USING CULTURAL DIVERSITY TO ENHANCE
THE ZAMBIAN GDP

ML Kaingu (Preston University, Los Angeles, USA)

This article is based on working out a strategic plan in the promotion of cultural tourism in Zambia. Though Zambia is endowed with many cultural heritage products, the country has not paid attention to the development, promotion and marketing of this very important tourism product. The government of the Republic of Zambia must create an enabling environment for its people and investors in general to participate in this lucrative business opportunity. Policies on the development, management and promotion of cultural tourism must be enacted so as to help the citizens and investors to participate in this business. Since the Zambian investors in this business will come late in the region, strategic management programs to have a fair competition in this industry must be formulated, implemented and monitored.

Key phrases: Cultural tourism, strategic management, poverty alleviation, wealth creation, Zambia, culture

INTRODUCTION

Zambia is a land–locked country with 73 tribes living in harmony (Ministry of Community Development 2003:1). This creates cultural diversity. These tribes each practice their own traditional and initiation ceremonies, beliefs, values, music and language. It is important to note that most of those 73 tribes are bantu–speaking. This means that the 73 tribes can be streamlined to 7 main tribes according to dialect. These are: The Lozi of the Western Province, the Tonga of the Southern Province, the Bemba of the Northern Province, the Lunda, Luvale and Kaonde of the North–Western Province and the Nyanja of the Eastern Province. Each of these dialects represents many dialects which come to 73 (Sikapa 2009:7).

It is important to note that although small tribes are represented by the bigger dialects, they are free to practise their cultural heritages and still speak their own languages. Therefore, the 7 main dialects are used for conveniences. This explains why there are 79 government registered traditional ceremonies. Zambia, therefore, has rich culture of both tangible and intangible products. Three of them being listed by the United Nations Education, Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). These are the Victoria Falls (tangible heritage), the Makishi of North–Western Province and Gule wa Mkulu of the Chewa people in Eastern Province (intangible heritage). Soon another heritage which is both tangible and intangible will be listed, and these are the Baroste Plains and the Kuomboka Ceremony of the Lozi People of Western Province. It is however important to note that there are many other tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites which could be registered on the UNESCO list. These are, among many others, tangible sites like the lake Chila in Northern Province, where the Germans threw their guns at the end of the Second World War, and the Motomoto museum also in Northern Province.

To show how Zambia could mainstream its cultural capital in growing its GDP, the following aspects have been considered:

- Product analysis

  This will show how culture can be developed into a tourism product.

- Human Resource Development

  This will show how the human resource, both in rural communities and in towns, could be trained to handle the product of culture.

- Strategic Management

  This will show the purpose, objectives and aims of designing cultural products and mainstream them into the competitive tourism market, both locally and internationally. This will allude to the mission statement and both corporate and business strategies in the cultural tourism business.

- Marketing

  This will show how Zambian cultural products can and should be marketed both locally and internationally

PRODUCT ANALYSIS

One industry that would take culture as a product is Tourism. It is important therefore to discuss cultural tourism as the product that should be developed by Zambia. Cultural Tourism encompasses all cultural aspects and show cases them. This could mean local and international tourists. Items which could be developed as products are:

a) Traditional ceremonies.

b) Indigenous foods.

c) Music and Art.

d) Rituals.

The above mentioned items are intangible products which are basically a service.

a)   Traditional Ceremonies

A traditional ceremony can be defined as a ceremony of a festive nature often pracised in public arenas. According to Oxford, a ceremony is a public or religious occasion that includes a series of formal or traditional actions. As already stated, Zambia has got 79 government registered traditional ceremonies. However,

considering the expenses involved in developing a product, Zambia can promote, develop and market at least 24 of these traditional ceremonies so as to come up with a cultural tourism calendar, which could be mainstreamed with other tourism products like safari hunting, site seeing of products such as the Victoria Falls, and game viewing.

It is important to note that all the 79 government registered ceremonies are already developed as a cultural tourism product and all that is required is to bring in a bit of modernity, in terms of sanitation (so that there can be waterborne toilets and showers) without the risk of adulterating the cultural heritage. One other area that could be improved is accommodation at the ceremony sites so that tourists would stay where the ceremony takes place rather than staying in hotels and lodges. It is envisaged that this would improve cash generation for the ceremonies and create business opportunities for locals.

b) Indigenous foods

Van Wyk & Gericke (2000:25-28) writes that the southern parts of Africa has a rich mix of healthy and exotic plants to be eaten. Zambia, for example, has various delicious and nutritious indigenous foods which have not been appreciated by the town – dwellers and the tourists most of whom patronise the traditional ceremonies. It is therefore important that the preparations and presentations of these indigenous foods are improved so that they could be appreciated by the patrons of the ceremonies. This, too, could improve the viability of the traditional ceremonies. It is important to note that indigenous food galas could be used to attract and promote the interest in the town – dwellers and tourists. In fact a combination of indigenous food galas and traditional ceremonies blended with a pomp would be a carnival.

c) Music, Theatre and Arts

Generally, music and arts are part of the traditional ceremonies. However, Zambia has in abundance, music and arts which could stand as products on their own. Though Zambia has several types of music and dances, none is taught at tertiary level and this has exacerbated the interest of the young fellows who are supposed to be the future promoters of our tradition. In sharp contrast, most of Zambia's neighbours who have a few traditional dances and music have programs which promote these at tertiary level. Even if the above are not taught in our colleges and universities, frameworks must be designed at community levels which will help the youths to buy in the knowledge of preserving their culture.

d)   Rituals

Rituals can be contrasted from traditional ceremonies. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornsby 2005) rituals are a series of actions that are always performed in the same way especially as part of a religious ceremony. Although rituals could make good cultural tourism products, they are little known because of the myths that surround them. There are stories that people are able to fly using a basket, that someone is able to shoot another in America from Zambia and many others. In fact the combination of rituals, traditional ceremonies, music and arts could be used to promote the film industry in Zambia, considering that the country is more culturally diverse than Nigeria. In this regard, Zambia could perhaps come up with '*Zollyhood*' like Nigeria's '*Nollyhood*'.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

To be able to develop the above mentioned cultural tourism products, a capacity building program must be undertaken by the rural communities who handle the said products. Men and women must be recruited by each traditional ceremony to be trained and developed in various aspects.

Contemporary human resource will be required to develop cultural tourism in Zambia so as to have a competitive advantage to its neighbours in the SADC. Human resource management has been defined as the process of acquiring, training, appraising, and compensating employees, and of attending to their labour relations, health and safety, and fairness concerns (Dessler 2008:2). It will be important that the human resource that will be trained and developed to manage cultural components for cash or monetary gain should be made aware of the sociology of tourism that brings conflict between the residents and the visitors. A human resource expert or consultant could be outsourced to make sure that the training of the personnel is done responsibly to avoid adulterating the cultures for the sake of money. Outsourcing refers to the practise of having another company (a vendor, a third party provider, a consultant) provide services (Gerhart, Hollenbeck, Noe, & Wright 2008:9). It is the practice of having certain job functions done outside a company instead of having an in-house department or employee handle them; functions can be outsourced to either a company or an individual.

However, a business sense must be instilled in the people to learn and appreciate that culture could alleviate poverty, reduce hunger and create wealth. Therefore all the functions of human resource, for instance recruitment, selection, hiring, training

and development, performance appraisal and remuneration would be undertaken to assist in developing and handling the above products into business.

Learning is also very important. This is where the youth will be encouraged to learn how to safeguard, preserve and appreciate culture which will be passed on to them from the older persons who have the knowledge, skill and understanding of the same. Michael Armstrong (2006:543) quotes Senge (1990) that a learning organisation is where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, whee collective aspirations are set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together. He further quotes Kim (1993) who defines learning as the process of increasing one's capacity to take action. As explained by Reynolds, Caley and Mason (2002), it should distinguished from training: learning is the process by which a person acquires new knowledge, skills and capacities whereas training is one of several responses an organisation can take to promote learning.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategic management is a social science that looks at an organisation's competitive advantage in the chosen industry or sector. It envisions realizing the objects and goals of an organisation in the chosen sector. Strategic management is designed from top to bottom, where as the top, which is referred to as 'corporate strategy, looks at the vision, mission and objectives of the business, the middle management looks at strategic business units, which are designed and created to enhance competition and realize the objectives and goals designed at corporate level.

This is more pronounced in the MBO (management by objectives), which states that the top management team first defines the company's strategic goals for the coming year, these goals are passed on to the next layer of management and these managers define the goals they must achieve for the company to reach its goals. This goal setting process cascades down the organisation so that all managers set goals that help the company achieve its goals. These goals are used as the standards by which an individual's performance is evaluated (Haasbroek, Nel, Poisat, Schultz, Sono & Werner 2008:346). For the management of an organisation to have a competitive advantage, it must have a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and BPEST (Business, Political, Ecomonics, Social and Technology). These are environmental factors analysis (Cole 1997:34-40).

Hugh Macmillan and Mahen Tampoe (2000:13) contend that the word 'strategy' has been defined differently by many authors, each emphasizing one or more aspects.

They give the earliest definition of strategy as coming from the ancient Greek writer Xenophon, who defined strategy as knowing the business one proposes to carry out. These authors comment that this definition stresses that strategy requires a nowledge of the business, an intention for the future, and an orientation towards action.

These learned authors then go on to submit their own definition of strategy as 'ideas and actions to conceive and secure the future.' This definition, they contend, highlights the fact that strategy requires thought about the future but also effective action to realize the conception.

Gamble, Strickland and Thompson (2008:3) also offer a definition for the word. In this work, they define strategy as 'management's action plan for running the business and conducting operations.' They further submit that a company's strategy consists of the competitive moves and business approaches that managers are employing to grow the business, attract and please customers, compete successfully, conduct operations, and achieve the targeted levels of organisational performance.

Hugh Macmillan and Mahen Tampoe (2008:7) provide the four elements and show how these form a conceptual framework for strategic management. These elements are given as context, strategy formulation process, strategy content and strategy implementation process. The context provides the background of the strategic management. It determines the issues which strategic management must address and hence the agenda and scope of the strategic management for the particular enterprise.

The second element is the formulation process. This is the process by which the strategies are thought out, conceived, compared, and chosen. Although there is no universally correct process that will generate successful strategies, there are three elements that should be present in every formulation. These are strategic intent, strategic assessment and strategic choice.

Strategic intent refers to the highest level purpose of the organisation. This therefore is the driver of the strategic process as it provides the purpose from which all actions originate. Strategic assessment involves an assessment of the context over a particular time and the effects of future possible actions. It considers how likely the enterprise is to realize its strategic intent as the business environment changes. Strategic choice, on the other hand, involves deciding what action to take and how to take it for the future health and direction of the enterprise. Strategic choice should address strategic issues or dilemmas posed by the context in a way that fits the strategic intent.

The implementation process is also an important part of strategic management. It is envisaged that for a strategy to succeed it must have the necessary resources (human, material and monetary resources).

The final and last stage of strategic management is monitoring. This is the stage which makes sure the strategy choice is working and forever checking on the performance of the strategy that has been employed.

As can be seen from the definition of strategic management above, Zambia must create an atmosphere for private sector participation in the promotion, development and marketing of its cultural tourism. To achieve the marketing of cultural tourism, the strategic management must be on the following objectives:-

- Initiate deliberate policy to capacity build people in the rural areas so that they can appreciate culture and traditional ceremonies to be business entities which can create wealth and alleviate poverty.

- Incentives must be offered to companies willing to invest in this line of business as to help them create a strategic competitiveness in the region. These incentives can be in the form of tax rebates and creating empowerment funds for rural areas to help in capacity building and promotion of cultural tourism. The focus must be mainly on traditional ceremonies, which are unique and endemic to Zambia and are already world – acclaimed.

- Reduce tremendously or abolish Visa fees and other restrictive border formalities in order to attract more tourists into the country.

- Initiate policies aimed at conserving the intangible cultural heritage to be marketed as products.

It is however important to note that Zambia has strategies to enhance the marketing of cultural tourism in the region. These are:-

- The friendliness of its people.

- There are no restrictions on foreign exchange externalisation.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that strategic management will help Zambia interest its citizens to consider cultural tourism as a product that could promote, create and generate wealth to enhance the GDP growth. With the unpredictable weather and change in eco - system caused by the climate change, new innovations which could

mitigate and alleviate hunger in rural areas should be sought after, and cultural tourism, which is mainly a rural product, could be this innovation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARMSTRONG M. 2006. *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. Tenth edition. London: Kogan Page.

COLE G.A. 1997. *Strategic Management: Theory and Practice*. Second edition. United Kingdom: South – Western Cengage Learning.

DESSLER G. 2008. *Human Resource Management*. Eleventh edition. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall.

GAMBLE J., STRICKLAND A.J. & THOMPSON A. 2008. *Crafting & Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage*. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

GERHART B., HOLLENBECK J., NOE R.A. & WRIGHT P.M. 2008. *Human Resource Management*. Sixth edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

HAASBROEK G.D., NEL P.S., POISAT P., SCHULTZ H.B., SONO T. & WERNER A. 2008. *Human Resource Management*. Seventh Edition. Cape Town, Republic of South Africa: Oxford University Press.

HORNSBY A.S. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

KIM D.H. 1993. The Link Between Individual and Organizational Learning, *Sloane Management Review.* Fall.

MACMILLAN H. & TAMPOE M. 2000. *Strategic Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. 2003. *National Cultural Policy*. Republic Of Zambia.

REYNOLDS J., CALEY L. & MASON R. 2002. *How do we learn?* London: CIPD.

SENGE P. 1990. *The fifth Discipline: The Art and practice of the learning Organisation*. London: Doubleday.

SIKAPA L. 2009. Insight into Traditional Ceremonies. *Kalibu Zambia Tourism magazine*, Jan-Feb, 003:7.

WYK V.B. & GERICKE N. 2000. *People's plants: A guide to useful plants of Southern Africa*. Briza: Pretoria, South Africa.