

# Why Ethiopia Should Develop Domestic Tourism and Who are Responsible for this?

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## Abstract

*Since domestic tourism development in Ethiopia is a missed opportunity, the main objective of this study focused on identifying and explaining reasons of domestic tourism development in the nation and its key actors. To achieve these objectives, qualitative approach with explanatory design and expert purposive sampling techniques were employed for focus group discussion and interview data gathering instruments. The qualitative data was collected from twenty private and governmental tourism experts and twenty eight domestic tourists in the form of interview and six focus group discussions with nine discussants each were analyzed. The interpretation of qualitative data was a content descriptive approach. The main result revealed that domestic tourism development in the nation has a benefit of promoting ethnic and religious tolerance, contributes to the quality of life through educational travel, retain the hard currency and brings development to rural areas. The key stakeholders of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia also include the Ministry of culture and tourism, tourism Ethiopia, Ethiopian airlines, event organizers, tourism and hospitality related associations, religious leaders, media, schools, tour operators and travel agents, universities & research institutions, consultants and hotels. Finally, based on the results of the study involvement of religious and cultural institutions and their leaders, strengthen the national tourism media forum, establishment of national domestic tourism stakeholder platform and supporting and strengthening the establishment of tourism related associations were some of the recommended points to the sustainable development of domestic tourism in the nation.*

**Key Words: Domestic Tourism, Benefits, Stakeholders and Ethiopia.**

## Introduction

Tourism mainly explores on international movement of inbound and outbound tourists, but international tourism is only one part. Domestic tourism, historically speaking, is in fact the first form of tourism and today it continues the most part of the sector. Domestic tourism generally makes up the vast majority of flows, even though it is more difficult to track of this type than those of international tourism which requires the crossing of the international border. For this reason, domestic tourism throughout the world is a predominant yet invisible portion of economic and socio-cultural activities in the tourism industry. Hence, the domestic overnight leisure tourism market is a key segment in many countries. For example, most US and China tourists never leave their country and the number of domestic tourists within these two countries exceeds that of all international inbound tourists. Compared to international tourists, domestic tourists are more knowledgeable about the destination, its culture and custom, its language and food, and other general features, so they are more demanding for the quality of products and services (Pierret, 2011; Eijgelaar, Peeters and Picket, 2008).

Due to its income redistribution effect and its various multiplier effects, domestic tourism is an excellent tool for human development (Pierret, 2011 & WTTC, 2016). It has significant effect on the overall life condition of the local people. Direct and indirect employment generated by tourism in China is 7.7% of the entire workforce, representing 60 million persons, domestic tourism accounting for 40 million of them. Thus, the weight and value of domestic tourism cannot, therefore, be ignored (Moseley, Sturgis & Wheeler, 2007). Domestic visitors generated 75.8% of Australian tourism industry GDP while international visitors generated only 24.2%. Additionally, tourism emissions are a little lower for domestic air travel than for international air travel because distance is the most important factor for high emission figures (Eijgelaar, Peeters, & Picket, 2008).

In developing nations, domestic tourism has been prioritized as an important driver for economic development by generating both income and employment relatively cost effectively by utilizing previously largely untapped resources of nature and culture. Previous studies conducted have revealed that domestic tourism contributions, in comparison with international visitor contributions, are as high as 60% of the total tourism income. However, these studies remained to examine the socio-cultural and political significance of domestic tourism (Robinson & Picard, 2006; Moseley, Sturgis & Wheeler, 2007). Therefore, Ethiopia is an ideal destination for domestic tourism's socio-cultural significance study since it is a multicultural nation in which over 80 ethnic groups live together. More than perhaps any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is known for its ancient and rich culture (UNESCO, 2006 and Gordon & Carillet, 2003). Each ethnic group has its own unique cultural traits which attracts the attention of domestic and international tourists as well. Ethiopians are extremely proud of the range of their traditional customs, the visual and performing arts and special lifestyles, values, traditions, and festivals and events, banquets, music, theatre, shows, village and rural life, historic and religious monuments or vernacular buildings and ruins (Camerapix, 1995 & MoCT, 2018).

In addition to this, the presence of domestic tourists has become an important feature in everyday life of many Ethiopians, in both rural and urban areas (MoCT, 2009 & Yechale, 2015). However, the problem is when the rationale for domestic tourism development has been discussed within the country; it is often conceived in macroeconomic terms: generation of government revenue and employment. These benefit the whole of Ethiopians, but it ignores the social and cultural elements of tourism sustainability. Even the tourism development policy of Ethiopia (2009) is biased to the economic contribution of tourism industry which magnifies merely the economic impact of international tourism without considering domestic tourism and its significance of the sector beyond its economic contribution. It emphasizes simply the contribution of international tourism in earning and conserving foreign exchange, in creating employment opportunity and distribution of income. Additionally, measurements are taken simply to enhance the economic profitability of the sector. The study prepared by World Bank (2006) emphasizes on tourism resources of Ethiopia, economic significance, required facilities, and the linkage of tourism sector with local economy. Finally, the awareness level of academicians and practitioners on domestic tourism is not clear for the smooth running of the industry and above all studies regarding the significance of domestic tourism development and identifying its stakeholder is insufficient. Even the studies that have been made are sketchy and isolated; they shed very little light on the significance of domestic tourism development. Particularly, researches are remained to assess the benefits of domestic tourism development. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to describe the benefits of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia and identify its key stakeholders.

## Methods and Materials

The researcher has chosen to carry out an explanatory research design within a qualitative research approach to explore the significance of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia and identify its key stakeholders (Krippendorff, 2004 & Patton, 1990). This approach is highly efficient in obtaining specific data about the value, opinion and social issues of particular people (Altinay, Var, Hines, & Hussain, 2007; Hejri, 2006). Qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore behavior, perspectives, feelings, and experiences in depth (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2006) which was deemed to have the potential to benefit the study. In the course of the fieldwork, the study was relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data includes in-depth open-ended and semi-structured interviews; this permits the researcher to probe to unearth respondents' over all understanding on the practices and challenges of domestic tourism development and focus group discussions (FGD) with the target population of the study. Formal and informal discussions were conducted with different community members, domestic tourists, tour operators, associations, experts and government officials. Secondary data includes archival research from policies, books, proclamations, regulations, journals, magazines, proceedings, pamphlets, manuals, bulletins, newspapers, reports, articles, internet materials and individual writing exercises related to the study.

The population of the study was the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the nine National Regional States and two City Administration Culture and Tourism Bureaus (Addis Ababa, Mekele, Summera, Bahir Dar, Harar, Dire Dawa, Jigjiga, Adama, Hawassa, Assosa and Gambela), tourism and culture related associations, tourism media forum, domestic tourists, Ethiopian tourism Organization and respective offices and associations at these cities as well as the community members. Expert purposive selection for interview and FGD helped the researcher to exclude uninterested respondents, consider variations in education level and experience of respondents to the subject of the study. Above all, the whole experts of the organizations were not participated in the study because some of those who are working in these offices do not have relevant tourism experience to the study issue since they are working in the cultural wing.

Interviews with key stakeholders both from the private and public sector including senior experts from each bureau and offices, associations, tour operators and domestic tourists at each destination and policy and decision makers in order to elaborate on the practices and challenges being faced was conducted. Each pool of items was organized based on the main objectives of the research. All interviews were recorded by digital voice recorder and notes were also taken throughout the course of the interview. Based on the principles of data saturation, twenty eight domestic tourists, nine private tourism operators and eleven governmental officials were participated in the study. A total of six focus group discussions (FGD) with both private and public stakeholders were conducted with nine discussants each to identify the area of focus in order to elaborate on the practices and challenges being faced. Each group discussion pool of items was organized based on the main research objectives. All group discussions were recorded by digital voice recorder and notes was also taken throughout the course of the group discussion. To assure generalize-ability, data was collected from the maximum recommended number of samples based on the principle of data saturation.

Before the analysis of data, it is a must to measure the validity and reliability of the qualitative data. So, as reliability refers to the research trustworthiness and conformability (Bryman, Becker, and Sempik, 2008) to assure the reliability (repeatability) of qualitative data, all the interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were recorded and transcribed word for word. Therefore, one could go back and recheck the answers or responses. The interpretation of qualitative data was conducted as a content analysis method to organize and categorize obtained data into meaningful and efficient information, based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 2004 and Patton, 1990). In this case the interview and focus group discussion results were repeatedly and thoroughly read so as to gain the major themes of each respondent. Utilization of summary data and unattributed quotes to illustrate dominant issues in respondents' own words was employed. So, the processes of transcribing and interpreting from Amharic (local language) to English as well as identifying, coding and clustering was carried out. Therefore, the method of data analysis of the study is procedure of categorization of verbal and behavioral data, for the purposes of classification, summarization and tabulation. Based on this, the content of the qualitative data was analyzed on two levels; including the basic level of analysis of descriptive account of the data, this

is what was actually said with nothing read into it and nothing assumed about it and the higher level of analysis is interpretative, it was concerned with what was meant by the response, what is inferred or implied.

## Results and Discussion

Analysis and discussion of data as part of scientific methodology of research process are fundamental to reach to some conclusion. Therefore, this section deals with the interpretation and discussion of data collected from tourists, community representatives, tourism and hospitality experts through interview and focus group discussion. Besides, data was gathered through document analysis. This was very important to obtain data with regard to issues that required more clarification. Accordingly, the results of the study are presented as follows.

### Reasons for Domestic Tourism Development in Ethiopia

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in countries around the world. It is increasingly a major, if not the main, source of growth, employment, income and revenue for many of the world's developing countries. It is very labor intensive and is a significant source of development and employment, especially for those with limited access to the labor market. It can be significant for women, young people, migrant workers and rural populations. It can strongly contribute to social and economic development and to poverty reduction. Specifically, domestic tourism's value chain and its significant connections to other sectors such as agriculture, construction, utilities and transport can contribute to poverty reduction. With regard to the supply chain in tourism, one job in the core tourism and hospitality industry indirectly generates one and half additional jobs in the related economy (Djachenko, 2007). In addition to these, domestic tourism can facilitate better relations and understanding between people and cultures. It is a tool to build peace and enhance cooperation among different peoples, creating a unique enabling environment for collaborative and intercultural relations. It is also a platform for honest intercultural dialogue and national respect instrument. Nowadays, domestic tourism has become a fiercely competitive business (Yechale, 2015). A respondent from tour operators said that; *"for tourism destinations the world over, as indeed for Ethiopia, competitive advantage is no longer natural, but increasingly human made driven by science, technology, information and innovation. As such, it is not simply the stock of cultural and natural resources of Ethiopia that will determine her competitiveness in domestic tourism, but rather, how these resources are managed and to what extent they are complemented with human made innovations."* Therefore, domestic tourism can be an engine of growth, capable of dynamiting and rejuvenating other sectors of the economy if it is significantly well understood by the industry operators. Specifically, all respondents have agreed on the following good reasons why domestic tourism development in Ethiopia.

**1. Promotes Ethnic and Religious Tolerance:** Domestic tourism helps to producing social and cultural benefits for the domestic population who might not otherwise be able to experience the cultural and natural richness of their own countries. Through the opportunities for the exchange of ideas and practices that domestic travelers can bring, residents will also potentially develop stronger interest in promoting ethnic, racial and religious tolerance; deeper appreciation of the country's natural and cultural diversity; and greater awareness of the achievements of the federal government. One officer from the Amhara National Regional State Tourism and Culture bureau said that; *"through its inherent message of goodwill, hospitality, trust, service without servility, tolerance, interaction and communication, domestic tourism is a most effective mechanism for fostering cultural exchange and understanding among people. It is, therefore, an effective nation-builder and a strong incentive and reason for peace."* Imagine that you could not travel and meet your grandparents, parents or old friends at your own will, even though you lived the same country. It is hard to imagine, but this is true in most developing multicultural nations including Ethiopia, nowadays. Prior researchers have postulated that tourism in a multicultural nation that has been divided or remain hostile to each other can be a means of reducing tension and promoting dialogue, cross-cultural understanding, justice and national consciences. For this purpose, domestic tourism throughout the world is the first and still dominant and invisible portion of the industry for bringing ethnic and religious tolerance in a multicultural nation, Ethiopia. Thus, it is relevant and important to develop domestic tourism in the nation.

**2. Contributes to the Quality of Life through Educational Travel:** As leisure time, disposable incomes and higher levels of education increase, so does the need for a broader array of leisure experiences. Domestic tourism is a potential contributor to the quality of life of resident populations, if it is carefully planned and properly delivered. According to data collected from focus group discussants, the educational aspect of tourism is well known; domestic tourists visiting other places will understand the cultures and values of other regions, which enable them to be more tolerable and helps patriots to nationalism.

**3. Enhance Eco-friendly Activities by Using Local Resources:** Domestic tourism spreading development opportunities into the developing regions and rural areas through the use of local resources that are natural and human suited to the domestic tourism market as opposed to the international markets. Doing away with carbon emissions from domestic tourists reduces the footprint of their travels hugely. Domestic tourists take public transport around instead of private car that makes their trip more eco-friendly.

**4. Social Composition of Domestic Tourism is Broader:** Domestic tourism involves all social strata, from the richest to persons with modest (but stable) incomes and even the poor one in pilgrimage (domestic) tourism. Moreover, UNWTO (2019) briefly justified that certain social categories are much more highly represented in domestic tourism than in international tourism.

**5. Less Investment on Services and Facilities:** The focus group discussions from the tour operators session revealed that one of the reasons that hampered the tourism sector's growth is socio-economic factors, which includes; limited tourism infrastructure, inadequate number of tourist standard hotels and limited facilities. In contrast to international tourists, domestic tourists know the destination, its language, its customs, its laws, its climate, its cultural context. Thus, domestic tourists simply use already existing services and doesn't create management burden. Critically looking in to the case, it could have been possible to have targeted domestic tourists who don't require exaggerated (very high level) tourism infrastructure and facilities. Furthermore, domestic tourism also enables residents who have growing disposable incomes and their leisure time to participate in productive and satisfying experiences produce social and cultural benefits for the host community.

**6. Retain the Hard Currency:** Domestic tourism helps to retain hard currency that might otherwise leave the country in the form of outbound travel expenditure in travel to foreign destinations. Foreign exchange is saved by encouraging the spending by the affluent local population in travel to the domestic destinations. Thus, Ethiopian nationals who can take consider their country as a priority destination to explore unique nature and culture (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018).

**7. Encourage Public and Private Local Businesses:** Domestic tourism can also encourage public and private local travel organizations to create the receptive, transportation, accommodation, attraction and entertainment facilities needed to compete in key travel markets at home and abroad. Besides, it supports re-distributing of wealth within the nation's boundaries. This redistribution can be targeted to encourage the transfer of currency and other physical and human resources from relatively affluent portions of the country to economically less prosperous regions, through the strategically focused domestic tourism program. It is much less sensitive to crises, whether it is economic, natural, health or political. Therefore, it is an excellent crisis shock-absorber, especially in the case of economic and political crises. Also, because of its income redistribution effect and its various multiplier effects all throughout the value chain, it is an excellent tool for regional development. Hence, designing a domestic tourism development is vital for the local businesses in the nation to exploit existing tourism development potentials and reduce dependency on foreign tourists. In effect, once the local businesses have developed an appreciation and passion for the attractions in their country, the tourism equation becomes complete. One respondent from Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Office addressed that; *"domestic tourism is a tool for tourism transformation by initiating a vibrant domestic tourism sector, encouraging local tourism products & businesses, and use of homegrown solutions are some of the best tools driving the country's tourism development transformation."*

**8. Brings Development to Rural Areas and Creates Entrepreneurial Opportunities:** Many of Ethiopian prime tourism attractions are not located in the city centers but in the rural areas (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). Domestic tourism development allows rural peoples to share the benefits, promoting more balanced and sustainable forms of development. It provides an alternative to urbanization, permitting people to continue a rural family existence, enfranchising both women and the youth. The domestic tourism accommodates a thriving and dynamic informal sector; from craft and fruit vendors to transport vendors, mule rentals, and others. Apart from the opportunities provided in the informal sector, there are many business opportunities to involve previously neglected groups in the tourism business; entertainment, laundry and transportation services, craft rental; arts, craft and curios sales; tour guides and walking tours of places of interest; teaching of Ethiopian languages and customs to interested visitors; restaurants emphasizing local cuisine; guest houses and much more.

### Stakeholders for Domestic Tourism Development in Ethiopia

Based on the data gathered from interviewees and focus group discussions, the potential domestic tourists of the nation were students, family and friend visitors, religious people, school children, researchers, college and university fellows, independent journalists, Familiarization tour for journalists, conference tourists, company employees on holiday, organized local travel groups, event attendants, business persons and all members of the community having the ability to visit much of what our beautiful Ethiopia has. Therefore, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Tourism Ethiopia, Ethiopian Airlines, MICE Organizers, Tourism and Hospitality related Associations, Religious Leaders, Media, Schools, Tour Operators and Travel Agents, Universities & Research Institutions, Consultants, Transport Organizations, and Hotels are some of the many stakeholders that should be participated in an organized platform in order to satisfy the needs of the potential domestic tourists for the betterment of tourism development in the nation. However, as per the discussion with the respondents; the government, private sector, the media, and NGOs are the most inclusive categories of key stakeholders for domestic tourism development in Ethiopia as per their rank of list. Based on this category, the respondents identify the central roles of these key stakeholders as follow:

**1. Government (Federal, Regional & Local):** As per the tourism development policy, the federal government should play five key roles in the development and promotion of domestic tourism: facilitation and implementation, coordination, planning and policy-making, regulation and monitoring and development promotion (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2009). The regional governments should take on similar functions as at the federal level with three main exceptions. First, the focus is much more on the implementation and application of national principles, objectives and policy guidelines as appropriate to local conditions. Second, as much of the tourism product is itself located at the regional level, regions should take on a much more important role in facilitating and developing domestic tourism product. Third, regions should have a major role to play in marketing and promoting their destinations in competition with other regions locally. The local government is even closer to the product than the federal or regional governments. The functions of the local government mirror those of the regional government, but with added emphasis on the planning, development, maintenance of many specific aspects of the domestic tourism product. The exact role of the local

government in the domestic tourism development thrust will be determined by local conditions existing at the regional levels and most importantly, the availability of the necessary financial means and skills base to carry out the respective functions.

## 2. Private Sector (Tour Operators, Travel Agencies, Hotels, Associations, Transport organizations and Event Organizers):

The private sector has and will continue to play a critically important role in the further development and promotion of Ethiopian domestic tourism. The private sector bears the major risks of tourism investment as well as a large part of the responsibility for satisfying the domestic tourists. The delivery of quality tourism services and providing the customer with value for money are largely private sector responsibilities. Furthermore, the private sector is in a position to promote the involvement of local communities in tourism ventures by, inter alia, establishing partnership tourism ventures with communities.

**3. The Media:** Areas of participation and involvement by the local media in developing domestic tourism include: domestic tourism awareness programs to the population at large, press coverage and special campaigns to promote domestic tourism initiatives, promotion of domestic tourism through familiarization trips and press reports on different destinations, cooperate with regional tourism organizations in marketing their regions to the domestic market and provide an important link to the federal public relations efforts in order to bring best experiences from outside the nation.

**4. NGOs:** Particularly environmental and community-based ones are expected to play a vital role in the development and spread of responsible domestic tourism practices in the nation.

The other issue that was addressed in this research is the perception of domestic tourism stakeholders towards the concept, practices and challenges of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia. Most respondents' demonstrated a meaningful understanding of domestic tourism (the responses varied). The Respondents' understanding of domestic tourism ranged from visitors from 'Ethiopia itself', to some respondents indicating that domestic tourism is when Ethiopians travel and stay in places inside Ethiopia but outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes. As shown by the respondents, domestic tourism as a concept is well understood by most tourism operators including its accumulative benefits except domestic tourists themselves. It was interesting to note that some respondents even included the traveling of residents within the country to visit their family, friends and relatives and also taking part in a vacation.

A number of respondents agreed that there were domestic tourism seasons in Ethiopia. They highlighted Christmas, Easter, Epiphany, *Chambelala*, *Irricha*, finding of the true cross (*Meskel*), sport and school holidays are some to name. It emerged from the study that a lot of Ethiopians prefer to go to the village than visiting areas of interest. It was encouraging to note that a number of respondents recognized that a lot of Ethiopians want to travel but the hindrances include inaccessibility of high prices and lack of promotion. In order to mitigate the lack of promotion, respondents recommended aggressive marketing strategies to be employed in order to appeal to the domestic tourism market. Most respondents acknowledged that domestic tourism has a big potential for the small businesses but noted that only a little share of the small businesses' total occupancy is from domestic tourists.

Regarding prices respondents said the prices were steep and beyond the income bracket of the majority of Ethiopians. For instance, Ethiopia's average economy-wide monthly earning is about a third of that of Egypt but cost of living index in Addis Ababa is roughly twice the corresponding figure for Cairo (International Labor Organization, 2018). Tourism places were considered extremely expensive for Ethiopians even though tourism enterprises have introduced a tier pricing system that provides a marked difference between the price paid by the locals and the international tourists. A number of respondents indicated that the most important incentive that can be used to lure the domestic market is the offer of discounts. Some also argued that more emphasis should be placed on local advertisements promoting special Ethiopian rates. Respondents indicated that domestic tourism is hardly promoted in Ethiopia and this is compounded by high prices which inhibits and restricts domestic tourists. Therefore, the emphasis was placed on making Ethiopians feel more comfortable and developing a more holistic approach to domestic tourism. The approach would encourage locals to travel in their own country and appreciate the value of tourism.

## Conclusion

Domestic tourism development in Ethiopia has largely been a missed opportunity. Had its history been different, Ethiopia should be one of the most visited places in the world. The tourism industry in Ethiopia has been woefully protected from foreign competition (limited international investment in tourism facilities). As such, the potential of domestic tourism to spawn entrepreneurship, to create new services, to drive other sectors of the economy, to strengthen rural communities, to generate foreign exchange and to create employment, has not been realized. Yet domestic tourism, perhaps more than any other forms of tourism, has the potential to create fraternity and brotherhood among citizens of the nation. It also creates opportunity for the small entrepreneur, promotes awareness and understanding among different cultures, breeds a unique informal sector, helps to save the environment, creates economic linkages with agriculture, light manufacturing and curios (art, craft, souvenirs), creates linkages with the services sector (health and beauty, entertainment, banking and insurance) and provides dignified employment opportunities. Domestic tourism can also play a strategic role in dynamiting other sectors of the economy like the agriculture sector that benefits from the tourism industry (increased demand for new agricultural products and services such as organic agriculture, farm tourism), the manufacturing sector as well as crafts. Perhaps the weakest economic linkages with the tourism industry in Ethiopia exist in the services sector (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). Therefore, many domestic tourism destinations have started successfully and use the industry to

encourage other sectors of the economy and to generate new and innovative service opportunities. To sum, domestic tourism is a tool for achieving national consciences among a multicultural and divided ethnicity of Ethiopia.

## Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the study, the following recommendations are made as follow:

**1. Involvement of Religious and Cultural Institutions and their Leaders:** They are also recognized for their role in supporting the implementation of policies and activities, and in peace mediation efforts. There should be cooperation between heads of religious institutions and stronger involvement in efforts to refuse religious and cultural values exploitation in Ethiopia which is an important factors in enabling domestic tourism. Furthermore, they should strengthen domestic tourism by promoting harmonious interreligious and cultural coexistence in this multi-religious and cultural nation of Ethiopia. Therefore, the federal, regional and local governments should be committed by providing a climate conducive for religious and cultural institutions to the further growth and development of domestic tourism.

**2. Strengthen the National Tourism Media Forum:** The significant rise in the use of mainstreaming and social media as a means to enhance civil society voices and foster inclusive participation in the country is an enabling environment for domestic tourism development. However, as per the respondents, a significant number of regional mainstreaming media and ethnic activists in the social media have exploited these vehicles for hate speech and racism, as well as to undermine social inclusion and incite violence in the country. Therefore, at least the national mainstreaming media should be a model for preaching and fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding among the nations, nationalities and peoples of the country by providing equal opportunity, respect, and tolerance for peaceful conflict resolution and consensus building of the nation. In addition to this effort, the government and other domestic tourism stakeholders also should strength the existing tourism media forum which are always preaching diversity and contributing to the national solidarity movement of this multicultural society.

**3. Establishment of National Domestic Tourism Stakeholder Platform:** Respondents highlight a range of actors and institutions that should involve in domestic tourism development in Ethiopia, varying from government organizations and political leaders to religious institutions and leaders, universities, tour operators, tour guides, transport companies, individual celebrities, cultural institutions, nongovernmental organizations and civil society. They argue that the resilience of these processes depends on interdisciplinary cooperation, and that progress in domestic tourism which requires multi stakeholder cooperation, shared responsibility and strong leadership. Therefore, there should be a new form of domestic tourism development stakeholder platform and the platform should be grouped similar stakeholders together and give specific tasks to play.

**4. Establishment of Domestic Tourism Marketing Forum at the Destination Level:** There is a need for collaborative and participatory approach to domestic tourism marketing. Tourism and Hospitality operators need to come together and formulate marketing strategies that can appeal to the local community and tourism Ethiopia and the regional bureaus should take the leading role for this purpose. The marketing strategies can only be achieved if the operators develop customized products that can appeal to Ethiopians. There is also a need to target domestic tourists during the low seasons (May, June, July and August) only. While respondents indicated that the practices being employed by stakeholders are not holistic, there is need to increase marketing and the distribution channels for domestic tourism. The service provided by the accommodation sector should encourage repeat visit there by making the locals ambassadors of tourism by establishing domestic tourism marketing forum. The prices in the tourism destinations should be reviewed with the assistance of the forum. In the off season all the tourism destinations should lower their prices to attract domestic tourists to fill the seasonal gap, and there should be two different prices for domestic and international tourists. Further the forum should set the average prices of tourism destinations in the destinations as well as the amount Ethiopians can spend, and be presented to service providers in a comprehensive pricing guide. All these will assist to have affordable prices to domestic tourists and strengths domestic tourism development.

**5. Increase Accessibility to Attractions for Domestic Tourists:** From the observations made it can be concluded that in order to encourage accessibility, the tourism operators need to provide group travel and making travel more affordable. The operators could promote inter-regional travel by encouraging touring and publicizing the hidden secrets of the different attractions in different regions and the experiences there. Therefore, the federal government, tour operators, the destination managers, guides and the community should team up for the increment of domestic tourists flow.

**6. Establishing Local Community Compensation Standards:** Domestic tours do not directly compensate residents and other affected parties. In these cases, more should be done to understand how indirect compensation would be beneficial to the community members in terms of their values and preferences. It should not be assumed that all affected parties view positive economic change as morally acceptable. Therefore, tourism organizations, associations, tour operators, destination managers and relevant government units could set standards of compensation that operators would have to meet in order to be certified to guide tours and benefits the community.

**7. Supporting and Strengthening the Establishment of Tourism Related Associations:** Domestic tourism always functions as part of the wider economic and geopolitical systems from which it cannot be divorced. If we take the idea to build cultures of peace

seriously, informed action is needed on multiple fronts. This includes addressing the issues of social injustice and other types of conflict within the industry itself and working with young generation should not be left for tomorrow. Therefore, the tourism operators at any level should work parallel with children and young generation's interest. So that educational institutions should organize and actively participate in tourism related clubs like 'know your country' and the concerned tourism organizations should support and strengthening them.

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