Environmental Education

Assignment
Case Study (600 words)
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30th November 2010
CASE STUDY

1. Introduction

This case study will analyse how the Southern Ridges located in Singapore demonstrates the concepts of ecotourism and sustainable development. As cited by Fennell (2008:24), ecotourism is a sustainable, non-invasive form of nature-based tourism that focuses primarily on learning about nature first-hand, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented (control, benefits and scale). It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation of such areas.

Sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Azapagic, Perdan & Clift, 2004:5).

2. Background

As part of the Government’s effort to enhance and promote biodiversity conservation, Urban Redevelopment Authority’s (URA) launched the Parks & Waterbodies and Identity Plans in 2002. More than 90% of the survey respondents liked URA’s idea of connecting the 9-kilometre chain of ridges - Mount Faber, Telok Blangah Hill and Kent Ridge - at the southwestern part of Singapore through park connectors, mid-level pedestrian bridges, timber boardwalks and footpaths (URA, 2010).

Presently, the Southern Ridges is managed by the National Parks Board (NParks). The Ridges offers spectacular views of Singapore’s greenery as well as modern buildings.

3. Target Audience

The Southern Ridges caters to both locals and tourists such as walking enthusiasts, history lovers, photography buffs, nature lovers, bird watchers, families and friends (NParks, 2010).

4. SWOT Analysis

4.1 Strengths

a) Rich in history such as The Reflections at Bukit Chandu Museum is a World War II Interpretative Centre (National Archives of Singapore, 2010).

b) Lush, green and open spaces with rich variety of flora and fauna.

c) Strong public support and positive publicity through the survey launched in 2002 (URA, 2010).

d) Varied trails offer interesting sights and views such as the Kent Ridge Heritage Trail, Canopy Trail, HortPark, Alexandra Arch Bridge, Forest Walk, Hilltop Walk, Henderson Waves bridge, Faber Point and Marang Trail.
e) URA was conferred the prestigious Urban Land Institute (ULI) Awards for Excellence 2010: Asia Pacific (URA, 2010.)

4.2 Weaknesses

a) High maintenance costs in maintaining the pedestrian bridges, boardwalks and footpaths.

b) Low awareness and publicity of the history and heritage.

c) Some parts of the trails are located near to residential areas and may pose security concerns.

d) Not all trails are physically inclusive and accessible for the disabled and elderly population.

4.3 Opportunities

a) Platform for environment education and conservation issues to schools and other stakeholders.

b) Preserving biodiversity to facilitate ecosystems.

c) Tie up with Singapore Tourism Board to introduce targeted environmental activities to increase awareness and encourage positive actions.

d) Building and strengthening Singapore’s name into a Garden City.

4.4 Threats

a) Completing land use for future commercial or residential development.

b) Environmental implications such as damage of flora and noise pollution due to increased human traffic and irresponsible acts of visitors.

5. Southern Ridges: A Place For Ecotourism

Martha Honey (2008) established seven criteria for ecotourism namely: travel to natural destination; minimises impacts; builds environmental awareness; provides direct financial benefits for conservation; provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people; respects local culture; and supports human rights and democratic movements.

Southern Ridges is indeed a unique recreational destination for both locals and overseas visitors wanting a nature experience and more. By linking the less accessible parks into a large recreation ground, it provides greater opportunities for sports, leisure and outdoor participation.

Environmental efforts are evident with pedestrian bridges and footpaths built to minimise damages to the environment by visitors. Signages are also put in place to remind visitors on
the dangers in the nature and preserving the environment. Guided tours and volunteering opportunities with NParks involve the community actively to raise awareness and empowerment people to make a difference.

6. The Future of Southern Ridges

One aspect of sustainable development adopted by NParks is the Forest of Giant trees project sponsored by SembCorp Industries. In this project, over 600 giant trees native to the Southeast Asian region were planted. The trees are expected to reach their full height in 50 years’ time. The Government is also constructing the Labrador Nature and Coastal Walk which is an extension of the Southern Ridges, linking the Southern Ridges and Waterfront. It is expected to be completed in 2012. Singaporeans can look forward to a variety of experiences with nature, including a mangrove trail with rich biodiversity and a coastal boardwalk with breathtaking waterfront views along the entire stretch of Keppel Bay (URA, 2010).

7. Conclusion

It is important that Singapore continues and strengthen its’ efforts in biodiversity conversation through ecotourism and sustainable development to educate the public and combat environmental issues such as climate change, global warming and pollution. Appropriately managed and supported by all stakeholders, these efforts aim to bring about quality living for our current and future generations.
REFERENCES


