

Upon being asked about the impacts of ecotourism in the region, at least half of the respondents agreed to have seen some form of changes in terms of income. The more established villages in the region attest an improved quality of life for the local villagers.

“...We don't have other options in this region. Although there is some farming and animal husbandry, now they are disappearing because of lack of interest from the government. The government must implement an ecotourism developing plan in order to develop Karpaz.” (Respondent 6).

Some respondents also pointed out how women in the villages have been empowered by gaining income as a result of using their domestic skills by making, promoting and selling their food products to the tourists. As highlighted earlier, one way of promoting local products in the region is through the eco festivals where all goods sold in the stalls are from the local farms and or locally made. In other words, locals are gaining an income they never had before.

Overall, there was also a belief that jobs have been created for the local people and the businesses have also begun seeing the profits from the projects. They claimed that although it has taken a long time to establish these projects, now their benefits are beginning to be seen. Ecotourism projects are also aiding local trade boost in the region, there are products which are locally produced and sold and or served to the customers while staying in Karpaz. As such the local villagers and business operators have somewhat all benefited from ecotourism development. As Respondent 7 pointed out:

“...Ecotourism is the best type of tourism over here. Because we have nature, we have the vision to live a natural life as we did it for 50 years without a pharmacy, chemicals.”

Development of eco-tourism also leads to an increased awareness of environmental protection. Even though not fully fledged and practiced around all Karpaz region, the general perception is that the locals and the business people in this region have some knowledge of what ecotourism is all about. As mentioned before, when defining ecotourism, some noted ecotourism to be a form of responsible tourism activity and thus, there is an attitude of responsibility towards protecting the resources they have. As respondent 5 pointed out there is a sizeable number of people who believe in sustainable practices and want to act upon it.

“.....we are buying almost everything from our village markets, vegetables, fruits, cheese, meat and the money is staying in the village.” (Respondent 5).

There was, however, a few negative responses from some of the respondents, especially mostly from those who are still struggling to catch up and or trying to venture into the program. They noted little financial effect, if any at all, citing that money was going out rather than staying in the region. One of the respondents pointed

out how some of the big tour operators subs hired some eco-restaurants from the region for a small fee and operated them by charging lots of money for the meals. Some of the respondents also complained about the preferential treatment of the big hotels in the region. As Respondent 8 said:

“... we are paying the same taxes as the big hotels and the big hotels are given extra benefits such as imported goods with no customs tax. They even received a discount on their electric bill but we couldn't. They can easily reach to the politicians. We can't survive like this and we will have to shut down if it goes like this.”

Some noted that even though tourists came, they came only for day trips and returned to the cities and not much money is spent in the region. So it was often the tour operators who were benefiting and rather than the local businesses.

4.6 Locals' Expectations of Ecotourism in the Region

When asked about the expectations of the respondents from eco-tourism in the region, there seem to be two concepts which pop up all the time. Respondents talked about the need for education on eco-tourism and financial support from the government.

There was a general consensus among the respondents about educating both local residents and the businesses in the region on the concept of ecotourism and sustainable practices. Education was also required on the benefits of sustainable development and ecotourism in the region. Respondents 9 said:

“.....There is no education to explain the benefits of ecotourism and so the residents don't know why they should be involved in ecotourism. The tourism ministers, unfortunately, don't know anything about tourism. The previous ministry was a doctor and we couldn't explain him anything.”

Furthermore, they believed that there is a need for financial support to properly start these eco-tourism programs, especially for the beginners. More financial support is

needed to venture and to establish programs to operate on a full capacity. They felt that there was still a lot to learn and get these project going.

Hence the need for further help from the government in setting these projects through financial aid. In a nutshell, all of the respondents agreed that more education on the benefits and importance of eco-tourism is still required and so is the financial aid. Respondents felt that since the locals put so much effort into sustainable practices, it was about the time they also started making meaningful yields.

4.7 Local Stakeholder's Contribution to Ecotourism

For the purpose of this discussion, the stakeholders refer to the local villagers and the ecotourism business entrepreneurs. In response to the question on their contribution to sustainable practices, there was a mixed bag of thoughts, varying from the fact that some villagers were more established than the other. Respondents felt that the locals, as stakeholders, had not quite made much of a significant contribution yet.

“...Local people have not made a significant contribution yet, but we have a cooperative and we are trying to educate people and involve the locals in eco-activities. Firstly we need a plan to organize what we are expecting from the villagers, we want them to produce vegetables, fruits, organic eggs. Organize the villagers and involved them in ecotourism facilities.” (Respondent 7)

Those who are involved in ecotourism activities already taking responsibility for their natural resources and promoting local production of goods and services. As was pointed out by the interviewees in terms of development, the business started to use local building materials and restaurants use local food productions. For example, one village had signs restricting hunting in the area as a form of protecting their natural resource. The same village also has a farm of its own, whenceforth all meals made in the guest house are all taken from the products on this farm.

4.8 Perceptions of the EU and Other International Organization Support for Eco-Tourism

Respondents were also asked about how the EU and other sources of international support affecting eco-tourism development in the region. Leaving the challenges aside in acquiring a help, the respondents were aware and supportive of the help offered to such projects by the EU, USAID and Turkish Embassy. There is help coming in from the Turkish Embassy and the EU. There are challenging processes to receive funds, in particularly the EU's assistance, from one of these organizations due to the tedious regulations and requirements that the Turkish Embassy demands. Respondent 3 said:

“.....Turkish Embassy has some programs for helping but we have to apply through our tourism ministry, and we couldn't get any positive answer from our Ministry yet. And as you know tourism ministry is changing continuously here.”

They believed that although the EU has rules too, they seem to help more and better than Turkish embassy. The EU aid was noted to have some rural development plans in place that help support eco-tourism projects. Respondent-2 said:

“EU has rural development plans. There is a big department for it and they are supporting eco-tourism. They support rural development projects such as the centralization of milking. They pay attention to hygiene. The USA also helps a little. EU helps more than the government.”

Villages like Buyukkonuk and Mehmetcik are examples of villages that are benefiting greatly from the EU aid. Dipkarpaz village, however, couldn't benefit from EU aids because of the properties are Greek titled. The legislation of EU doesn't allow aid to the lands that have Greek titles. And finally, a few respondents complained that even though there were help aids available they were not able to get one at all because of the regulations they have failed to meet.

4.9 Perceptions about the Municipality & Government Policies

When questioned about the eco-tourism based development policies of the municipality and government, all of the respondents were negative. The general response in terms of policies by both the municipality and government was rather negative. The most respondents did not identify much with the policies of the municipality or government. In addition, they did not see much action from the Municipality in terms of ecotourism in the region. As Respondent 2 said:

“.....The municipality is very keen about eco-tourism because the families are getting money and this contributes to the local economy a bit but they are supporting mass tourism, no help is given to small size enterprises. They use our photos in tourism fairs abroad but don't have a budget for us.”

However, as from 2017, one activity is very much supported by the municipality. This is the establishment of a CITTASLOW market - a vegetable and dairy market promoting local production. All Villagers are encouraged to participate in it and so are the businesses as well.

4.10 Respondents' Recommendations for Ecotourism in Karpaz Region

The respondents gave a few but interesting recommendations. They pointed out that although ecotourism projects are going well in some villages for those that have ventured into it, they all felt that assistance in widening the number of activities can be offered in the region. They explained how most guests who visit the area are entertained in the local villages. Some also partake in the local farm's duties and visit the sea. The respondents pointed out how some projects for new activities are waiting for the approval of the government. Respondent 10 said:

“The cittaslow movement in Mehmetcik village creates ecotourism movement but to increase this activity everywhere in north Cyprus need government willingness and proper actions.”

All respondents, emphasized the importance of more funding from the authorities to help sustain the projects. Although products are being locally produced, the stakeholders all request more intervention and support from the authorities to locally produce and funding for the projects. Respondents also want more education. They pointed out that although there are some policies on ecotourism and sustainability, they have not been really clear to the operators and all of the stakeholders, hence the request for the authorities once more to educate the locals and businesses.

One of the major aims of sustainability is to aid the locals or host community, hence a need for more programs that can assist the locals to self-support themselves. Thus, more information and education on the projects should be given to the locals and businesses. Some of the new enterprises seemed more eager on finding out more on how to be effective and efficient in their business. According to Respondent 6:

“...Ecotourism has a direct relationship to the environment, in my business, we are offering to visitor’s service such as picking an orange from the trees. And also trying to generate the electricity from solar energy and wind. Besides, we are trying to combine the activities with the environment. Furthermore, we don't waste the excess food. We are always giving the food to animals, which the visitors are appreciating.”

The respondents also noted that most of the eco-tourism enterprises were small businesses operating at a personal level. Suggestions were made for associations to be formed to help protect and promote the ecotourism activities in the region. The respondents also suggested that in the same manner mass tourism is promoted, some marketing strategies should be developed by the government to advertise eco-tourism. They believe that there is a huge need for the local municipalities to step in and play a more active role in the activities. Respondents have the notion that since Karpaz region is a rural place it is always neglected by the governments.

They claim that the politicians remember the place only just during the elections. Politicians have no plan about how to develop Karpaz region. Respondents strongly believe that eco-tourism could be an appropriate way for developing this rural part of the country. Eco-tourism operators are waiting for financial aid from governments, policy, and regulations about ecotourism and for the conservation of the Karpaz peninsula. Respondents believe that the progress in ecotourism activities will increase the local production and economy, increase the income and could be a solution to unemployment. Respondents also believe that the establishment of ecotourism further can also conserve the nature and protect the unique beauties and ecology of Karpaz.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter provides a summary of the study as well as the conclusion of the research. Highlighted in the chapter are the summary of the study, achievements of the objectives, and the conclusion of the research study. Outlined also in the chapter are the recommendations and areas of future study.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study endeavored to ascertain the role of ecotourism in achieving sustainable development in the Karpaz region of North Cyprus. It also sought to understand the local people and business operators' perceptions and understanding of sustainable development and eco-tourism. Furthermore, the research study also aspired in finding out the current situation and potential of eco-tourism activities in the Karpaz region. Lastly, the study provides recommendations and suggestions for effective eco-tourism activities in the region and likely areas of future study.

The sample data included locals and local business operators engaged in eco-tourism in the Karpaz region. The researcher used judgmental sampling to select respondents for the interviews based on their ability to give information on the current state of ecotourism in Karpaz and its potential. The same technique was also used on selecting the locals interviewed in the study to give a further insight into their understanding of

sustainable development and eco-tourism its challenges and suggestions for future developments and programs.

5.3 Achievements of Objectives

All objectives as established and given in the first chapter were achieved. The first objective was to ascertain the locals' understanding of the terms sustainable development and eco-tourism. A sizeable number of the respondents acknowledged having been familiar with the terms and concepts. The study also aimed to understand the current state of eco-tourism its challenges and the community's expectations. The findings reveal that quite a few villages in the region have adopted sustainable practices and endeavor in practicing eco-tourism for the long run. Out of the respondents questioned in the survey, at least two villages have been established and successfully operating in this area. The rest of the respondents have adopted sustainable practices and eco-tourism with some challenges in fully setting up the operations.

Both the setup and still developing sustainable development and eco-tourism projects in the region all highlighted challenges with the municipality and government's failure to protect and effectively promote the concept in the region. Although the government has placed policies on eco-tourism, the locals and business operators in the region still feel and think the government supports mostly mass tourism which is a direct opposite and threat to sustainable development projects. Policies were rather noted as being just on paper but not in full practice as yet. Respondents also felt there was a need for more policies such the Environmental policy towards the protection of area to be affected. The land is still seemingly undisturbed and in its most natural state. Some concessions are trying to avoid any activities that disrupt and destroy the environment; however,

they need the government's endorsement to ensure maximum protection of the resource. Still, on the government's failures, respondents felt they need more of its input in promoting the destination as an eco-tourism center. Two villages have been well set and are seemingly doing well, however still require more effort from the government, as with the rest of the operations that have adopted the business concept.

Furthermore, challenges with accessibility and poor infrastructure were a major concern in the region, with a request for help also from the government. Although there is some form of development in the region at the local level workmanship, the respondents felt there was a need for more development to entice the customers more to the region.

In terms of expectations from both a business and local person's perspective, respondents highlighted the need for further educational seminars and activities on the concept to better equip the business people how to operate and the locals on what to expect and how they can help in protecting the environment. Additionally, the newly formed businesses still needed financial support to operate their business at full capacity.

With reference to impacts of eco-tourism activities in the region, both positive and negative effects were reported. Mostly in the well-performing villages, positive effects have been noted. For example reports of locals, empowerment was noted, job creation thus locals earning some form of income. Local trade and production have also improved in the region as a result thus local businesses and farms earn an income from sales made locally to support the projects. In a way quality of life is slowly improving

in the region. Additionally, there is an increased awareness of environmental protection thus everyone trying their level best to maintain the resource.

Sadly, however, these positive effects although known and realized to some, the still upcoming business has not quite reached to this point, hence a sizeable number still waiting to experience the positive effects of sustainable practices. Some operators, especially the eco-restaurants felt abuse from the tour operators who have come to make use of their properties, collecting huge sums of money from the tourists and leaving the businesses small commissions which barely keeps them running.

5.4 Conclusion

Given the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that eco-tourism in Karpaz is a viable rural tourism development plan with so much potential in the near future. It is still a fairly new concept to many who have adopted the idea and formed their businesses as eco-tourism centers. Although the respondents were somewhat knowledgeable about the concept the researcher also concludes that there is still quite a lot to be learned and achieved in the region in this regard. Only two villages out of the ten visited were more established and seemingly doing well, with a keen interest from the rest to fully operate and begin to realize some profits and benefits.

As such more education on the concept was noted as essential to both the business operators and the local community. The researcher also noted a keen interest from the locals and business operators to embrace the concept and endorse protection policies within their villages and properties. One concession had no hunting signs in its thick bushes and promoted locally produced foods for its visitors.

The research also deduces the need for the government and the municipality to fully support the villages in endorsing sustainable practices. There was a call for the local municipality to be fully active in promoting the protection of the environment and participating in the projects. Although the municipality was a part of the Citta slow, recently introduced in the region in one of the villages, there is still need for them to be more participative in other regions and the annual eco-days festivities. The municipality is also involved in the Eco day's festival co-hosted with the Buyukkonuk village members and eco-tourism stakeholders.

As highlighted earlier in the discussion, the eco days are one of the greatest days of TRNC where visitors from all over Cyprus visit and take part in the activities. Instead of making it a local activity the government could work at promoting it as an international event thus promoting more travel into North Cyprus. The politicians have taken an interest and participated in the event, however for the wrong reasons, hence the request for the government to ensure that participation is taken seriously and for the right reasons and to the benefit of North Cyprus, Eco-Tourism boost.

During the day local productions are sold and especially women are very active in the event. This is a good example that Eco days creates to the local economy and also has positive effects on the social and culture of the local life of Karpaz. Another village Mehmetcik (Galatya) is already declared as Cittaslow which means slow city. This declaration is approved internationally by the European Cittaslow Association. This tourism movement is a new concept of ecotourism which started in Italy. The municipality is steering this movement and is applying a tourism developing plan for the village according to the principles of cittaslow. Infrastructure is designed, pedestrian and bicycle roads are started to be done. A plan emerges with the agriculture

ministry for organic fruit and vegetable production. Lastly, an open market (bazaar) opened near the road for selling organic production to all people. This would be a good example to all Karpaz regions for spreading the ecotourism movement all over the Peninsula.

Also deduced from the findings the researcher concludes that the future prospects of Karpaz region as an eco-tourism center are high and bright. This is arrived at because the locals and the business operators in the region seem conscious of the concept and have already begun working towards sustainability. Even though there have been some challenges faced in the currently running programs, there is a belief that the programs will grow and do well for the villages.

5.5 Recommendations

Given the outlined findings and conclusions noted, first and foremost, the researcher recommends the need for further education on sustainable practices in the region. The government has set policies that promote sustainable development and eco-tourism practices, should step up to effectively aid educate and promote these developments along with the locals and the business operators. The researcher suggests for the government alongside with the International aids in Eco-tourism to educate the locals and help them with setting up the businesses and how they can best maximize the concept.

On another note, because there are many small businesses operating under this concept with little knowledge no how to operate and market their services, the researcher suggests the formation of cooperation's and or associations to be the voice of these businesses to the government. Additionally, these associations may assist by way of

promotion and marketing of activities and properties in the region. Also by collectively working together, the businesses may boost each other's sales through booking referrals in the event of over spills.

Karpaz region is a rural and still undeveloped region. As the population is increasing unemployment is increasing also. The young generation is seeking to go away for jobs which could be bad for the nation in the long run. The economic situation of the region influences the locals to sell their properties and move from the area. Properties are in the interest of the construction companies who are looking for more money, more profit, such as constructing big hotels and gambling hotels. This situation carries the risks of spoiling the beauties and nature of Karpaz Region.

Another solution would be to prepare a tourism development plan for Karpaz region catapulted by the government, the private sector stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, ecotourism associations and ecotourism cooperatives representing the locals' voice. In the rural development plan should be the principles of Ecotourism. It should also have policies that support local production and protection of the environment since eco-tourism is community-based and controlled. Implementation of plans and any sustainable development projects have been noted to problematic for a number of reasons, as such the government should try and work with all the necessary stakeholders in eco-tourism and also they should reorganize the legislation according to Ecotourism principles and they should arrange education programs for locals and also for entrepreneurs. Currently, the projects in TRNC suffer from a lack of government interest and financial support, which has made it difficult for the eco enterprises to face some challenges in operation. The Government could take a step further in seeking international aid or funding for these projects already in existence.

Promotion of the region is another handicap for the eco businesses; this could be done also by the technologic facilities such as the internet, Facebook, booking.com. By the supporting of government and tourism ministry could be done professionally and increase the visitors to the region. One of the entrepreneurs of Karpaz village promote his guest house via booking.com and increase his visitors a lot and also elected as the third hosting most visitors in whole Cyprus while is the first in TRNC. The successful instance could be applied to all enterprises at Karpaz region. In the research, we found out that the promotions by the government are given to big tourism agencies. This policy must change and promotions must be given directly to the ecotourism enterprises. Karpaz is a unique place, it is appropriate for ecotourism, as the villagers say there is no other Karpaz. Let's protect the culture, history, nature and improve the lives of indigenous people of Karpaz. Let's save KARPAZ.

5.6 Limitations and Future Study Recommendations

The study has a number of limitations noted. Firstly study was conducted in Karpaz, a small region in North Cyprus; as such results cannot be generalized. Further research on the same topic may be conducted in other regions similar and on small islands as well such North Cyprus. Secondly, data was mainly collected from the business operators in the region and a few locals working within these operations, future research could look into interviewing other business operators in the region and other locals from outside the business projects. Other stakeholders such as the government, municipality and the International aid companies could also be interviewed on their insight on the current state of Eco-tourism, its challenges, impacts, and progress in the region. Last but not least, a qualitative data collection method was used; wherein future research studies could consider using the quantitative approach to gathering information.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Questions

English Question:

1. What do you understand about sustainable development and ecotourism?
2. What is the current situation of ecotourism in your village and Karpaz region?
3. What are the challenges face ecotourism in your village and Karpaz?
4. What are the local people expecting from ecotourism?
5. What are the local people and local organizations contribution to ecotourism?
6. What is the policy of municipality (government) about ecotourism based development?
7. How EU and other international support effects on ecotourism development?
8. What are the economic impacts of ecotourism on local life?
9. What are the relations between ecotourism and sustainable environment?
10. What are the impacts of ecotourism on rural sustainable development?
11. How ecotourism can improve Karpaz region tourism sector?
12. How ecotourism can be more beneficial to local people and economy?
13. Why ecotourism is essential for Karpaz region tourism development?
14. How ecotourism can attract foreign tourists and how could be international eco destination?
15. What is your opinion about ecotourism development?

Türkçe sorular

- 1-Sürdürülebilir gelişme ve Ekoturizm hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- 2-Ekoturizmin mevcut durumu köyünüzde ve Karpaz bölgesinde nedir?
- 3-Ekoturizmin köyünüzdeki güçlükleri nedir?
- 4-Köylülerin ve halkın Ekoturizmden beklentileri nedir?
- 5-köylülerin ve köydeki derneklerin Ekoturizme katkısı nedir?
- 6-Belediyenin ve hükümetin ekoturizm gelişmesi için politikası nedir?
- 7-AB ve Uluslararası organizasyonların Ekoturizme katkısı ve desteği nedir?
- 8-Ekoturizmin bölge halkı üzerindeki etkileri nedir
- 9-Ekoturizm ve sürdürülebilir çevre arasındaki ilişki nedir?
- 10-Ekoturizmin bölge kırsal kalkınma üzerindeki etkileri nedir?
- 11-Ekoturizm Karpaz turizmini nasıl geliştirebilir?
- 12-Ekoturizm nasıl daha fazla bölge insanına ve ekonomisine katkı sağlayabilir?
- 13-Ekoturizm neden Karpaz bölgesi için uygun turizm şeklidir?
- 14-Ekoturizm nasıl yabancı turistleri bölgeye çekebilir ve uluslararası olabilir?
- 15-Ekoturizm gelişmesi hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?