Do integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) linked to ecotourism limit the prospects for human development in rural Costa Rica?

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Master thesis

Permanent lenke
http://hdl.handle.net/11250/187814

Utgivelsesdato
2012-09-20

Metadata
Vis full innførsel

Samlinger
Master's theses (Noragric) [571]

Sammendrag
The overall objective in this Master Thesis is to assess the impact of ecotourism as Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) implemented by international and national environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica. By examining these projects in relation to the overruling policy of the environmental NGOs and their funders, this study aims to find out if ecotourism ICDPs limit the prospects for human development in rural Costa Rica. This research used a mixed-methods approach of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and applied critical theories to guide the early stages of the research project. In short, environmental scientists fear that ICDPs fail to achieve conservation goals by focusing too much on development drivers and external factors such as policies, funders and forces of the market. On the other side of the debate, academics within development studies fear the opposite; that conservation goals act as the driving imperative, overruling the prospects for human development. Human development is to a large extent about individual values, and what people and communities ought to value, which means that personal preferences need to be taken into consideration in order to achieve human development. Research findings recognize that ecotourism ICDPs have weaknesses and pitfalls concerning differences in values among the stakeholders, lack of context-specific knowledge and power inequity, where conditions for funding and conservation objectives act as the overruling imperative. Despite of this, positive outcomes have been identified and elaborated. The local majority residing close to the protected natural areas express appreciation for ecotourism, as it provides alternative sources of income and new capabilities. The civil society, through the environmental NGOs, creates a new arena where individuals can serve as political actors, facilitating local empowerment which eliminates threats to both human and environmental security.

Utgiver
Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås
Ecotourism and the Development of Indigenous Communities: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Jessica Coriaa and Enrique Calfucurab. Abstract A large part of the literature analyzing the links between biodiversity conservation and community development assumes that nature-based tourism managed by indigenous communities will result not only in conservation of natural resources but also in increased development. In practice, indigenous communities have often failed to implement successful ecotourism projects due to a combination of factors, including isolation and a lack of financial resources, man... Keywords: ecotourism, biodiversity, ICDP, indigenous communities. a Department of Economics. Local ecotourism project, Belize Local communities have the most at stake, and therefore the most to lose, in the emerging of tourism development, and they must formally international ecotourism marketplace. consent to development in their areas. As globalization makes local economic control increasingly difficult, ecotourism seeks to reverse The underlying concepts and principles behind this trend by stressing that local business owners ecotourism have helped set new standards and local communities must be vitally involved. for the tourism industry, and these standards Opportunities to invol... Eco tourism, natural resources, cultural heritage, rural lifestyle and an integrated tourism is a type of local economic activities. Eco-tourism contributes to conservation of biodiversity; sustains the well-being of local people; involves responsible action on the part of tourist and the tourism industry; promotes small and medium tourism enterprises; requires lowest possible consumption of natural resources; stresses local participation, ownership, and business opportunities, particularly for rural people; and above all includes the learning experiences. This chapter has revealed that there is a need for sustainable development in tourism, and the connection between tourism and environment is much stronger than in other sectors.