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# Impacts of Sustainable Tourism within the South West Region of Cameroon

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences  
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# Impacts of Sustainable Tourism within the South West Region of Cameroon

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**Impacts of Sustainable Tourism within the South West Region of Cameroon**

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**Abstract:**

This Bachelor's thesis is aimed to develop education and awareness of the local people of Cameroon and the South West Region in particular regarding the benefits of sustainable tourism. Hence this will help the people of Cameroon and likewise Africa nations as a whole. Sustainability is a growing phenomenon in the twenty-first century and most of the African countries lack of education regarding this topic. The governments of many African countries have to create a platform to educate the masses on the benefits of sustainability especially in the tourism sector which is one of the world's fast growing industries in recent times.

The thesis will be based on tourism in Africa and Cameroon in particular. Thus if the Cameroon government can invest more on education and sustainability in particular, Cameroonians will realize about the benefits they could obtain especially in the tourism sector. Consequently, Cameroon's economy will grow as well as other African countries that will also educate their people on sustainable tourism. Education and sustainability go hand in hand in any developing society, therefore if the African nations or Cameroon in particular want to attract many tourists in the future, the government has to carry out a proper sustainability project on education.

A qualitative research method was carried out by developing theme interviews. The main tourism impacts such as economic, socio-cultural and environmental were addressed in the research focus as the main problems affecting the promotion of tourism in Cameroon and the South West Region. The benefits of sustainable tourism are described to encourage all parties involved such as the government, the local people and the private sector to achieve this goal in the future. Moreover, one of the major problems facing African nations and Cameroon in particular are the preservation of infrastructures in the tourism sector and its products for the future generations. Solutions and suggestions were found from the analysis of the collected data that could help the African counties and Cameroon in to get a better tomorrow in the tourism industry. In addition, ideas and concepts to transform negative impacts into positive were created.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Cameroon, Education, Economy, Development, Ecology, Socio-Cultural

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## 1 Introduction

Africa is the setting for the long dawn of human history. About a million years ago humans explore northwards out of this lovely continent called Africa. From about four million years ago ape-like creatures walked upright on two feet in this continent. Thus some two million years ago, the first creatures to be classed as part of the human species evolve in Africa. From the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans and Arabs transported enslaved west, central and South Africans overseas in the African slave trade. Moreover, the European colonization of Africa developed rapidly in the scramble for Africa regardless of the slave trade. Meanwhile it was believed that Africa had up to 10.000 different states and autonomous groups with distinct languages and customs before it was colonized. Studying Africa's history has been challenging for the researches because of lack of written materials. A critical study method for finding information about African history has been the recording of oral history, historical linguistics, archaeology and genetics. (Williams 1987, 162-174.)

The tourism industry is a major sector of the economy for many African countries. Despite the fact that there are 54 countries in Africa whereas only four of these countries benefits the most from the tourism industry and these countries are Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and South Africa. Nonetheless there is a second category of countries which also benefits in the tourism industry which are Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya. (Christie, Fernandes, Messerli & Twining-Ward 2014, 74-79.)

The Republic of Cameroon is a country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Nigeria to the West; Chad to the northeast; Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo to the south. Meanwhile the country coastline lies on the Bight of Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. Cameroon is home to more than 200 different linguistic groups although French and English are the official languages. The country however is well known for its native styles of music, particularly makossa and bikutsi, and for its successful national team. In 2008, the president of the Republic of Cameroon signed decrees abolishing provinces and replacing them with regions. Hence all of the ten provinces in the country are now known as regions. (Loreto 1982, 5-11.) This thesis will be focus on the south west region of Cameroon which is one of the most touristic regions in the country due to its natural resources, culture and landscape like the mount Cameroon found in Buea which is the capital of the south west region.

Cameroon is one of those countries in Africa with a relatively minor industry which is still growing. Notwithstanding since the 1970s, the government of Cameroon has cultivated the industry by creating a ministry of tourism and by encouraging investment by airlines, hotels

and travel agencies. Cameroon is known as Africa in Miniature promoting its diversity of climate, culture and geography. Cameroon is a home to many of Africa's iconic animals such as cheetahs, chimpanzees, elephants, giraffes, gorillas, hippopotami and rhinoceroses. (Tegomo, Defo & Usongo 2012, 54.)

## 1.1 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in nine chapters. In chapter one the introduction of the thesis as well as details of the research methods throughout are described. The chapter explains the research aim and introduces the final objectives, examines the research plan in particular the type of investigation and strategy. The presentation of data collection, administration and analysis methods identifies the research limitations. The second chapter describes the history of Cameroon, the People of Cameroon and as well as the culture of Cameroon. Also the South West Region of Cameroon, and important touristic towns and sites mostly visited by tourist and why they are mostly visited by tourists are described in the same chapter. Basic definitions of tourism and sustainability are found in chapter three, four and five.

The sixth chapter describes the research method chosen for this research and provides information about data collection as well as the conducted theme interviews. In chapter seventh, the results from interviews are provided to summarize the thesis in chapters eighth and ninth with recommendations as well as conclusions.

## 1.2 Background of the Thesis

The authors of this thesis are from Argentina and Cameroon and they share many similarities not only cultural but also challenges. Many developing countries have a potential in tourism and the countries would benefit on sustainable methods of tourism. After gaining basic information regarding Cameroon the authors decided to team up and research the impacts of sustainable tourism. Because one of the authors is from Cameroon there are more possibilities to obtain information regarding tourism from locals, governmental and private institutions. The focus area of the thesis is on the South West region of Cameroon. Working as a team the authors shared different ideas as well as knowledge on the subject.

There are plenty of natural resources that could be developed in a sustainable way to progress economically. Tourism has impacts in all kinds of aspects such as economic, environmental and cultural, there is a need for a proper study on how sustainable tourism impacts on the South West region of Cameroon. It is important to find the balance between progress and sustaining the cultural heritage. Finding the balance benefits all parties involved in tourism business. Locals who maintain their cultural heritage could benefit by becoming part of a tourist attraction. Tour operators and private companies could promote such attractions to

benefit themselves. The main role of designing a sustainable tourist plan to involve all sectors to collaborate and develop tourism plays the Government of Cameroon. This would activate the economy locally and internationally as it is well known in the tourism field.

### 1.3 The Research Method in the Thesis

In this thesis the research is based on qualitative method the research materials are gathered using qualitative methods. Having said that there are basically two types of methods use while writing a thesis. The other method used is known as the quantitative method. In this method, the process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the connection between observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. In addition, mostly numerical form such as statistics, percentages etc. Moreover, the researcher is hoping the numbers will yield an unbiased result that can be generalised to some population. On the other hand, qualitative methods ask broad questions and collects data from participants. Overall, the qualitative method produces information only on the particular cases studied, and most of the general conclusions are only hypotheses. (Leavy 2011, 65.)

Qualitative research method has been chosen for the research in this thesis. The South West Region of Cameroon will be used as a case study to explain the benefits of sustainable tourism and how education can play a vital role. Social media will be used to carry out the research, questionnaires, and also to conduct interviews through mobile phones and skype to various local government offices as well as local people.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The research questions in this thesis were divided in three parts highlighting the main topics where the research was focused:

1. What are the economic impacts of sustainable tourism in South West Region of Cameroon?
2. What are the socio-cultural impacts of sustainable tourism in South West Region of Cameroon?
3. What are the ecological impacts of sustainable tourism in South West Region of Cameroon?

## 2 Cameroon as a Tourist Destination

Cameroon was the first African country to reach the quarter finals of the soccer world cup in 1990 in Italy and has won the African cup of Nation four times. Cameroon is known as African in Miniatures, as if all the best bits of the continent have ended up in one place. There are many different people including the pygmies who live in the forest. The country also has



many different wild animals and birds such as the African elephants, giraffes, and big cats. Volcanoes rise straight out of the sea, and there are rain forests and deserts. The people of Cameroon love to dance and they hold many different celebrations that give them the chance to show off their dancing skills. The most popular tourist destination in Cameroon is the Waza Park which is the home for many animals such as giraffes, antelopes, elephants and many more. The country also harbors unique beetles and frogs: beetles such as the Goliath beetle which is the world largest and heaviest beetle as well as the Goliath frog which is also the world largest frog. Many of these frogs are not left any more in the country since people like to eat them. Cameroon also have some dangerous volcanic lakes like Lake Nyos. In 1986 the lake belched out carbon dioxide killing about 2000 people and over 3000 cows. (Price, Hilden & Dubois 2011, 112.)

## 2.1 The History of Cameroon

The earliest inhabitants of Cameroon were probably the Bakas (Pygmies). These inhabitants known as the pygmies still lives in the forest of the south and east regions. On the other hand, in the late 1770 and the early 1880s the Fulani, a pastoral Islamic people of the western Sahel, conquered most of the northern region of Cameroon displacing the largely non-Muslim inhabitants living in the region. (Nkwi 2010, 40-42.)

The name Cameroon is resulting from the Portuguese word, Cameroes mean shrimps. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive the coast of Cameroon in 1472. Upon arriving the coast they saw meaning shrimps in the river known as River Wouri and they called it Rio Dos Camaroes (meaning River of Shrimps in Portuguese). Cameroon was first colonized by the Germans in 1884 with it capital in Buea. However, after the First World War when the Germans loose, Cameroon was then partitioned between Britain and France under a June 28, 1919 league of Nations mandate. France gained the larger geographical share than Britain and the French Cameroon was the first to get it independence in 1960 while the British Cameroon got its own independence in February 1961. Furthermore, in the same year in October the French and the British Cameroon were united known as reunification. (Nkwi 2010, 43.)

The very first president of the Republic of Cameroon was Ahmadou Ahidjo but he resigned as the president in 1982 and handed power to his Prime Minister Paul Biya. The capital of the present day Cameroon is Yaoundé with a total population of 1.818million people in the city. (2005) while the population of Cameroon is 22.25 million (2013). The country is bordered by Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo to the south. The flag of Cameroon is Green, Red, and Yellow with a star at the centre of Red indicating one Nation. (Nkwi 2010, 50-51.)

The population of Cameroon is made up of different ethnic groups. The largest of these is the Bamileke people who live in the western part of the country. Other groups include the Fulani people, who live in the north, and the Douala, Ewondo, and Fang people who inhabit the south and central regions. (Tafang 1992, 120-125.)

## 2.2 Geography

Cameroon is the world's 54<sup>th</sup> largest country. It is slightly larger than Sweden and the state of California in the USA. Cameroon is located in Central and West Africa, bordering the Bight of Biafra between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. The country's coastal plain extends 20 to 80 kilometers inland from the Gulf of Guinea. The mass of Mount Cameroon which is found in the SWR of the country reaches almost to the sea. (Tafang 1992, 130-135).

Cameroon has two major seasons known as the Dry & Rainy season respectively. The dry season starts from November to April with temperature ranges from 23 degrees Celsius to 31 degrees Celsius. The country lies within the intertropical zone with yearly temperatures varying between 20-28 degrees Celsius. However, the temperature is being influenced by the proximity to the sea, the more you go hinterland, the hotter it becomes. The dry season is manifested by a total stop of rainfall, harsh sun, blue skies and generally dusty atmosphere. On the other hand, the rainy season is a contrary to the dry season with new hope especially for farmers who get back into total activity. It is evergreen at this period as the nature blossoms out. (Molua & Lambi 2007, 5-7.)

## 2.3 People and Culture

There are two main official languages spoken in Cameroon. The French and English however there are fifty-four native dialects being spoken by the people. Religion on the other hand has played a very vital role in ethnic grouping. A large number of the population are Christian and Muslim meanwhile about forty-five percent of Cameroonians still practice the traditional African religion. In addition, Cameroon observed two national holidays. The Youth Day which is celebrated by the country youths is on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February. On this day the youths of Cameroon march in a parade through the streets while wearing their school uniform. National Day on the other hand is observed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May and is a celebration of the day in 1972 when Cameroon became an independence republic. Nevertheless, many Cameroonians also celebrate Christian or Muslim holidays as well. (World Trade Press 2010.) The map of Cameroon can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1: The Map of Cameroon (Google pictures).

## 2.4 The South West Region of Cameroon

### 2.4.1 Geography

The South West Region (S.W.R) of Cameroon constitutes part of the territory of southern Cameroon with its Capital Buea. This region has a total surface area of 25.410 km<sup>2</sup> with its population of 1.316.079 (2005). The S.W.R of Cameroon is one of two Anglophone (English-speaking) regions with its brother region the North West Region (N.W.R) with its Capital Bamenda. The S.W.R has six departments which are the Fako, Koupe-Manengouba, Lebialem, Manyu, Meme and Ndian (Tafang 1992, 130-135.).

Limbe is one is the most beautiful cities in the S.W.R of Cameroon. With a black sandy beach, it has been a tourist attraction area in the country. It is one of the top four commercial ports in Cameroon where coffee, cacao, cotton, sugar, tobacco, rubber and palm oil are traded. On the other hand, BUEA which is the capital of this region is located 900m above the sea level on the southern slope of the Cameroon Mountains. There are oil palm and rubber tree farms in the suburbs, owned by the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). Korup National Park is located in the oldest tropical rain forest with the widest variety of biological characteristics. The park is the home for a remarkably wide variety of wildlife, including primates, birds, trees and other plants, along with several tens of recently found animals and plants. (Page 2009.)

#### 2.4.2 Tourism in South West Region of Cameroon

Moreover, this region is known as the best touristic region in the country to visit. This is the more reason why the writers choose this part of the country as their case study on the benefits on sustainable tourism and how educational sustainability can help to improve the life of the local people hence standard of living. Limbe which is beside the Atlantic Beach is known as one of the best cities in the country. This sea side town is also known for its famous BOTANIC Garden which was founded by the German in 1892 under the Directorship of Paul Preus. The Garden served as a trials and acclimatization Centre for the introduction of exotic crop species such as Coffee, Cocoa, rubber, oil palm, banana, tea and sugar-cane for distribution within the country and other German colonies. Thus this Garden was said to be one of the most important tropical botanic garden in the world. A tourist attraction Centre known as “jungle village’ ’has been developed in the garden, where popular cultural activities takes place during certain events or simply for tourist pleasure. Several routes have been mapped out to enable tourists an easy access to the garden. These route are the coastal trial which enable visitors to have a good view of the the western part of the garden; the biodiversity trial facilitates tourists to get a picture of the biodiversity found in the area. Bota adventure trial permits nature lovers to see big trees and some wild animals. (George, Mair & Reid 2009, 130.)

This region was known for having the first English speaking University in the Country called the University of Buea (UB). Notwithstanding Buea which is the capital, with the highest peak in West Africa and the sixth highest in Africa is also a major attraction in this region. The Korup National Park found in Ndian Division has been a great major touristic town in the S.W.R as well as towns like Kumba with the biggest market in this region. There are also important growing touristic towns like Tiko, and Manfe. In addition, the Kupe Muanenguba division has one of the oldest forests in Africa. Over 329 bird species on Mount Kupe alone amongst them, the elusive Mount Kupe Bush Shrike (*Malaconotus kupeensis*), the white-throated Mountain Babbler (*Kupeornis gilberti*), and the Green-breasted Bush shrike (*Malaconotus gladiator*). Furthermore, the mountain also harbors the Grey-necked Picathartes (*picathartes oreas*) or rock fowl, as it is locally known. (Cheek, Pollard, Darbyshire & Onana 2004, 83-85.)

This dense forest also has several species of Chameleon, with many thought to be found nowhere else in the world. However, there are other important mammal species as elephant’s rare antelopes and buffalo roam parts of the black bush as local’s calls the dense forests. Besides the dense forest, this area also has the twin lakes known as the twin lake of Muanengu-

ba. One of the lakes is known as the male lake while the other is known as the female. The Bakossi people believe that their founder resides in the male lake (Neba 1999, 79.).

### 2.4.3 Culture

Beside the natural heritage in the S.W.R, Manyu division has a rich cultural heritage, which cannot be passed by. This part of the S.W.R has diversity range from its popular traditional dish, to the traditional regalia; and the customary dances and songs. The traditional regalia of the Manyu people is one rich in colour and diversity. For the males it is a white shirt, worn over a nicely threaded wrapper, all tied by the side. This is also accompanying with beads hung on the neck and usually of a red colour. The ladies on the other hand are simple in their big gowns, commonly called Kaba. The pictures below shows how a typical Manyu outfit in traditional occasions. (Ncha 2013.)



Picture 1: A typical Manyu man in his traditional wear. (Ncha 2013.)



Picture 2: Occasional traditional dance wear for the Manyu Women. (Cultural event, Ncha 2013.)

Beside the Manyu culture there are other many more cultural heritage in the S W R which has to be preserving the people for future generation. Like the Bakossi popular Ngone dance and the traditional wear as well as the Bakweri people. Furthermore, there are also strong cultures from the Oroko people, the Bafaws just to name a few. (Neba 1999, 83.)

Tourism products can be defined as the sum of physical and psychological satisfaction it provides to tourists during their travelling route to the destination. It can also be defining as any product that is marketed by a country or an institution to visitors so as to attract them to visit a country as tourists. (Musoro 2009, 20). The picture 3 gives a detail of some tourism products.



Picture 3: Tourism Product Portfolio. (Chris-bech.com)

Tourism in Africa started way back in during the Roman Empire. Christian and Islam missionaries travelled widely in sub-Sahara Africa. Over the past centuries, tourism has developed into one of the world's most important industry. A great number of people has the ability to travel. Africa known before as the Dark Continent, with its geographical, historical and diversity the continent is rich for economic development using tourism as a tool for diversification than the main economic traditional events. The continent has nature based tourism in form of several safaris in east and southern Africa. However cultural tourism plays a very important role in the current tourism in Africa despite of the comparatively small- sized companies compared with other regions in the world as well as the continent (Dallen & Gyan 2009, 170.)

Cameroon which is a country in Central Africa and one of the two countries in the world that speak French and English as well as Canada as their official languages. With its population of

about 22, 25 million (2013) and 200 ethnic groups with varied cultures. Travelling through Cameroon is like discovering the entire African continent that is why the country is term African in miniature, meaning all cultures of Africa found in Cameroon. In addition, with its sophisticated cultural diversity as a tourist destination at the moment which the country is hoping to become an international tourist destination by 2035 with several events to be hosted like the female football championship this year and the African cup of nation in 2019 hosted all by Cameroon. (Mintour 2016.)

The focus of the writers is in the SWR of Cameroon which is one of the popular tourist destination in the country. In other to maintain the products that attract visitors, understanding the needs and reaction of the locals and balancing the ratio of visiting the country, an impacts study of this region is vital, hence this region is the backbone of Cameroon tourism potential. One of the most important event in the SWR of Cameroon that has attract many tourists in recent years is the mount Cameroon Race of Hope. The mount Cameroon Race is an endurance race of about 40km with 2500 m of difference in height which is particularly difficult and physically demanding. Sportive and cultural event vibrates the SWR for about a week thus an opportunity for Tourists to discover the mountain as well as the culture of this region. (Mount Cameroon Ecotourism Organization 2015.)

The race was launched in 1973 on the initiative of Guinness Cameroon and has been one of the most coverage sporting events in Cameroon. Women were allowed to take part in the race for the first time in 1983 and the following year, the organizers allow foreign climbers to take part. However, in 1990 Guinness Cameroon withdrew from organizing the race and The Cameroon Athletics Federation took over and the competition resumed in 1996. (Mount Cameroon Ecotourism Organization 2015.)

The 2016 edition of the Race of Hope was held on Saturday 27/2/2016. There were over 500 nationals and international athletes in various categories namely seniors, juniors, ladies and veterans. Below is the map of the South West Region of Cameroon showing the six divisions in the region. (Mintour 2016.)

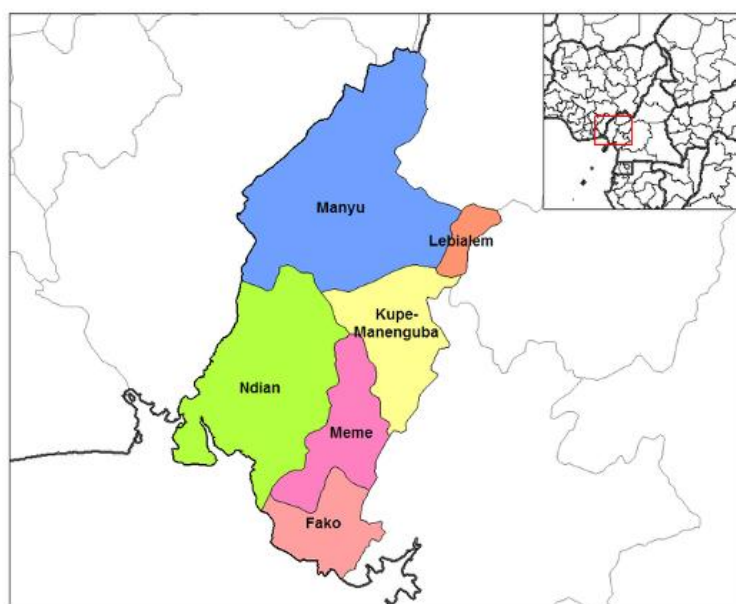


Figure 2: Map of the SWR Cameroon showing the six divisions (mintour.gov.cm)

The mountain however is an active volcano as it has erupted six times in the previous century, the latest recorded in March and April 1999. During the eruption, the lava flow destroyed farmlands in localities found on the slope of the mountain such as Bakigingili, Batoke and upper farms in Limbe. (Mintour 2016.)

In addition, the native people around the foot of the mountain (the Bakweri people) believe in the god of the mountain known as Efasah Moto, which is believed to be composed of two halves which is half human and half stone. The Efasah Moto is believed to take care of all the local people as well as the tourists that visit the mountain. It provides them with food, water and even shelter during their journey up and down the mountain. Visitors are allowed to eat what they can consume while on the mountain but not allowed to take away anything provided by the god of the mountain (Efasah Moto). This has helped greatly in sustainable tourism as well as ecotourism. (Mount Cameroon Ecotourism Board 2016.)

Furthermore, one unique experience at the foot of the mountain is the cultural heritage of the Bakweri people. This tribe is settling at the slope of the mountain, where most villages are still traditional and remote. Culturally, a chief stays at the head of a village with an elected village committee where a chairman serves as an administrative authority. The Bakweri people have a rich culture and still perform their traditions. The best known and very spectacular is the "Male Dance" performed only once a year by every village in the region. This dance presents the strong relationship of indigenous people to the elephants living in the forest around the foot of the mountain and the nature in general. The Mount Cameroon Ecotourism Organization (Mount CEO) offers a special cultural tour through Bova village intended to



give tourist the opportunity to learn about the lifestyle and traditions of the local people. (Mount Cameroon Ecotourism Organization 2015.)

### 3 Tourism Industry

#### 3.1 Definitions and Concepts

There are many different concepts and perspective to define tourism. The study of this phenomenon changes constantly so does its concept too. The most accurate definition could be a socio-geographical phenomenon represented through the flow of people not only by crossing their borders but also by travelling in their own countries. Tourism brings experiences that can be enjoyed individually or collectively which are usually driven by a range of motivation and purposes such as leisure, business, health or unique activities in a search for authenticity as well as fulfilment. Such activities are done by people travelling outside their usual environment for a specific period of time where it comes a remuneration from the place visited. From a psycho-sociological perspective tourism is about people, it is an industry made by people. (Lomine & Edmunds 2007, 185-186.)

Defining the “tourism sector” or “tourism industry” is quite complex since it is made by an economic activity resulting from combinations of goods as well as services without boundaries. Tourism has not been identified as a sector of the economy, in fact, the sum of the economic activities in hotels, restaurants and transportation make the tourism economy. There also other activities that tourist may practise that can be include in the tourist economy as well, among them it can be mentioned: recreation, culture, shopping and leisure. From the demand and supply perspective tourism is a result from tourist demands and consumption. Such demands have “tourism characteristics”, this means that they will cease without tourist consumption and they are “tourism connected” where tourists consume significant quantities. In the tourism industry their other important factors that are part of the industry such as government spending, capital formation, and travel and tourism non-visitor exports. They may supply the tourism sector directly or indirectly. (Mitchell & Ashley 2010, 8-9.)

#### 3.2 Tourism Development

As travelling became more demanding as well as a common activity for different purposes tourist destinations emerged and increased. Particular destinations and resort areas have been developed to be accessed by tourist and thus become popular. Developing tourism means planning and managing destinations that are visited by tourist where they may interact with the local population, the environment and also with other tourists. This activities bring benefits for the local economy. From a theoretical perspective there are some important fac-

tors to take into consideration in tourism development, for example, destinations change over time and develop where there are different kinds of visitors at different times. The product or tourist experience changes over time as well as the involvement of locals in tourism destinations changes. Managing is the key factor to success in developing since it is well known that in tourist destinations there is a limit to growth, if the demand for visits exceeds the capacity of the destination, visitor experience will be affected and then consequently reduced by ending up in decline. (Mason 2008, 25.)

Tourism is seen globally as an economy of great significance; this has been observed from its contribution to the world economy. In other words, it can establish that it is the largest industry in the world. The growth of tourism is forecasted to continue in the future, there will be a 4% increment in the number of international tourist arrivals by 2020. As a result, many countries are aware of this growth in the industry and developing their tourism markets globally. Among these countries many of them are developing ones encouraged by important factors such as foreign exchange earnings, employment opportunity, economic growth and social development. (Sharpley & Telfer 2002.)

#### 4 Sustainable Development

The need for more environmental practices in tourism dates back from 1980s. Sustainable development could be defined as a process that finds a balance for the present needs without having a negative impact to future generations to meet their own needs. There are three main principles in sustainable development: futurity, equity and holism. Briefly it can be explained that futurity refers to the needs of future generations in a long term perspective from analyzing human activity impacts and socio-economic development. Equity means that different generations should have fair as well as equal opportunities, this is applied to all people in present and future. From the holistic aspect it is stated that development should be aimed to global, political, social, economic and ecological perspective. This has brought a more complex situation towards economic growth by taking into consideration all the aspects of sustainability since a balance between negative impacts and economic development is challenging. In addition, sustainability has three important elements that are the ecological, socio-cultural and economic. (Saarinen, Saarinen & Becker 2009, 7-8.)

Sustainable development is the proper use of natural resources in reasonable way for national development in collaboration with government, private sectors and community. The main objective is to maximize the quality of life standards. In addition, there is a need for implementation and planning in sustainable development in all around the world. For the development process it is required the involvement of not only international organizations but also governments, industries, customers and tourists. The main role is played by industries to im-

plement a long term objective plan to identify all social issues as well as responsibilities. Customers are crucial participants in the developing process in short term needs and objectives implementation. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2008, 216-218.)

#### 4.1 Economic Sustainability

Sustainability in economy is the ensuring the vitality of business to work effectively, efficiently to generate income for a long time. For business purposes, strategies must be found for the proper use of available resources to obtain the maximum output in a long term. Such resources must be used in a responsible and efficient way to run business in the long run and to increase the profits. The main focus will not be only in the economy but also in the local ecology, no harm must be produced. In local community's industries need to choose eco-friendly raw materials and have a responsible plan to avoid damages in environment from waste disposal. Unfortunately, natural resources are not enough for the economic demand which is constantly growing and becoming more demanding. Modern economies have currently acknowledged this situation to avoid damage in future generations. Strategical plans should be designed to use available resources in the best way to obtain the highest advantage. The main points to have a sustainable economy are avoiding potential environmental damages and at the same time develop a business what will make profits for long term benefits. (WisegEEK 2016.)

#### 4.2 Socio-cultural Sustainability

To achieve sustainability from the socio-cultural perspective communities must be developed to benefit both individuals and communities. As it is well known the welfare of a society is the common goal in every community. Governance and social system are only developed by increasing the human capital and reinforcing human values. The most important is to have the equity and poverty alleviation from a proper protective strategy aiming social needs. (Munasinghe 2007.) Communities must not be affected neither by the presence of visitors nor outsiders who are residing for a long or short period in such communities. Quality in Tourism products are developed only by the cooperation between the tourism industry, local community and the involved organizations. One of the key roles is play by the host community therefore they must receive proper training and education to maintain quality tourism services as well as sustainability in their societies. (Edgell 2006, 22.)

#### 4.3 Environmental Sustainability

Tourism is ecological when the numbers of tourist who visit a natural habitat do not produce any damage. Because of the limited natural resources in this modern society there must be an

effective use of the available resources. Environmental sustainability could be explained as taking the correct actions for reserving nature in the world so that human life can be supported. Only the making of responsible decisions will reduce negative impacts on the natural environment. Most businesses are not conscious with this issue and take little or no participation at all to reduce the negative impacts produced in the environment. However, there are many organizations, governments and NGOs taking proper measurements to reduce the amount of pollution that is not sustainable. There is commitment among them to work and have a positive impact in the environment. In the tourism field environment plays a key role in most of the products and activities, environments may be natural or artificial. Nature is modified in all kinds of tourism activities to support and develop tourism products. Facilities such as roads, airports, and ports are needed in tourism as well as transportation, hotels and restaurants. They will produce an impact in the environment but it can be minimized by a proper strategical plan. (Cooper & al. 2008, 187-188.)

## 5 Sustainable Tourism

There are different definitions and points of view of what sustainable tourism is. The most accurate view for sustainable tourism is the one from the book *Tourism, recreation and sustainability* by the authors Stephen McCool and Neil Moisey. Tourism is a tool of social and economic development that benefits a community without having a negative impact in the ecosystem. Communities' values should be protected not because of their value to tourism industry instead because of their value to their people. Tourism should be viewed as a part of large policy framework planned to create a sustainable society. In this way, tourism would be a tool for economic development to help communities to progress without having an end. (McCool & Moisey 2001, 5-6.). Economic growth and protection of environment are mostly expressed in sustainability where both should complement each other. By providing quality of life for future generations a shelter is created between human activities and the environment. Sustainable tourism meets the needs of visitor or tourists, the industry and environment. The well-being for all of these mentioned are linked and not separated. (Hall & Richards 2000, 1.)

### 5.1 Impacts of Tourism

The impacts of tourism is one of the most researched area of tourism, one of the most focused areas are the effects of income and employment. Nowadays tourism can be seen as one of the most important employment sources in the world. It improves the investments in infrastructures where mostly help the living conditions of local people. Governments also benefit from substantial tax revenues and most of the new jobs in tourism are created in developing countries by making a balance in economic opportunities to avoid rural residents moving to

overcrowded cities. As a result of this, in many countries governments and developing agencies have supported and encouraged the use of tourism as a key tool for development. Locals commit as well by investing time, money, effort and hope in tourism with the belief of bringing economic as well as social benefits to their communities. Despite the investments from governments, agencies and the commitment of locals the benefits of tourism cannot be always demonstrated. (Moscardo 2008, 1-2.)

The environment is made up of human and natural features where tourism takes place. In the human environment there are three important factors and processes which are economic, social and cultural. The natural environment consists of plants and animals in their habitat. Human environment and natural environment can be clearly seen as separated environments where both interlace. Consequently, human activity is affected and has effects on the natural environment. Tourism by being a remarkable form of human activity can have major impacts. These impacts can be noticed in the destination region where tourists interact with the local environment, economy, culture and society. In this way, the impacts of tourism are visible from the perspectives of socio-cultural, economic and environmental. In most of the cases the impacts are a combination of all these mentioned perspectives. (Mason 2008, 36.)

## 5.2 Positive Impacts in Tourism

The impacts of tourism can be beneficial or positive depending from the perspective and the judgement the observer has. For instance, the building of a hotel in an area with little tourism activity. Such hotel will create more jobs opportunities which is a positive impact if it is seen from the economic perspective. Positive economic benefits are usually job creation and contributions to the local economy. There are also positive social impacts such as representing traditional local art or handicraft activities resulting from the tourist demand. Environment can have its benefits too, the visits to sites of natural attractions generate revenue that it is used to maintain and restore the attraction. Tourists become more conscious from their visits by knowing that they are supporting the protection of the environment. (Mason 2008, 36-35.)

## 5.3 Negative Impacts in Tourism

When tourism development fails to bring the promised benefits there are negative impacts such as environmental degradation, conflicts in the culture of local communities, disruptions to daily day life and disappointment. Environment suffers negative impacts in many different forms where the ecosystem is destructed when building tourism infrastructures leading to pollution with waste disposal. Inappropriate architecture for tourism facilities causes a reduction of natural resources in the local environment including water and food, even wildlife be-

havior suffers a change. Besides these mentioned negative impacts in the environment also community members face conflicts. The most common is different groups supporting and opposing to tourism development by having different interests for potential benefits. Since tourism contributes to changes in employment and income in hot communities it can result in another form of conflict. Some of them are changes in gender roles within families coming from tourism employment. Resorts and lodges can also limit the local access to certain places thus causing a negative impact on their use of these places for subsistence and recreation. (Moscardo 2008, 2-3.)

Cultural challenges are identified as another negative impact, for instance changes in cultural practices for the sale and presentation of tourism. On the other hand, some local residents also feel forced to represent their culture and keep certain images of their lifestyle to meet the tourist expectations. Sometimes during peak seasons locals must leave aside their traditional practices, especially agriculture, due to the high tourist demand. This causes a shortage in the resources needed for such activities and subsequently a decline in traditional cultural practices. Also it can be mentioned the changes in daily life affected by traffic congestions and general crowding, the presence of strangers in ceremonies and rituals is not always well accepted by locals. Residents end up travelling further to live, work and recreate due to rises in the cost of living. By having such negative impacts, the main attitude coming from locals is deception towards tourism due to the failure in development to bring the expected results. The most common failure is the less income and fewer expected jobs. Locals are not provided with the required training to be able to work and most of the jobs offered are usually low level in terms of career potential as well as skill development. Local business tends to fail due to inflated predictions for visitor numbers. All of these described impacts can be avoided by planning and controlling, there has to be a better understanding of the negative impacts that tourism can cause. (Moscardo 2008, 2-3.)

#### 5.4 Economic Impacts in Tourism

Economic impacts in tourism are usually related to other types of impact and they cannot be easily separated from. As mentioned above, among economic impacts benefits results are obtained such as contribution to foreign exchange earnings where government benefits from the revenues. Employment is generated and contributes to local region. Nevertheless, there can be negative results as well, some of them are inflation, opportunity costs and over-dependence on tourism. Inflation is related to increases in prices of land, houses and food can be a result from tourism. The prices of commodities are usually increased when tourists have extra demands on local services at tourism destinations. Opportunity cost refers to developing tourism more than other forms of economic activities, for instance, in a coastal area where investments are entirely made on tourism rather than market gardening or fishing. In small states

tourism can be seen by the government as the best method of development and thus create an over-dependence. Eventually, the only source of economic development is the tourism industry becoming the country dependent on tourism revenue where any change in demand would lead to a major economic crisis. Moreover, by measuring from a global scale tourism has positive impacts. Jobs in tourism are likely to increase during the early part of this century in comparison with other jobs from different economic sectors. (Mason 2008, 45-46.)

### 5.5 Socio-cultural Impacts in Tourism

To understand the impacts of tourism from the socio-cultural perspective it is important first to have knowledge of the terms society and culture. Sociology is the study of the interaction of people in groups, their interactions, attitudes and behavior. Culture is related to the observation of people from social interaction, social relations and material artefacts. Culture is knowledge, behavioral types and values that have been transmitted through generations. Socio-cultural impacts are the result of the interaction between visitors and host populations. Some of the most beneficial impacts of tourism in society as previously mentioned are the creation of employment; the develop of poor regions that are not industrialized; the promotion of local arts and crafts and traditional cultural activities; encouragement on local population to represent their cultural life; renovations and preservation of local architecture as well as are that have cultural value. In developing countries, tourism has better job potential by changing employment from traditional agriculture to service industries. (Mason 2008, 57-60.)

Besides the beneficial impacts tourism also causes harmful effects on the society and culture of host areas, for instance, overcrowding that can cause stress for both tourists and locals. In places where tourism become the major source of income traditional activities such as farming may decline. For some locals it may be difficult to interact with tourists who have a different cultural background and values. Situations become more difficult when tourism is a seasonal activity and locals have to modify their lifestyle during that time. This is clearly observed in countries with strong religious codes which are modified by tourist invasions and consequently seen as nationally undesirable. Another remarkable socio-cultural impact of tourism is related to the “demonstration effect” when the differences between tourists and hosts are visible. Especially in developing countries when locals observe tourists and notice their upper material possessions of the visitors. By locals trying to aspire to the same it may lead to positive effects where residents are encouraged to adopt a more productive behavior. However, locals tend to become resentful for being unable to obtain the same goods and lifestyle demonstrated by visitors. Notably, young people are the most affected to this demonstration effect by causing societal divisions between the young and older community members. Younger members are encouraged to migrate from rural areas in the pursuit of the

“demonstrated” lifestyle in urban areas or even abroad. This effect may vary depending on the local culture since some cultures are stronger than others. In addition, there is an impact on tourists from the interaction with local residents as well. Some of them are reinforcing the stereotypes beliefs rather than mind opening as travel experiences are supposed to cause. Impacts of experiences may also change tourist’s thinking and behavior. (Mason 2008, 60-62.)

## 5.6 Environmental Impacts in Tourism

Some factors are important to know how significant they are in relation to environmental impacts. Environments are not equal, each is different and it may be more susceptible to tourism impacts than others. It has to be taken in consideration the tourism activity that is developed or practiced in such environment and the nature of the tourist infrastructure. Activities occurs in a particular season not during the whole year. By observing from the environment factor an urban environment may not be affected in the same way as rural one. Large built urban environments are able to sustain bigger amounts of visitors than most of rural environments. The reason is not only because a city has roads and paths to minimize the direct impacts of tourists’ movements, but it is also the structure and how well organized it is. However, places that are environmentally delicate such as cliff-tops, mountains and coasts are the ones that attract most of tourists. (Mason 2008, 71-72.)

The activities that are practiced in a tourism environment will influence in the impacts they may produce. Some activities have minimal impacts and do not consume natural resources. For instance, Buss sight-seeing may have little effect on the environment where it is traveling despite the buss may contribute to pollution and traffic congestions. Other activities such as hunting and fishing can remarkably consume natural resources if they are not carefully controlled. By considering the nature of the infrastructure that exists for tourism the impacts will be more significant. It can be seen in the effects of mass tourism on the French and Spanish Mediterranean coastal areas that are greater than a small number of walkers in the Himalayan Mountains. Nevertheless, impacts can be reduced to minimum if this form of mass tourism is well planned by controlling the groups of tourists. (Mason 2008, 72-73.)

In places where tourism is a seasonal activity the environment may be affected only by part of the year and then being able to recover during the rest of the year. In spite of this possibility of recovering some activities may have a serious impact where environment is not able to recover. Some ecosystems are sensitive from the human activity, for instance, modifications in animal behavior resulting for the presence of humans in their habitat. Also tourism activity can bring some beneficial impacts to environment by promoting measures to protect the environment, landscape or wildlife. The preservation of buildings and monuments can be promoted through tourism as well as providing the income to maintain historic buildings, heritage



sites and wildlife habitats. Consequently, some of the negative environmental impacts from tourism are litter dropped by tourists, traffic congestions resulting from overcrowding of visitors in certain tourist areas. Water in beaches may be contaminated depending on the tourist activities, also footpath erosion and the creation of human structures such as buildings where they are not supposed to be built lead to the damage in wildlife habitats. (Mason 2008, 73-74.)

## 6 Research Method

The purpose of researching is to obtain information and data to increase the stock of knowledge. By taking into consideration factors such as the awareness of man, its culture as well as society improvements in the field that is being researched can be developed. Research can also be used to verify or establish facts, existing or new problems are possible to solve with the outcome of new theories. There are two kinds of research method, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative method is related to statistical, mathematical or numerical data techniques to elaborate a systematic empirical examination. The intention of this kind of research is to develop theories, create models or hypotheses that are related to a phenomenon. (Baggio & Klobas 2011, 11 -12.) On the other hand, there is qualitative research method which is the chosen one for the research in this thesis.

### 6.1 Qualitative Method

Qualitative research method focuses in meaning context, the data collection instrument to be used must be sensitive when analyzing meanings from data. Humans are the most suitable for this kind of tasks because interviewing, observing and analyzing are main activities in qualitative research. The main points of interest are the understanding of how people interpret their experiences, how their worlds are constructed and the meaning of their own experiences. Qualitative research is often located in interpretive research where reality is socially constructed. This means that there is no single observable reality, there are instead multiple realities or interpretations of a single event. Knowledge is not found, it is constructed. During the research, main focus will be on understanding the meanings from the collected data obtained via interviews, observations and documents. The data analysis will be inductive and comparative by presenting the findings in different themes and categories. (Merriam 2014, 5, 21.)

### 6.2 Theme Interviews

In this thesis qualitative interviews were conducted, such interviews are different than quantitative. Qualitative interviews are deeper and intensive in comparison with quantitative re-

search that is more numerical. The main purpose is to understand and construct social reality instead of creating statistical descriptions or future predictions. Answers are seen as a wholeness rather than comparing with each other. (Marshall & Rossman 1989, 2.) There are three different types of qualitative interviews; structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview. In structured interviews a certain amount of questions is asked face to face where only the questions that have previously written and planned in a list can be asked. All of the respondents receive the same amount and type of questions in order to compare results and answers from the conducted interviews. (Edwards & Holland 2013, 3.) Semi-structured interviews are meant to be conducted face to face where the researcher has previously designed the questions and themes for the interviewee, in comparison with the structured interviews the researcher is able to make extra questions and develop the interview more in depth. The purpose of these kind of interviewing is to collect valuable knowledge and thoughts besides the themes that have been previously discussed during the interview session. The last interview method is called unstructured interview, also known as “depth” interview and “exploratory” interview. The reason to be called as “depth” interview is that the researcher and interviewee are able to discuss a subject in depth by having conversations without any standard procedures as open as possible. Questions are not necessary to be made previously the interview, instead the topic to be discussed will vary depending on how free the interviewee will talk about the themes with the researcher. (Edwards & Holland 2013, 29-32.)

### 6.3 Data Collection

During the research process data collection is one of the most important parts. Important points must be established such as the type or research to be used and the main goal of the research. Data collection process will depend on those mentioned main points. There are two main different sources from data can be collected, one is primary data and the other is secondary data. Primary data is the one that is collected by the researcher himself/herself making the researcher the primary user. All other data collected from secondary sources are considered as secondary ones. (Veal 2006, 147.) In this case, the used data is primary and the research done to collect data has been from the primary source.

### 6.4 Validity and Reliability

It is important the value of evaluating the validity and reliability of the information collected to develop the research. Validity can be categorized into several types, for instance, face validity, content validity, criteria and construct validity. In this practise this is a good feature to find out the real and true facts with their best description. Interviewees may have different opinions, experiences and behaviors which will affect the information obtained from

them. This is quite common in the tourism field which makes the validity of data in tourism cannot be as certain as in natural sciences. Reliability relies on the results based on an experiment, test or any measuring procedure will produced the same result every time when the research is conducted on different time with different materials. It's based on factors such as trustiness, dependability and credibility. (Veal 2006, 41.)

### 6.5 Analyzing the Answers

Unstructured interview method has been used as data collection method for this research. This was the most suitable method since the only possible way of contacting locals from South West Region of Cameroon was via emails or social media. For the interviews specific themes and questions were based on different tourism sustainable perspectives such as Economic, Socio-cultural and Environmental. The most important point was to find the main difficulties or problems regarding tourism impacts from interviewee's opinions. The information obtained was very important for the conduction of this research. All the interviews together included seven prepared open-ended questions organized in the same order for all respondents. Interviewees were also able to bring additional information at the end of the interviews in order to gather all information possible based on their experiences and opinions as locals. Email, social media such as Facebook and Skype interviews were the most practical due to the distance barrier between Finland and Cameroon. It was informed to respondents beforehand that all interviews were held anonymously. Skype interviews were conducted with interviewers own mobile phone as well as computers. They were recorded for their better understanding and transcription, interviewees agreed with recording their answers. All interviews were conducted in Local Cameroon's language (the Pidgin English) for the easier answering of respondents. They felt the interviews more natural by being able of speaking and writing in their mother tongue. Consequently, answers were then translated into English. Questions with cover letters were sent to respondents in order to let them be familiar with. Emails were sent during the first week of February 2016 and within the first week three respondents sent written answers via Emails as well as social media. During the whole month of February two more respondents sent their written answers and two other agreed for a skype interview. These last skype interviews had a duration of one hour each. Unfortunately organizations such as Green Cameroon and local establishments never answered to their invitations for interviews. Answers were only received from local inhabitants in South West Region of Cameroon. The age of respondents was from 20-40 years old, most of them were students, workers and housewives. These respondents were from potential touristic areas such as Limbe located by the sea, Kumba, Mamfe and Buea where mount Cameroon is found and the popular "Race of Hope" is organized.

## 7 Results

The main idea of the implemented interviews was to obtain all information possible regarding the actual situation and issues with sustainability in tourism in South West Region of Cameroon. The impacts produced by this large industry are diverse and some can be positive and negative. Locals shared their opinions and experiences that were helpful to be used as realistic data and useable. The highlights from the collected data were classified as Economic impacts, socio-cultural impacts and environmental impacts. By identifying these impacts it could be then possible to develop new ideas to promote tourism in Cameroon by being sustainable and beneficial for all parties involved.

### 7.1 Economic Impacts

According to one interviewee, a university student, in cities like Buea, Limbe and Kumba the prices of basic goods and services has increased. This has led to residents complain on high prices of goods and services due to their small incomes. Nevertheless, all respondents agreed that tourism in South West Region of Cameroon is the key to economic development, the beauty and uniqueness of the nature as well as natural resources are potential to attract tourists. However such resources and natural areas need to be developed to become a tourist destination. By developing these areas and becoming them as tourist attraction there would be new job opportunities for locals. In cities like Kumba and Mamfe several visitors are attracted by the sprout of local businesses, for instance, the sell souvenir items such as hand-craft jewelry or sculptures. Companies would invest in tourism activities and the development of them. Also businesses from different sectors that are not linked to tourism would be benefited as well, for instance, when constructing new infrastructures or improving transportation.

Most of the restaurants in the South West region are basically own by locals who are not well trained neither are professionals in gastronomy. Most of the traditional styles to prepare the local food is seen by tourist not proper according hygiene standards despite that such traditional cooking styles are sustainable. Eco label products are not used, perhaps at some places in a lesser extent. On the other hand, most of the hotels meet the basic sustainable standards. Some of the problems facing the hotels is power shortage that occur almost every day. Although the staff at the hotels are hospitable to their guests, most of them are not well trained in the hospitality field. Corruption and the common so call administrative bottle neck has affected the expansion and grow of many local hotels. Regarding roads, the SWR of Cameroon is very backward making accessibility of hotels to be very poor. Moreover, the lack of security is an everyday problem in the SWR of Cameroon. Many tourists complained to some hotel managers that they have been robbed by locals. This has reduced the number of tourist in some extent and it has led to private security in hotels.

## 7.2 Socio-cultural Impacts

Tourists are interested to see the local culture in Cameroon. Locals could take advantage of their cultural heritage by developing events that could show visitors how they live and celebrate their traditional ceremonies. This could be possible if an agreement with partners and private sectors is established to meet the needs of locals depending on their requirements. It is important to avoid negative impacts not only to locals but also to visitors. The cultural heritage must be transmitted to future generations to not lose it. Younger inhabitants must be educated to appreciate and respect their cultural heritage and not be tempted of imitating the same lifestyle as visitors may have. Most of interviewees also pointed out the lack of education and training among locals. Language barrier have been one of the problems faced by many of the tourists. This is due to the fact that many are Europeans who do not understand the local language and same happens to the locals by trying to speak English. Although basic education in Cameroon is free, many young people are not able to attend school because their parents cannot afford studying materials for their children. In addition, many families in Cameroon have more than six children making their parents difficult to send their children to school. Most of children would rather work in the farms or in the local markets to help their parents. Many interviewees agreed that the Race of Hope affect the culture in some extent in the SWR of Cameroon and Buea in particular. Many visitors from all over the country and the world come to the South West during this event and thus a mix culture of people and ideas flow between locals and tourists. Because of this, traditional dances are performed during this period of the race. These are traditional dances supposed to be performed only in the chief Palace but due to the event they are exhibited to the public. Cultural tourism has a long history and its roots have been the original form of tourism. This is one of the form of that most policy makers seem to be betting on the future. If care is not taken most of the cultures in the South West region will be disappeared in decades to come.

The most suitable way to involve locals in tourism activities is by education which is the key in the world today. Locals must be educated to know the importance of cultural heritage and its preservation for future generations. It is important to mention again that these questions were asked among locals of different age group as well as in different towns or division with different levels of education. Local residents in Buea said that the cultural way or dressing especially from young girls have changed due to the external influences of many tourists in Buea. Many of the young boys and girls have adopted the western way of dressing that has been copied from the western tourists. Traditional annual festivals dances are now being organized on a regular basis to satisfy the visitors who can afford to see cultural dances such as the Malay dance as well as the Bakossi Ngone dance. The increase of tourists have resulted in

several changes in the locals' culture, ethnics, religion, values, lifestyles and languages. This has also led to anti-tourist attitudes from locals towards visitors.

### 7.3 Environmental Impacts

One of the most significant problems in the SWR of Cameroon was the disposal of waste from hotels and restaurants. Waste materials from hotels are not recycled, instead they are disposed on the streets of the city and thus contaminate the environment. Furthermore, constant power failure causes many hotels to use wood for energy supply, in this way environment is damaged by cutting down trees. The building of new hotels and the construction of new roads has destroyed the natural habitat of many animals and microorganisms. African elephants that used to be seen at the foot of mount Cameroon have disappeared in the last decade.

The Race of Hope also has a great disadvantage in the environment because during this period the organizers have to burn the bushes around the mountain to make way to the athletes and spectators. The bush fire also destroys and kill many animals, grasses and some medicinal plants. Most of respondents who answered to these questions in Limbe were more concern about the increase of pollution in air and noise as well as the solid waste disposals by hotels in this part of the country. Transport by roads and rails is continuously increasing in response to the rising number of passengers. One consequence of this increase in road transport is that tourism now accounts for more than 60% of road travel and therefore it is responsible for an important share of air emissions.

In addition, the newly constructed football pitch in Limbe has caused land degradation and loss of wildlife habitats and deterioration of scenery. Many residences see this to be a problem as the construction of road leading to the football pitch and car park will destroy many natural habitats. The table below shows the effect of too many tourist trampling over and over the vegetation and soil, eventually causing damage that can lead to loss of biodiversity and other impacts. Such damage can be even more extensive when visitors frequently stray off established trails.

## 8 Recommendations

From the economic perspective, government should try to get into collaboration with hotels, tour operators and resorts to meet the needs and problems that these companies related to tourism are facing. The best way to boost up the economy in tourism is by providing a support and subsidies to startup companies, for instance, tax free during the first year. Inspections are needed in all tourism establishments in order to assure the security for visitors. There must be rights and rules that protect the workers in tourism field to assure the have proper salaries, career opportunities and education. All tourism establishments must have security in

order to keep the safety of not only tourists but also workers and locals. In every town in South West Region of Cameroon there should be a tourism information board. Despite that nowadays most of information is obtained through internet there is still the need for a place from where information regarding places or directions can be obtained. Visa procedures should be simplified for visitors, especially coming from neighboring countries. This would facilitate the movement of visitors to the country and increase the use of goods as well as services.

From the socio-cultural perspective, government should create educational establishments for proper education in the tourism field. This would help, for instance, to obtain professionals in hotels, restaurants, tours operators and resorts who would be aware of communication without language barriers. Tourists would be aware by having proper guiding from these professionals to know how to interact with locals during they stay. The most important is not offend or affect the culture. Also they would be taught to preserve their cultural heritage without affecting other locals neither visitors. Cultural ceremonies and traditions must be respected, especially the ones that are only celebrated annually. Cultural believes and ceremonies can be an attraction to visitors and also a mean of interaction between visitors and locals. In order to avoid any offences to the local culture there should be strict rules for visitors to make clear what they are allow to do and what they are not. Locals should be able to celebrate their cultural activities for traditional purposes and not to only satisfy tourists' needs. Tourists are supposed to be only spectators appreciating and observing the culture without having extra demands or imposing that may stress or offend locals.

From the ecological perspective, most of the attractions in South Region of Cameroon are mostly natural therefore they must be preserved. This can be only achieved by having strict sustainable procedures in all establishments linked to tourism activities. Some of them are wasting control, the amount of visitors must be regulated in natural resorts. The use of Eco labeled should be introduced in hotels and all establishments since most of the locals have little or no knowledge regarding sustainable procedures to preserve the environment. There is a strong need to educate personnel involved and locals about this issue. In certain natural areas that may be potential to stablish and construct a resort or hotel, they should still be preserved in their natural way. Tribes and locals could maintain their traditions such as hunting in a more responsible and regulated way without affecting. During the Race of Hope many trees are burnt to keep the track for runners. This is a clear harmful activity for the environment that should be modified by the organizers of the race. Recycling methods should be introduced to all tourism activities. This would help to sustain the environment for present and future generations.

## 9 Conclusion

Despite that during the research process answers were obtained only from locals and not from governmental institutions nor private sectors in overall looking this research is considered successful. In the beginning of the research many difficulties and challenges were found due to the distance between the two countries Finland and Cameroon to obtain knowledge of the real situation regarding the impacts of tourism in the South West Region of Cameroon. Fortunately locals provided concrete and clear information regarding the three different kinds of impacts that were the main focus in the research. Respondents were interested and enthusiastic to provide all the possible information by knowing in the future changes as well as improvements can be possible.

To implement proper sustainable criteria in tourism activities in the South West Region of Cameroon, many factors are necessary to implement. For instance, when a tourists visits a place at any destination it produces benefits to the local community socially and economically. Therefore, by creating tourist attractions and increasing the number of visitors always in a responsible and regulated way communities will be benefited. Hots communities in the South West Region of Cameroon must work and collaborate together with the government as well as the private sector. To all obstacles in the development of the tourism sector proper actions must be taken. Such obstacles are lack of education in locals, lack of government concern on tourism sector, organizations that are not conscious of these issues and lack of cooperation in all parties involved. By having Government more active regarding this situation improvements are possible to achieve. Without having the Government involved to create a proper sustainable plan in collaboration with the private sector improvements will never be possible.

When thinking of future generations every person should be responsible and concern. Ethical behavior is required to preserve the nature and to not offend locals. In addition, tourists must be aware of the different impacts that environment and locals can have if activities are not practiced in a responsible way. Any kind of activity affects somehow the environment and the inhabitants of such environment, by being responsible and conscious the only effects or impacts will be positive.

The main goal for tourism strategy development in Cameroon must be sustainable transportation, preserving the environment, education for the locals as well as economic benefits for all parties involved. This research could be used for future studied regarding sustainability in the South Wes Region of Cameroon since there is still a lot of work to be. Argentina is also facing a similar situation regarding economic, environmental and socio-cultural issues. Therefore, the ideas and concepts developed in this thesis will be used as well in Argentina if the opportunity is given. Actions and attitude changes are necessary as soon as possible to make people more conscious, there is still time to improve the situation.



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## Appendix

### Emails sent for interviews

Dear Mister or Madam:

My name is Brian Vzay and I am a third year tourism degree student from Cameroon living in Finland. The name of my school is Laurea University of Applied Sciences and at the moment I am writing my thesis in collaboration with another tourism degree student Fernando Gomez. The purpose of our thesis is to research and develop sustainability in South West Region of Cameroon. We need to obtain information regarding impacts from tourist activities from the Economic, Socio-cultural and Environmental perspectives. I would like to ask you if we could interview you to obtain all information possible to develop our research as well as a future sustainable plan for Southwest Cameroon. We could set a day and time if you would like to have a spoken interview by phone, otherwise we could interview you through social media. If you have any questions or doubts regarding our thesis project I will be pleased to answer. Thank you in advance.

Brian Vzay

Tourism degree student

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