Routledge Handbook of Ecotourism

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The role of the visitor in stewardship and volunteering in tourism

Publication details


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Published online on: 22 Sep 2021

How to cite: James Malitoni Chilembwe. 22 Sep 2021, The role of the visitor in stewardship and volunteering in tourism from: Routledge Handbook of Ecotourism Routledge

Accessed on: 09 Aug 2023


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Introduction

The term *stewardship* is “a recognition of a duty of care to the present and future custodians of valuable resources of the earth” (May, 1991, p. 116). They are caring and protecting resources in the natural and cultural environment rest in all people inclusive of visitors, tourists, and local communities. The involvement has its purpose, to maintain the resources in the present status for the benefit of the present tourism consumers including the future visitors as well as the host communities in the form of sustainability. In order for sustainability to function properly, it requires responsible human actions to preserve the natural environment and its resource in their present form for the benefit of future generations. Sustainability should truly connect humans and the natural world (Fennell, 2019), and particularly of the marginalised communities (Acquino & Andereck, 2018). In order to exercise care of both the natural environment and local communities to sustainability, some visitors to various places of tourist interest take volunteering activities. Again, there is a growing demand for volunteerism and international growth in popularity for visitors, and tourists to travel for a volunteering activity (Guttentag, 2009; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Despite the growing demand for volunteering, there is also questioning of the actual benefits of trekking to the host communities through volunteerism (Tomazos & Butler, 2012; Mostafanezhad, 2014). Sometimes foreign interests are put in the forefront at the expense of the desires of host communities (Palacios, 2010), and volunteers without the required skills can go a volunteer work, consequently hindering development projects and produce unwanted results (Guttentag, 2009). The true value and cost with regards to the triple bottom line are equally questionable (Goodwin, 2011; Wearing, 2001). Other criticisms facing volunteer tourism are profit-driving factors that largely benefit organisations. First, over-promising benefits that organisers and volunteers fail to accomplish; second, harming destinations as a result of lack of local knowledge and ethics; third, creating communities dissatisfaction due to lack of respecting host community cultural values (Benson & Henderson, 2011; Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004; Tomazos & Cooper, 2012; Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012). Also, a recent study by Acquino and Andereck (2018) acknowledges that volunteer tourism cannot always benefit the host community, beyond the volunteer’s contribution mainly in marginalised communities.
Volunteer tourism brings together both local and international volunteers in tourism. Individuals partake on working holiday, volunteering their labour for causes that are meaningful to the volunteers and their related organisations (Tomazos & Butler, 2009a, 2009b), including being considered as a hero for volunteering in some causes (Tomazos & Butler, 2010). Volunteer tourism is promoted as a way of experience authenticity within the context of alternative tourism beneficial to a destination, leading to expectations of a responsible tourism ethos. Wearing (2001, p. 1) defines the purpose of volunteer tourism as “aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in a society; the restoration of certain specific environments or research into aspects of society or environment”, carried out alongside touristic activities. In volunteer tourism, it involves utilising discretionary time and income to travel out of the normal place, where most of the activities take place, to a completely new environment to assist others in need (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Others refer to the term volunteer tourism as ‘voluntourism’ or ‘international volunteering’ (Schwarz, 2018). Due to its dynamism use of the term volunteer tourism, and linking to its motivating factors and outcomes, it is becoming challenging to conceptualise the term by using a sole idea to interpret its meaning. Although, volunteering holidays contribute to the “reduction in barriers to travel, also an increase in the middle class in many developing countries, and the desire of that middle class to seek out more unusual travel experience” (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p. 121). However, more increasingly are also other travel motivations that may clash with the requirements and consequences of volunteer activity (Palacios, 2010). Some are engaged in volunteer activity with the purpose of learning and acquiring a new experience (Sin, 2009). Given such motives, there are questioning their volunteering if they will adhere to issues of local, national and international ethics, which needs to be taken into consideration when doing their activities. Applying international ethics may be easy to obey due to internationalisation and industrialisation. However, most of the international volunteers in tourism find it challenging to adhere to local ethics. These are ethics applying to local cultures in many developing countries. Most of the volunteers in tourism can obtain basic training in some of the national ethics—general cultural practices that are applicable at a national level, for example; national language, greetings, some acceptable national dressing, and beliefs.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to train international volunteers in everything due to the given short time of their visit to a destination. Challenges may, as well as appear because of the various motives driving the volunteering activities. For example, the search for autonomous freedom, seeking out obligations and dependencies. For example, there is a need for mutual understanding and interest between guests and hosts. However, due to personal motives meetings places for activities can become places for both sides to gaze at each other (Krippendr, 1987). There may also be personal beliefs, whereby volunteer tourism becomes a spiritual mission to spread philosophies to hosts whose cultural beliefs may differ. The behaviours of egoism may appear, whereby volunteer tourists make themselves feel better through an opportunity for superiority (Taillon & Jamal, 2010). Expectations by volunteers from the hosts may create some differences, particularly, when local cultural beliefs play a role, in which volunteer tourists ignore them or decide to understand from the perspective of another destination they had already volunteered. Another factor can be governance challenges to level the playing field between the host community and volunteers on the understanding of local ethical practices that sustainable tourism in the destination (Chilembwe & Mpond, 2016). Many volunteers in tourism programmes do not critically consider issues of poverty and inequalities when imposing development agenda (McGehee, 2012), for volunteering based on countries where volunteers originate and the kind of solutions, and they are to offer to benefit the host destinations. Also, volunteering in tourism should aim at
empowering the local communities (Ong, King, Lockstone-Binney, & Junek, 2018), by
providing them with the know-how knowledge, and skills to handle activities that sound
technical and suitable for volunteer experts.

**Stewardship and volunteerism managing approaches**

The success of stewardship and volunteer tourism depends on the willingness of volunteers to
engage in a travel experience that has an approach to assist a destination community and engage
in work that more mainstream tourists may view as ‘hardship’ (Acquino & Andereck, 2018).
Both stewardship and volunteer tourism should aim at making a legitimate contribution, create
a positive impact on the host communities, especially in less developed countries. Volunteer
tourism should also develop a mutually beneficial relationship between the visitor-tourists,
visitor-tour operators, and the host community (Beirman, Upadhayaya, Pradhananga, & Dera, 2018; Butcher & Smith, 2010). Moreover, they must drive their community projects using a
bottom-up approach and accommodate volunteer tourists to have their experiences to learn
some of the local ethics through interactions. Therefore, there is a need to reconsider the nature
of stewardship and volunteer tourism using development aid if working properly to the mutual
understanding of local ethics and beliefs between the tourists and hosts. According to Wearing,
Young, and Everingham (2017), volunteer tourism should move away from developmental aid
to an environment where people can agree and exchange cultural values. A volunteer can be
local or inter-organisation, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charitable organisations,
universities, conservation agencies, religious organisations, and a growing of non-profit orga-
nisations (Briggs, Peterson, & Gregory, 2010).

These organisations use a variety of models to manage volunteers in tourism and the wildlife
environment. Some of the examples of management models are outsourcing volunteers, joint
ventures with profits, and non-profit community organisations willing to work on various
tourism projects. Outsourcing to a community is suitable for convenience and conservation.
However, it may be low for the community model. Environment and conservation criteria are all
important aspects of the choice of a management model. However, Spenceley, Snyman, and
Eagles (2019) note, the model to contribute to biodiversity conservation is high with NGOs and
insourcing, moderate with joint ventures and for-profits, and slow for community model. Using
NGOs approaches is functional by using existing NGOs for delivery of services, such as operating
a festival or special event. Second, the development of specialised NGOs dedicated to volunteer
activities, and can also be called friends of the volunteers. It is important to utilise volunteers when
managing the environment and conservation. Using NGOs could handle low visitor numbers,
perhaps, due to the ability of NGOs to utilise volunteers, rather than paid staff, providing some
buffer capacity in times of low tourism volume and low income. As Spenceley et al. (2019)
indicate, the management of expectation is critical to the success of the long-term sustainability of
the management model. However, environmental degradation could happen after a long time
despite managing the environment and conservation by using NGOs to utilise small numbers of
volunteers (Nyirenda & Chilembwe, 2015). Environmental degradation may happen fast or slow,
that is, regardless of how small or large the number of stewards engaged at the place because they
can also partake in other leisure activities in the same natural environment.

**Stewardship and volunteer activities**

Visitors can volunteer on several types of tourism services depending on their capabilities
in areas of lodges, restaurants, campsites, horse trails, guided walking or hiking trails, fishing,
filming, rafting, and boat transport or cruises, mountaineering, and rock climbing. They can also volunteer in the infrastructure that supports services such as roads, airstrips, electrical distribution, communication facilities, water supplies, waste management, and security.

The benefits to the host community and the promotion of personal learning primarily drive young adult volunteer tourists (Francis & Yasué, 2019). However, there could be frustrations in the case voluntourism provides limited benefits to host communities. On a positive note, despite such frustrations, the volunteer tourists acquire personal growth and learning as the decision of whether to withdrawal from volunteering takes place after a certain time. Several volunteer activities exist as categorised below into the following areas:

- volunteering requiring expertise, knowledge, and skills,
- volunteering not requiring expertise, knowledge, or skills,
- volunteering requiring local or community and national ethics, and
- volunteering not requiring local or community and national ethics.

Volunteer tourists or volunteer tourists seek travel experiences that are mutually beneficial for themselves and the host community (Francis & Yasué, 2019; Palacios, 2010; Woosnma & Lee, 2011). Participants provide free labour as well as direct and indirect economic stimulation to benefit the host community and contribute to sustainable development (Chilembwe & Mweewa, 2019; Frilund, 2018; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). With such impacts on the host community, voluntourism may help educate volunteer tourists by fostering cross-cultural communication and understanding, raising consciousness about racism, and privilege about building knowledge, skills, and confidence (Bailey & Russell, 2010; Raymond & Hall, 2008). Such personal lessons and enhanced self-efficiency could lead to broader societal change if experiences spur greater civic engagement, activism, and pro-social or pro-environmental behaviours when the volunteer tourists return home (Brondo, 2015). They can have many reflections after a volunteer experience and understanding some dynamics of other societies. Some of the volunteers may have repeat visits organised by themselves, to check how the communities have changed over time, but also understand some areas of help needed to contribute something that may be meaningful in their society.

Volunteer tourists as a diverse group of people with different backgrounds, ages, and skills who are motivated to see a range of different types of experiences (Francis & Yasué, 2019; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Volunteer tourists have philanthropical motivations, such as ‘giving back’ to the host communities and helping people with less privilege (Bailey & Russell, 2012). Besides that, there are self-serving interests such as pleasure, adventure, recognition, skill training, personal growth, and making friends (Lo & Lee, 2011). The interaction between the visitors and the hosts, as well as their blend would likely encourage them to share the skills and learn more from those who have better experiences like environment and activities assigned to work.

Other studies of voluntourism indicate that volunteer tourists’ partial motivation is to benefit the host community (Ballantyne, Packer, & Hughes, 2009; Curtin, 2010; D’Souza et al., 2019; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). However, there is also questioning whether voluntourism can benefit the host communities (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). It appears many Western countries increasingly run voluntourism by for-profit businesses. On the contrary, in sub-Saharan Africa, volunteer tourism is to a larger extent based on culture, mainly on ‘Ubuntu’ concept (Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2012). Ubuntu means becoming a humane being, having a kind heart of helping others without expecting something back as a benefit.
The volunteering programs in tourism can focus on either short-term or medium-term activities. However, voluntourism is run by for-profit businesses, whose programs may prioritise the volunteers’ self-interested motivations over the goal of designing the projects that have long-term benefits to the host communities (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016; Strzelecka, Nisbett, & Woosnam, 2017). McLennan (2014) argues that placements of unskilled people in the short term do not benefit local communities but rather harm the communities because of the culture or local context by the volunteer tourists. Besides, voluntourism may have limited educational benefits for volunteer tourists (Francis & Yasué, 2019), as they expect to learn more things in the process of volunteering activities. As such, they would add very little value that can benefit the local communities and the natural environment where the stewardship is taking place.

In order to contribute to a meaningful social change in society, volunteer tourism providers need to emphasise the broader intrinsic values of voluntourism such as helping less privileged people, protecting rare species, and contributing to positive social change in one’s communities (Francis & Yasué, 2019; Bailey & Russell, 2012; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Shaw & Miller, 2016). Volunteer tourists should prioritise ecotourism sustainability, by incorporating the socio-environmental aspects, particularly of personal responsibility for sustainability issues and actions, and developing an ethics of care (Jamal & Camargo, 2012; Mair & Laing, 2013; Miller, Rathhouse, Scarles, Holmes, & Tribe, 2010). Good stewardship takes into consideration of responsibility for the sustainability of the present and future valuable resources in the environment.

The International Ecotourism Society (The International Ecotourism Society [TIES], 2015) defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, sustain the wellbeing of the local people, and involves interpretation and education. In ecotourism, voluntourism should accommodate both visitors and staff as well as volunteer tourists, based on the principles as follows:

- minimising physical, social, behaviour, and negative psychological impacts,
- building environmental and cultural awareness and respect,
- provides positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, including volunteers who could help provide sensitivity to host countries’ political, environmental, and social climate, and
- recognise the rights and spiritual beliefs of the indigenous people in the community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment (TIES, 2015).

Local communities play a critical role in enhancing positive outcomes for the conservation of culture and its environment, working closely with the visitors and volunteer tourists in order to have their better experiences of the community. (Chilembwe, 2019). Also, local guides contribute to both the local communities’ environment and visitor experiences (Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014). However, their contribution does not go beyond the narrow education focus goal of interpretation in ecotourism (Walker & Weiler, 2017). Therefore, the local guides should extend to assisting tourists and visitors, in general, to identify their role and responsibility in sustainability outcomes. There is a need for the guides to impact visitors’ or tourists’ attitudes and behaviour changed beyond their specific tourist experience (Ballantyne, Packer, & Falk, 2011; Packer & Ballantyne, 2013).

Again, there is a need to connect the interpersonal experience to visitor’s personal life (Walker & Moscardo, 2014) as the local guides provide a critical role in fostering sustainable wildlife (Ballantyne et al., 2009; Curtin, 2010). As volunteering in tourism can be local or inter-organisations, NGOs, charitable organisations, and the growth of for-profit
organisations. Wearing and McGehee’s (2013) review of volunteer tourism research describes a strong relationship between volunteer tourism and ecotourism. The reports indicate that both share parameters such as similarity developed infrastructure, supplied marketing by the tourism industry, established environmental and cultural carrying capacities with strict monitoring, and environmentally sensitive behaviour and operations from both the tourists and operators. Volunteering in an ecotourism environment can help the formulation of symbolic relationships between tourists, Indigenous people, and natural areas (D’Souza et al., 2019). However, volunteering in ecotourism is not without obstacles when willing to achieve positive results in the communities. For example, volunteer tourists cannot adhere to the themes of commitment, communication, and cultural understandings at the forefront. There could also be language barriers between the volunteers and the host communities. As such, there is a need for special considerations to be given to the most vulnerable to minimise negative effects on their emotional well-being. Again, there should be cultural understanding and better social representation of volunteer tourism, as cross-cultural understanding does not happen automatically (Raymond & Hall, 2008). The social impact of volunteer tourism should also consider the ethics of medical volunteering, and not only those international volunteers who can work in orphanages but also medical volunteering in a wildlife setup. These are medical volunteers who have the know-how skills to detect various sicknesses and treat animals in the natural environment.

People associated with protected areas should have knowledge and skills that enable conservation, and cultural assets in protected areas and stewardship (McCool, Nkhata, Breen, & Freimund, 2013), as well as, in the protected area and asset stewardship (Jepson et al., 2017). Human assets, which comprise nature cultural attributes and dynamic involves the interaction between the protected areas and wider cultural practices and narratives to create a public identity for the protected areas (Jepson et al., 2017). The volunteers in tourism should take into account all aspects of sustainability, with a high priority on the social and cultural aspects of the local communities or cultural conditions of the communities that volunteer tourism projects design to influence the mind-set change between the visitors and the hosts.

Traditionally, volunteer tourism, when utilised correctly, is a powerful strategy for a sustainable alleviation form of tourism (Wearing, Beirman, & Grabowski, 2020). However, they also argue that the driving motives for people to have opportunities for volunteer travel holidays and engage in volunteer activities are disasters, for example, the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (Wearing et al., 2020). Examples in the conservation area are wildlife rescue and treatment, wildlife protection, and wildlife translocation (see also Table 12.1) for further areas of volunteering. Contrary to a sustainable approach, Suba (2017) and Ooi and Laing (2010) found out that the motives for people to volunteer in tourism abroad are travelling and leisure, experiencing a new culture and people, acquiring advantage at the labour market, gaining experience from abroad, and altruism. These motivations are to a larger extent for the self-benefiting as they provide little community benefits. The word ‘self-benefiting’ is somehow in confirmation to McGehee (2012), who indicated that most volunteer tourists demonstrate a sense of self-efficacy. They have a belief that one is capable of doing an activity and making a change in society through joining volunteering programmes. However, taking part in volunteering work simply strengthening the personal motives as they gain volunteering experience while working, learning from others, and also forming part of the personal and social development of volunteers (Chen & Chen, 2011). However, in some other circumstances, the kind of volunteers in tourism needed must be those who have highly specialised skills and knowledge in order to volunteer effectively. Even those that may want to gain experience through learning will find it hard to understand and follow up on what is
Applying a case study: Conducting stewardship and volunteering activities

This case study of WLC Centre is useful to governments, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) interested in protecting natural environmental areas and conserve wildlife. It is also useful to the visitors or general public including tourism volunteers to act responsibly by avoiding engaging in wildlife illegally for trade and subject animals to a lifetime in captivity, injuries from snares, traps, spears, or bullets which lead to slow, painful deaths to animals. Finally, it may also be useful to those animal rights groups or defenders who are concerned with the decline of wildlife homes which has led to an increase in human-wildlife conflict. The centre was established in 2008 as a wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and education facility to support the government’s initiatives in fighting against wildlife crimes such as pets and bushmeat, and ivory trade (GoM, 2012).

The centre provides many activities that both visitors or volunteers may take part ranging from wildlife law enforcement, wildlife research, environmental education and training, and advocacy. Besides, international visitors and tourism volunteers, many schools and communities, both in urban and rural areas utilise the centre’s programmes. They deliver awareness messages about the dangers of wildlife poaching. They also provide friendly solutions to income-generating activities like the production of green energy stoves. The centre stepped in after realising that the demand for products like charcoal and firewood is very high in Malawi, mainly in urban areas, which exerted more pressure on natural resources. It is part of the solution to reduce deforestation and loss of habitat for animals, hence subjecting danger to wildlife. While urban areas are expanding, there is also a demand for more land by the urban residents to use, leading to the human’s activities conflicting with the remaining wildlife in the urban wildlife parks. They introduced

**Table 12.1 Department and projects to attach volunteers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wildlife department/section</th>
<th>Volunteering project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wildlife rescue and welfare | - Wildlife reintroduction programmes  
- Clinical projects in wildlife health  
- Wildlife emergency response unit  
- Wildlife rescue projects |
| Wildlife enforcement        | - Wildlife policy and law  
- Wildlife crime investigation  
- Wildlife justice  
- Wildlife detection dogs |
| Wildlife research           | - Elephants research  
- Monkey research  
- Primate conservation research  
- Conservation medicine research  
- Illegal wildlife trade |
| Conservation education and advocacy | - Conservation education  
- Protected areas conservation education  
- Stop wildlife crime campaigns  
- Parliamentary conservation assembly lobby  
- Community projects |
several community projects targeting schools in urban areas, members of parliament, wildlife managers, city residents, media, communities surrounding protected areas, police officers, and airport staff in order to work together to stop wildlife crime. There is also community activism, with the help of volunteers; they organise awareness campaigns against poaching of wildlife animals like elephants and rhinos. They involved the community such as the youth, scouts, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), media, and members of parliament. They place billboards at strategic places as one way of sensitising both staff, passengers, and the public on the implication of trafficking ivory or other wildlife products. They train airport personnel on the new wildlife legislation policy and how to identify ivory which is in the process of being trafficked through airports after endangered species have been poached. These activities and approaches explained are easy for visitors and any tourism volunteer to take the park, provided there is an interest in the preservation of wildlife including in the urban areas. Volunteers who do not have skills and knowledge can easily learn from others as they interact with each other. However, issues bordering cultural differences cannot are hard to eliminate, though minimal, and as work expects to accommodate local, national, and international ethics.

In contrast, volunteering in other projects (see Table 12.1) requires expertise and technical know-how. For example, in wildlife rescue and welfare, there are projects such as clinical projects in wildlife health, wildlife rescue projects, and wildlife emergency response projects that need volunteers with some background knowledge in wildlife management. Likewise, all the projects under wildlife enforcement and wildlife research are technical requiring volunteers’ skills and knowledge. Those volunteers with motives to learn and acquire experiences will likely find it hard to apply local, national, and international ethics when doing their work.

Furthermore, the centre created an innovative recycling bin which was designed exclusively for recyclable materials. As Lane (2018) notes, recycling is a widespread practice in developed countries; for example, Austria and the USA. However, the recycling practice in Malawi is still in an infancy stage. The centre introduced recycling practices and provides necessary training in collaboration with Environmental Foundation, and International Conservation and Clean up Management partners. They set up a collection point in the city. However, they attached recyclables collection from homes at a small fee per month. This development motivated some of the visitors and the communities who received training from the volunteers at the centre. Some local people can now afford to generate income through collecting recyclable products such as cans, papers, glasses, plastic bottles, and bags for sustainable construction projects. This initiative is likely to provide more opportunities for the local community at large who visit the centre to learn and practice practical waste management on a volunteer basis.

Further, the initiative is likely to contribute positively to behaviour change not only among the youth and students but also on several families and the general community, as many people learn from volunteers, to build their useful structures from recyclables. The practice expects to expand extensively and contribute to a cleaner and greener Malawi in the long-term process. Besides, the centre through tourism volunteers is also involved in the outreach and education initiative to assist women in the community in making fuel-briquettes. Fuel-briquette uses waste papers from offices, water, and sawdust. These are pounded into a gluey mixture and left to dry for 24 hours to make a brick-like fuel-briquette or green energy. They support women through training on how to make and use green energy stoves. Briquette is an excellent source of energy for local communities, it is cheaper as compared to charcoal, generates fewer emissions, and it is a healthier method of cooking. Besides that, it also engages the communities in forestation activities. They work jointly with schools and the local community to plant trees. They have planted over 20,000 trees and both local and international volunteers were engaged, see other activities Table 12.2 for volunteerism.
These responsibilities are incorporated into the projects, depending on the goals and objectives of the organisation. For example, the centre decided to embark on programmes that are related to wildlife environment, education, and conservation to engage the youth, schools, and community at large as well as economically empowering the communities while disseminating conservation messages against wildlife crime and protecting both the wildlife and environment. They engage in wildlife-related activities related to the environment and maintain wildlife. It is supported by over 45 international organisations whose and most of their clients are interested in visiting protected areas and viewing wildlife. Similarly, the organisations that support wildlife centres’ programmes connect most of their international volunteers to the centre. They worked jointly with international conservation organisations and local organisations; for example, members of parliament, local schools, legal firms, and community at large to deliver various initiatives effectively. Both local and international volunteers also play a significant role in the delivery of their projects to preserve the environment for wildlife sustainability.

The strength of the wildlife centre is that it operates from a private-sector perspective through a concession basis it received from the Malawi government. The centre wears a new face with better infrastructure, increased city wildlife, and activities, as well as visitors unlike when the government was operating the centre. It has established several network partnerships and donors who are supporting most of the projects. It also contributed tremendously to the improvement of wildlife policy change in Malawi by working with legal partners and Malawi Parliament to pass laws for wildlife protection. However, the centre is not without implications. First, the centre is mostly dependent on donors who provide financial and material support to their key projects including operations and management of all activities. It seems the centre does not generate adequate income on its own. As Moffett (2010) notes, wildlife conservation centres are generally capable of making business sense and generate more revenue and profits. The wildlife centre of this nature needs to generate substantial income and make profits for its sustainability.

Given that the donors and partners have decided to withdraw their financial support, it is likely that all projects that are currently running will face some challenges for continuity in the

Table 12.2 Some of the activities for volunteerism in environment and conservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation</th>
<th>Environmental education</th>
<th>Wildlife campaigns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborate with schools in urban areas to convey messages about urban biodiversity, and how it supports ecosystem services like air and quality water</td>
<td>• Provides awareness to the communities on the dangers of illegal wildlife trade like ivory</td>
<td>• Community activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community forest for household activities and income-generating activities</td>
<td>• Deliver programmes on specific issues that affect communities, for example, conflicts, wildlife welfare, and conservation</td>
<td>• Domestic and international travellers’ sensitisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tree planting activities</td>
<td>• Delivery of practical recycling practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providing stoves lessons</td>
<td>• Provides economic opportunities to the local community through the production of green energy (fuel-briquette)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
long-term process. Consequently, most of the international volunteers, who partake in activities due to some sort of partnership with a centre, will likely disappear. Similarly, illegal wildlife campaigns and fights for wildlife welfare are supposed to be carried out for several years to provide a proper transition from one generation to another in terms of best approaches or practices in wildlife conservation areas and waste recycling practices and management. The prolonged use of international volunteers, as well as local volunteers, makes them share a variety of ideas to move forward the awareness campaigns about the environment and conservation of wildlife.

To this end, some local ethics or beliefs liked to nature of the working environment in developing countries like Malawi. Stewards and volunteering in tourism should, therefore, understand the links in a wildlife set-up environment situation. Volunteers should have some knowledge about the variety of animal behaviours. Besides having skills and expertise may sometimes not be enough. It is critical also to make reflections on these questions when volunteering in a wildlife environment:

- can someone volunteer in wildlife set-up without knowledge in animal behaviours;
- are there any approaches to volunteers when defending from animals without causing any harm to wildlife;
- how to associate with animals like elephants and lions without being harmed in the cause of volunteering;
- what to do when faced with danger among wild animals; and finally
- can someone volunteer in a wildlife environment without having specific vaccinations about wild animals?

There is one of the widely known beliefs, which says ‘do what Romans do when among them’. Similarly, a certain section of people who work in the natural wildlife environment has a belief to turn themselves into any wildlife animal when they are in danger among the wild animals. They act locally using local ethics, a defense mechanism approach by becoming part of the wildlife and return to normal human beings later when out of danger. As a local approach, it works for those who are well conversant with the practice working or surrounded by the natural environment. However, the approach may not be supported or applied as an international practice. As a result, international volunteers in tourism cannot know the practice and it is also challenging to learn and master the practice.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

The extent to which the role of a visitor in stewardship and volunteering in a host destination is practised depends so much on the values of both volunteer organisers and the local communities (hosts). The local ethics, cultural practices, and beliefs cannot be detached among the local communities. These local cultural attachments present some challenges to the role of visitors in stewardship and volunteering in tourism because of some gaps in knowledge and practices. While some practices are trainable and easy to adopt by the visitors or volunteers, some of them require more time to understand, given the limited time most of the volunteers spend on volunteering their work. As McGehee and Santos (2005) define, volunteering is a form of tourism activity, which aims to provide an alternative journey or visitation that can help tourism development and ecological restoration in a community. It is, therefore, a need for playing the role of a visitor’s stewardship and volunteering ethically and responsibly, while exploring attractions and enjoying activities in a given cultural or natural context and contribute
to the sustainability of the tourism environment. Volunteerism should provide a beneficial
difference in a community and its stakeholders. Visitor stewardship with a strong relationship
that builds on the understanding of local ethics has the potential power to change the mindset of
the local communities through community activity engagement in projects and empowerment
of the host community. It is, therefore, recommended that visitors willing to engage in tourism
volunteering should be flexible to learn some of the national and local ethics and practices in
tourism destinations where activities take place. While it is understandable that they cannot gain
knowledge in all the local practices, but knowing some of the practices is crucial (practices
across the country or region), helps to minimise some of the challenges that volunteers may face
when interacting with the local people. It is also critical and advisable that first-time visitors or
volunteers should go through some briefings and orientations before they can engage in
meaningful volunteering activities. Finally, the case study applied is useful to governments who
wish to attract responsible and commercially successful tourism investors into natural areas. It
helps the community to benefit through tourism and be responsible for the conservation of
natural resources and wildlife. The case demonstrates the type of impacts the private sector can
apply in destination, on the natural environment, and society. The case also provides the basic
enabling environmental requirements that require attracting the best volunteers to support the
adoption of best practices under conditions of a natural environment. While motives for embarking
on volunteering tourism vary, some of them do not require and skills and knowledge,
as well as local or national beliefs. However, there should be an understanding that other
volunteering activities require high skills and knowledge, in addition to adherence to local,
national, and international ethics.

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**The Role of the Visitor**


