Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development Illustrated in the Case of Switzerland

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SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ILLUSTRATED IN THE CASE OF SWITZERLAND

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The concept of sustainable mountain tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for future generations (WTO, 2001). The principles of sustainable tourism development are composed of environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. In order to be successful in the long-term, an equilibrium among these three dimensions must be established (Samy & El-Barmelgy, 2005). The Swiss Federal Council established a general framework for its Sustainable Development Strategy 2000, which is used in this paper to show successful policymaking in this area. Furthermore, policy priorities, recommendations, challenges, and successful strategies for sustainable mountain tourism development are discussed. This paper also attempts to answer the question of how Switzerland is able to achieve sustainable mountain tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism development has become an increasingly popular field of research since the late 1980s. According to Liu (2003), the concept of sustainability has its origins in environmentalism, which became important in the 1970s. Dax (2002) points out that mountain ecosystems are rapidly changing. The fast pace of globalization, urbanization, and mass tourism are threatening mountain communities and the resources they depend on. Thus, worldwide, mountain areas face increasing marginalization, economic decline, and environmental degradation. On the human side, there is widespread poverty among mountain inhabitants and loss of indigenous knowledge. As a result, most global mountain areas are experiencing environmental degradation. Hence, the proper management of mountain resources and socio-economic development of the people requires immediate action.

THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE (MOUNTAIN TOURISM) DEVELOPMENT

The idea of sustainable development was first emphasized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in its *World Conservation Strategy* in 1980. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission Report defined sustainable development as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Though no universally accepted understanding of sustainable tourism development exists, the Brundtland Report first defined it. Keeping this definition in mind, different governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and researchers tried to come up with their own definitions, each with its own focus. Table 1, which is based on Thierstein, Walser (2000) and Schleicher-Tappeser et al. (1998), compares the contents of these basic definitions that were broken down into their concrete components and assigned to five different aspects of sustainable development, i.e. environment, economy, society, processes/decision-making systems, and ethics (see Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of the Components of Different Definitions of Sustainability

System	Goals				
	Environment	*Economy*	*Society*	*Processes*	*Ethics*
Brundtland report	Sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."				
WTO, WTTC, EarthCouncil (1995)	Sustainable tourism is "envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems".		The active contribution of tourism to sustainable development necessarily presupposes the solidarity, mutual respect and participation of all the actors, both public and private, implicated in the process, and must be based on efficient cooperation mechanisms at all levels: local, national, regional and international.		Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.
EU Strategy of sustainable tourism	The growing of tourism should no longer refer in a damage of nature or use resources, it avoids negative effects or reduces them to the minimum.		Involvement of all stakeholders		Tourism should bring economically and socially balanced benefits.
Alp convention, Tourism	Environmentally-compatible tourism	Promote competitiveness of alpine regions in tourism, consider the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development		Knowledge sharing, joint programs to promote the quality of tourism	
Sustainable development strategy 2002	Areas of natural importance and biodiversity are to be preserved. The consumption of renewable resources is to be kept below the regeneration level The consumption of non-renewable resources. Any impact of emissions and toxic substances on the natural environment and human health are to be reduced to a safe level.	Development is sustainable if prosperity and the capacity for economic development are preserved. (maintain income and employment, capital should at least be maintained and show qualitative improvement, Economic competitiveness and the capacity for innovation are to be improved.	Human health and safety are to be comprehensively protected, education is to be provided, ensuring individual development and identity. Culture is to be promoted, together with the preservation and development of the social values and resources that make up social capital.	Transparent decision-making involving a variety of parties should ensure that the concerns of sustainable development are considered to the greatest possible extent in political resolutions.	Equal rights and legal security are to be guaranteed for all, with particular attention to equal rights for women and men, equal rights and protection for minorities, and respect for human rights. intergenerational outlook (measures must address long-term problems or trends)

Thierstein, A., & Walser, M. (2000). The Sustainable Region: A Model for Action. Institute for Public Services and Tourism Contributions to the Regional Economy, Vol. 1. Berne, Switzerland; Stuttgart, Germany; and Vienna, Austria. Schleicher-Tappeser, R., Lukesch, R., Strati, F., Sweeney, G. P., & Thierstein, A. (1998). Instruments for Sustainable Regional Development. The INSURED Project – Final Report. EURES Report 9.

In addition to these definitions, the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2001) adds the following:

> Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.

The United Nations University (UNU) Mountain Project played a key role in bringing sustainable mountain development to a focus of international attention. Jansky and Furuyashiki (2002) state that it resulted in the UN General Assembly designating the year 2002 as the International Year of Mountains. In addition, the UNU Mountain Project provided the lead for gaining the high priority status for mountain ecosystem problems during the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 that resulted in the primary chapter of the Earth Summit, Agenda 21 (Chapter 13: Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development). Kohler and Byers (1999) point out that this document was a great step forward towards realizing the significance of the world's mountains. That chapter states that the fate of the mountains may affect more than half of the world's population, and that particular attention should be paid to mountain resources, especially water and biodiversity.

When looking at sustainable tourism, Liu (2003) states that it is important to examine the role of tourism demand and the nature of tourism resources, as well as the importance of intra-generational equity, the role of tourism in promoting socio-cultural growth, the measurement of sustainability, and finally the forms of sustainable development. Furthermore, Prosser (1994) stresses the following four powers of social change that drive the search for sustainable tourism: the dissatisfaction with existing products; growing environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity; the realization by destination regions of the precious resources they possess and their vulnerability; and the changing attitude of developers and tour operators. Sustainability has been widely viewed as holding considerable promise as an instrument for addressing the problems of negative tourism impacts and maintaining its long-term feasibility. Cater (1993) further identifies three key objectives for sustainable tourism: meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term, satisfying the demands of a growing number of tourists and preserving the natural environment in order to achieve both of the preceding aims. There needs to be, as Farrell (1999) points out, a smooth and transparent integration of economy, society and environment. Furthermore, it is a misleading notion to assume that ecotourism - which Ceballos-Lascurain (1996) defines as environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed or protected natural areas - can be the path to sustainable development. It is precisely these remote and pristine areas which eco-tourists seek that are extremely fragile and sensitive to human impact, and most susceptible to cultural disruption and environmental degradation. As a result, none of the forms of alternative tourism can be relied on as the way for promoting a sustainable and growing tourism industry in Switzerland as well as worldwide.

As Kohler and Byers (1999) state, tourism affects mountains in many ways. Economically, tourist resorts in mountains directly depend on their customers. There are direct and indirect benefits to many sectors and communities inside and outside the resort areas. However, a considerable share of tourism revenue spreads to areas outside the mountains. In addition, tourist activities have biophysical impacts. For example, paths and ski runs may modify sensitive Alpine areas, tourists have known impacts along mountain trails, and wildlife may be disturbed. On the social and cultural side, tourists may disrupt traditions, influence mountain communities by their number and lifestyles, and attract service providers from outside the mountains to become permanent residents in mountain resorts. These negative impacts have to be counterbalanced against positive influences, including economic benefits.

The promotion of tourism in mountains is based on special features that are attractive for tourism. Among these are the clean, cool air, the varied topography, and the scenic beauty of mountains and cultural landscapes. Moreover, tourism offers a great variety of opportunities.

Tourist activities in mountain regions include swimming, walking, visiting towns and national parks, skiing, snowboarding, carving, bird-watching, diving, and a number of new extreme trend sports that have developed in the last few years such as bungee jumping, hang-gliding, paragliding, river rafting, and mountaineering. Long recognized as places of sanctuary and spiritual renewal, mountains will become even more attractive as places of escape in a rapidly urbanizing world. In long-established mountain tourist regions in the Andes, the Alps, the Rocky Mountains, or the Himalayas, tourism provides up to 90 percent of regional income. Tourism has therefore greatly improved access, communication and infrastructure, and levels of education in previously remote, resource poor areas plagued by problems of survival and out-migration.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Samy and El-Barmelgy (2005) state that the principles of sustainable tourism development are composed of environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. In order to be successful in the long-term, a sustainable balance must be established between these three dimensions. This leads the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, important ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems. In the literature reviewed, several sets of principles for sustainable tourism development have been proposed. Most of those sets refer to aspects involving local communities, sustainable use of the resources, planning for tourism, as well as promoting information and research. Table 2, which is based on Eber (1992), shows the ten principles of sustainable tourism development that are built on four key pillars.
These principles build the foundation and provide direct value to sustainable tourism development and were produced to coincide with the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and aim to influence polices and programs adopted to attempt sustainable tourism development.

TOURISM DATA FOR SWITZERLAND

According to the second annual Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 released by the World Economic Forum, Switzerland has currently the most attractive environment for developing the travel and tourism industry in the world. This is due to the country's exceptional geographic location and its assets, both natural and man-made. The Alps are still the main attraction, but urban tourism and convention-related tourism have become more important in recent years. Moreover, as indicated by the World Economic Forum, Switzerland is number one in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2009), followed by Austria and Germany, the same as in the TTCI 2007 and 2008 Report. The TTCI measures the factors and policies that make it attractive to develop the Travel & Tourism sector in different countries. It is composed of the following 14 pillars of travel and tourism competitiveness: 1. Policy rules and regulations; 2. Environmental sustainability; 3. Safety and security; 4. Health and hygiene; 5. Prioritization of travel and tourism; 6. Air transport infrastructure; 7. Ground transportation infrastructure; 8. Tourism infrastructure; 9. Information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure; 10. Price competitiveness; 11. Human capital; 12. Affinity for travel and tourism; 13. Natural resources; and 14. Cultural resources.

Table 2: Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development

Pillars	Principles	Concept
Economic Sustainability	1- Maintaining Diversity	Maintaining and promoting natural, social, and cultural diversity is essential for long-term sustainable tourism and creates a resilient base for the industry.
	2- Supporting Local Economies	Tourism that supports a wide range of local economic activities and which takes environmental costs and values into account both protects those economies and avoids environmental damage.
	3- Marketing Tourism Responsibly	Marketing that provides tourists with full and responsible information increases respect for the natural, social and cultural environments of destination areas and enhances customer satisfaction.
Ecological Sustainability	4- Using Resources Sustainably	The conservation and sustainable use of resources - natural, social, and cultural is crucial and makes long-term business sense.
	5- Reducing Over-Consumption and Waste	Reduction of over-consumption and waste avoids the costs of restoring long-term damage and contributes to the quality of tourism. Adequacy relates to the capacity of the existing infrastructure to handle the waste generated and the right method of treatment.
Cultural Sustainability	6- Training Staff	Staff training, which integrates sustainable tourism into work practices along with recruitment of local personnel at all levels, improves the quality of the tourism product.
	7- Undertaking Research	On-going research and monitoring by the industry using effective data collection and analysis is essential to help solve problems and to bring benefits to destinations, the industry, and consumers.
Local Communities' Sustainability	8- Integrating Tourism Into Planning	Tourism development, which is integrated into a national and local strategic planning framework, undertakes environmental impact assessments, and increases the long-term viability of tourism. Integrated planning is also about good coordination and liaison between the various agencies involved in making decisions that affect the area.
	9- Involving Local Communities	The full involvement of local communities in the tourism sector not only benefits them and the environment in general but also improves the quality of the tourism experience.
	10-Consulting Stakeholders and the Public	Consultation between the tourism industry and local communities, organizations, and institutions is essential if they are to work alongside each other and resolve potential conflicts of interest.

Eber, S. (1992). Beyond the Green Horizon: A Discussion Paper on Principles for Sustainable Tourism. London, United Kingdom: WWF and Tourism Concern.

The TTCI 2009 Report from the World Economic Forum (2009) mentions that Switzerland is rich in cultural and natural resources, and includes an impressive number of World Heritage cultural and natural sites for a country of its size. A large percentage of the country's land area is protected (ranked 16th in the world), and the natural environment is assessed as being among the most pristine in the world (ranked 9th). This natural heritage is supported by a strong national focus on environmental sustainability: Switzerland is ranked second overall on this pillar, based on strong and well-enforced environmental legislation, with a particular focus on developing the Travel & Tourism sector sustainably. In addition to being gifted with features that make it an

attractive leisure tourism destination, Switzerland is also an important business travel hub with many international fairs and exhibitions held in the country each year. Staffing of the industry is also facilitated by the availability of qualified labor to work in Travel & Tourism (ranked 3rd) as well as excellent education and training, with many of the best hotel management schools in the world. Added to these strengths is Switzerland's excellent ground transportation infrastructure (ranked 1st worldwide), with top-quality roads and railroads and an excellent domestic transportation network. Also well assessed is the tourism infrastructure (ranked 7th), with readily available hotel rooms and ATMs for cash withdrawals. Such high-quality infrastructure makes a tourist's stay in the country easy and comfortable. This experience is reinforced by the high level of general safety and security (ranked 8th). For more information from the TTCI 2009 Report, please see Appendices B and C.

SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SWITZERLAND

Protected area tourism has long been a tradition in the Alpine countries and goes back to the beginning of the last century when the first Alpine national park in Engadin, Switzerland was founded in 1914 (Siegrist, 2004). Self-sustaining ecologies, societies, and economies in the Alpine regions are essential for cultural and landscape preservation as well as for continuing development. Thus, as Johnsen, Umbach-Daniel, and Schnell (2003) point out, particular attention must be paid to regional economic development and the role of tourism. In many Swiss Alpine regions, tourism is a very important economic factor for local people and may even be the only source of primary income from outside the region. It is further assumed that the importance of tourism for economic development in the Alpine regions will increase in the future. Thus, the dependence of tourism on the quality of the natural environment leads the national government and the tourism industry to focus increasingly on environmental protection. Thus, "sustainable tourism" is not a new type of tourism but is seen as a management process. For a region like the Alps, the important issue is to plan and shape tourism in such a way that the focus is not only on the economic implications of tourism, but also on how it affects the inhabitants and the man-made and natural environment.

Johnsen, Umbach-Daniel, and Schnell (2003) further state that the Alpine regions generally face different requirements within the context of sustainability and tourism. When looking at the socio-economic and socio-cultural aspect for a vacation region, it is vital that tourism generates adequate and lasting added-value for a region. The economic value of regional resources such as the workforce, land, and capital can be calculated based on the discounted, future net added-value of a region. However, this static outlook is not sufficient anymore, and a dynamic perspective on sustainable regional development is needed, which emphasizes the ability of a region to innovate and learn as well as adjust to new challenges. Interaction and networking between actors encourages both learning and innovation. Tourism is a strongly integrated regional system. This system includes the integration of various economic sectors that are relevant to the tourism industry. It considers various types of tourism and activity cycles such as tourists who spend the day and those who stay the night, arrivals and departures, stays, and local activities. As a result, looking at sustainable tourism development from a purely industry-specific point of view will not be successful. Thus, the most relevant issues in the area of tourism and environmental sustainability are changes to the landscape caused by the tourist infrastructure such as ski slopes, mountain railways, golf courses, transport facilities, vacation houses, etc. There is also the related loss of pure natural areas, emissions caused by traffic (exhaust), noise

and destruction of biotopes as well as energy consumption and the associated emissions. Secondary issues include waste removal, water supply (also for snow making machines), and sewage treatment. The latter is also important in the context of water run-offs.

As Owen and Maggio (2000) point out, the Federal Law on Assistance Regarding Investments in Mountain Areas, or Swiss Mountain Law of 1974, which was revised in 1998, aims at improving mountain conditions through investments in infrastructure, equipment projects, and land acquisition intended for industry, crafts, and trades. It also seeks to offer subsidies for community development projects, especially those concerning communications, roads, water pipes and treatment, waste disposal, schools, professional training, leisure, public health, culture, and sports. Subsidies for acquisition of land rights to support crafts and trades are given exclusively to municipalities and local NGOs. It is important to mention that the Swiss law is directed at the domestic "regional" level, which is defined as a group of municipalities closely tied geographically and economically. Regions are therefore to be delineated according to cultural similarities and to be in line with regional planning. A region's demographic evolution, long-term capacities, and collective infrastructure are the main criteria for determining whether its development will be encouraged and assisted.

GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN SWITZERLAND

In an effort to involve as many policy areas as possible in the sustainable development process, the Swiss Federal Council (2002) invited all federal agencies to participate in elaborating a strategy. A general framework was established for the 2002 Strategy, covering the following key points: (1) Equilibrium between the three pillars of sustainable development (economy, society, and environment); (2) Attention to both domestic and foreign policy concerns; (3) A practical and results-oriented approach (a concrete action plan); (4) A primarily wide-ranging strategy, i.e. not confined to a small number of policy areas; (5) Within individual areas, rigorous selection of measures according to the following criteria: a) New measures (no policies already in effect or approved by the Federal Council); b) Integrational perspective (measures must address long-term problems or trends); c) Importance (measures requiring action by the Federal Council); and d) Integration (environmental, economic, and social dimensions). In short, the policy is based on the involvement of cantons, communes, civil society and the private sector.

Guidelines for the Federal Council's policy are based firstly on the principles protected in the provisions of the new Federal Constitution that was adopted in 1999. The Preamble to the new Constitution refers, for example, to the responsibility of the Swiss people and the cantons (equivalent to individual states in the U.S.) towards future generations. In addition, Article 2 defines the overarching purpose of the Confederation, which includes the promotion of common welfare, sustainable development, inner cohesion, and cultural diversity, as well as efforts to safeguard the long-term conservation of natural resources and to promote a peaceful and just international order. The promotion of sustainable development is thus acknowledged to be one of the national objectives of the Confederation. Furthermore, according to Article 73 of the Constitution, sustainability, which imposes a binding requirement for action on all levels of government, the Confederation, and the cantons are to strive to establish a durable equilibrium between nature and its capacity for renewal on the one hand and its use by humans on the other hand (Swiss Federal Council, 2002).

Secondly, the guidelines for the Federal Council's policy are based on the three-dimensional concept of sustainable development that emerged from the Rio Conference in 1992,

encompassing the economy, society, and the environment. The definition of sustainable development that the Federal Council still holds binding is that which was formulated by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, with the Rio Conference in mind, and named after the Commission's Chairwoman – the Brundtland definition. It has been mentioned earlier in this paper (see The Concepts of Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development). Underlying this definition is an ethical and philosophical position in which full control over the future is replaced by a responsibility towards the future, based on intergenerational and interregional equity. Responsibility towards the future requires an ethical system in which rights and obligations are balanced between partners and partner nations of equal status. Conflicts of interest should be settled according to the orders of legitimate claims rather than those of the distribution of power. Responsibility and the safeguarding of interests form the ethical basis of a sustainable and forward-looking policy. For the Federal Council, this applies to external as well as domestic relations. Sustainable development is thus comparable to other fundamental ethical concepts such as that of liberty, which are not open to definitive definitions, but have to be interpreted and specified again in the relevant historical context. Sustainable development is thus understood as a "regulative idea," an ongoing challenge, which should inspire the social process of learning and structuring (Swiss Federal Council, 2002).

As the Swiss Federal Council (2002) in its report about Sustainable Development Strategy 2002 states, sustainable development involves three target dimensions: environmental responsibility, economic efficiency, and social solidarity. The goals to be pursued in each case can be determined using the criteria given in the Table 3.

When specific policies are defined, proper consideration must be given to all three aspects of sustainability. Sustainable development should not be equated with environmental protection, but be perceived as a political agenda, which is concerned with guaranteeing that development is viable in the long term, addressing environmental, economic, and social challenges equally. The aim of according equal status to the three dimensions of sustainability is also reflected in the measures proposed by the 2002 Strategy. Furthermore, besides recognizing the individual characteristics of the dimensions of sustainable development, integrating sustainable development into all policy areas is important. Thus, a holistic approach, i.e. the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development is the goal. Therefore, policies oriented largely towards economic aspects should increasingly fulfill their social and environmental responsibilities and vice versa. To ensure compliance with this guideline, the Federal Council is promoting a cross-sectional approach for the present strategy, with measures being developed in interagency and interdepartmental working groups (Swiss Federal Council, 2002).

In addition, the strategy of the Federal Council (2002) mentions that not only should all policy areas be geared towards the requirements of sustainable development, but coordination between the various sectors needs to be improved as well. Through liaison and conflict management, the aim should be to optimize processes and develop synergies, e.g. between technological development, environmental protection, and economic growth. By promoting innovation, offering incentives, and making sure that innovative forces are nurtured, new technologies can be developed that require fewer natural resources, reduce both the impact on the environment and risks to health and safety, and also create competitive advantages in the economic sectors concerned. In short, if sustainable development is to be achieved, the three target dimensions need to be considered at an early stage and problems need to be tackled in an interdisciplinary manner in the interests of viable long-term solutions. In the process, conflicts should be discussed openly and value judgments explained. Environmental, economic, and social

dimensions are to be taken into account in the fulfillment of all tasks. This means that the three key sustainability factors need to be weighed up continuously.

Table 3: Three Target Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Target Dimension of Environmental Responsibility	Areas of natural importance and biodiversity are to be preserved The consumption of renewable resources is to be kept below the level of regeneration or natural replenishment
	The consumption of non-renewable resources (e.g. fossil fuels, raw materials) is to be kept below the level of the potential increase in renewable resources Any impact of emissions and toxic substances on the natural environment (water, soil, air, climate) and human health are to be reduced to a safe level The impact of environmental disasters is to be reduced and environmental risks are only to be accepted to the extent that no permanent damage, outlasting a generation, would be caused
Target Dimension of Economic Efficiency	Levels of income and employment are to be maintained and increased, as required, with due consideration being given to socially and geographically acceptable distribution It should be possible for productive capital, based on social and human capital, to be at least maintained and to show qualitative improvement Economic competitiveness and the capacity for innovation has to be improved Market mechanisms (pricing) should be the primary economic determinants, with due consideration being given to scarcity factors and external costs The public sector is not to be managed at the expense of future generations (e.g. debt, failure to preserve assets)
Target Dimension of Social Solidarity	Human health and safety are to be comprehensively protected and promoted Education is to be provided, ensuring individual development and identity Culture is to be promoted, together with the preservation and development of the social values and resources that constitute social capital Equal rights and legal security are to be guaranteed for all, with particular attention to equal rights for women and men, equal rights and protection for minorities, and respect for human rights Solidarity is to be promoted within and between generations and also at the global level

The strategy of the Federal Council (2002) states that sustainable development is not merely a task for official bodies or the federal government alone. In view of the challenges existing today, sustainable development is a task for all institutions and individuals. The burden is not just on the federal government, but also on the cantons, communes, and towns. Other parities in society such as NGOs, economic stakeholder groups, companies, and churches, are urged to take initiative, take part in the debate, and develop appropriate activities. The Federal Council remains aware that one of the federal government's responsibilities is to set an example, e.g. in its own procurement activities. In Switzerland, numerous problems can only be constructively solved through close cooperation between the three levels of government. A Federal Council strategy confined exclusively to federal policy would therefore be inadequate. Cooperation with the cantons, towns, and other communes is essential. In order to involve especially the cantons, towns, and regions more effectively, a Sustainable Development Forum was established in 2001, in which the federal government, all the cantons, and the larger towns participate. With a view of implementation of the Federal Council's 2002 Strategy, this body is designed to be a platform for achieving sustainable development at the cantonal and municipal level.

Byers (1995) mentions that mountain environments deserve special consideration in development policy. While the last two decades have seen a steady increase in global attention to mountain regions, mountains have yet to be firmly integrated into the conservation and development agenda. She goes on to propose the following policy priorities for sustainable mountain development, which are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Policy Priorities for Sustainable Mountain Development

Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies and Donors
- Decentralize decision-making and control of resources
- Place mountains and its inhabitants firmly on the development agenda
- Promote international cooperation to reduce armed conflicts, to encourage environmental conservation, and to increase the free flow of information regarding mountain regions
- Integrate women fully
- Lengthen funding cycles and assist in transitioning good programs
- Increase the weight placed on ecological, social, and grassroots input to investment decisions
- Strengthening partnerships with nongovernmental organizations

National Governments
- Decentralize across the political, economic, and social service sectors
- Recognize the unique characteristics of mountain regions and peoples in formulating national policy
- Support grassroots community organizations
- Increase community control over local resources and access to secure land tenure
- Balance national economic interests with national environmental goals and basic needs of mountain populations
- Carefully assess impacts of large infrastructure projects and extractive industries on mountain environments
- Integrate women fully
- Strengthen partnerships with nongovernmental organizations
- Develop cooperative agreements with neighboring nations to protect transboundary mountain regions

AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SWITZERLAND

A good example of striking a balance in community-based mass tourism in Switzerland can be seen in Grindelwald. Kohler and Byers (1999) state that on peak days in summer and winter, the 4,000 inhabitants of the valley of Grindelwald host up to 20,000 tourists from the Swiss lowlands and from all over the world. Six to eight generations ago, the ancestors of today's inhabitants were suffering from severe poverty. Increasing population pressure and decreasing prices for agricultural products meant that the local community could no longer be sustained by traditional Alpine farming. Thus, many poor families were forced to leave their farms and migrate to the industrialized centers or overseas. That situation started to change when the urban elite of Europe discovered nature and culture in the Alps. Mountain settings, which have previously been perceived as hostile, were now regarded positively in terms of their scenic and scientific value. In addition, the interaction between Alpine inhabitants and their environment was idealized as an alternative to the unnatural urban life. The valley of Grindelwald was an outstanding example of this new perspective and against this background developed one of the first tourist resorts.

During the second half of the 19th century, the valley experienced an initial boom in tourism due to the growth in new tourist activities such as mountaineering and winter sports. This boom resulted in significant accommodation and transportation infrastructure and created employment for local people. However, outsiders from the Swiss lowlands and from abroad controlled the development. The First World War prevented the tourists, who were predominately wealthy and foreign, from visiting the Alps, leading to a total collapse of tourism in Grindelwald. After the war, some development resumed, but tourism did not recover until the 1950s. Yet, this long phase of stagnation was crucial to Grindelwald's further development. Diversification was in demand, with tourists from a wider range of socio-economic strata and origins with the proportion of domestic demand increasing. Moreover, the tourist services were taken over by local people, so the community gained control over the sector.

Nonetheless, increased local control did not prevent an unplanned and growing development of infrastructure, settlement, and tourist supplies when Grindelwald, like many other Alpine resorts, experienced a second boom shortly after the Second World War. There was continuous growth of mass tourism for almost three decades, resulting in a series of negative ecological, economic, and social impacts. An evaluation of these impacts showed that they could be kept in a positive balance, mainly due to the close links and interactions between a traditionally oriented Alpine farming sector and an indigenously controlled tourist sector.

Tourism nowadays constitutes the economic basis and is the major source of wealth for the local community, while agriculture provides its cultural basis and maintains high environmental quality. Recognizing these facts, Grindelwald formulated binding policy guidelines and concrete measures in the late 1980s in order to maintain a positive balance between the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of local development based on mass tourism.

During the 1990s, growth in tourism was unsteady, and there were considerable uncertainties relating to trends in tourism demand and the changing conditions for agriculture in terms of markets and subsidies. As a result, the balance struck in local policy guidelines has had to be continuously modified based on the two key lessons learned from two centuries of tourism development in Grindelwald. First, the potential for diversification within tourism has to be maintained in order to respond to unpredictable changes in the demands and attitudes of tourists. Second, local people must maintain a high degree of socio-political and economic autonomy in order to achieve sustainable community based mass tourism.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustainable tourism is a vital part of overall sustainable development. Now more than ever, there is a need to further consider the importance of sustainable tourism in the context of the development plans for the 21st century. Based on the concepts discussed earlier, Samy and El-Barmelgy (2005) identify the following three stages for achieving sustainable tourism development: (1) Integrated planning – Alpine tourism developments should be compatible and integrated with other activities and requirements of the region, local communities, local infrastructure, tourism needs, and environmental and management plans for the area. This will help protect fragile environmental resources and sites of cultural significance and help deal with the increasing effects of tourism growth. (2) Local community – Alpine tourism developers should consult and negotiate with the community in the pre- and post-application stages to alleviate or accommodate community concerns, and thus, gain wide community support. At the same time, local communities must play a major role in deciding what tourism product in their

communities should be developed. (3) Monitoring – both the construction and operational phases of development must be monitored and evaluated. While a development may appear to be ecologically sustainable in the early phases, environmental degradation may be slowly occurring. Thus, monitoring projects is essential to be successful (see also Appendix A).

Another way to achieve more sustainability in tourism is to implement standards and use them as a tool. Font (2004) states that standards can be used by the industry to improve their performance and communication to clients. Tour operators are more likely than individual tourists to promote standards and implement them through supply chain management to ensure that their suppliers reach desired product quality. At present, the large tour operators such as Kuoni and Hotelplan in Switzerland have developed environmental standards backed by training materials to assist and encourage improvements in performance by their accommodation suppliers. Thus, to address the negative impact of tourism, tour operators need to successfully integrate environmental, social, and economic principles into their business practices.

Every mountain community includes a great diversity of individuals and groups such as citizens, entrepreneurs, communal groups, and officials. Each has its specific interests in the local economy and resources on which it depends, with or without tourism. Kohler and Byers (1999) state that in order to provide a flexible and broad portfolio of services, community members need to recognize the diversity of multiple and changing demands in tourism. Strategic positioning is key and must be done in the context of a specific local image based on unique environmental and cultural assets. It should be linked to activities that build on local knowledge and traditions to ensure that tourists respect the natural and cultural diversity of the places they visit. Tourism constitutes part of a diverse local economy. Other economic sectors must be maintained, recognizing that tourism is a business that is usually seasonal and typically unpredictable over the longer term. Income from tourism should be reinvested not only in tourism, but also in other elements of a sustainable economy and environment. The challenges for mountain communities are to maintain a stake in tourism, diversify the local economy, and think and invest beyond tourism. In their policies on mountain tourism, national governments need to recognize the specificities and constraints of mountain conditions, and also the potential complementarities between mountain and other destinations. Decentralized and participatory decision-making is called for in this regard. As mountain tourism is linked to many other economic sectors, consistent sectoral and regional policies are required to address it. Thus, a significant proportion of the revenues from mountain tourism, especially those occurring outside mountain regions, should be reinvested not only because of tourism but also to ensure long term sustainable livelihoods for people who live in the mountains. All of these actions require sufficient, accessible, consistent, and clear information. The challenge for national governments is to develop and communicate reliable sectoral and regional policies that include tourism and reinvest tourism revenue in sustainable mountain development. In addition, for the tourism industry, the challenge is to work with local communities and governments. Those involved in the (inter)national tourism business could internalize concepts of sustainability, both environmental and socio-cultural, in their practices in mountain regions. The challenges for the tourism industry is to promote regional and domestic tourism, acknowledge responsibility, and act to enhance compatibility between tourism and sustainability in mountains, as well as to respect local populations and accept them as equal partners and communicate this respect to tourists.

Owen and Maggio (2000) make the following recommendations for sustainable development in mountain areas such as the Alps. They are summarized in Table 5:

Table 5: Recommendation for Sustainable Mountain Development

At All Levels	Recognize the importance of mountain ecosystems Support and protect peoples' rights and cultures Improve the well-being of mountain communities Ensure local participation Be sensitive to gender issues Make vertical and horizontal linkages Build public interest law capacities Promote legal education
At an International Level	Develop an international instrument Create mountain-specific protocols Strengthen regional policy frameworks Build transboundary cooperation
At a National Level	Build on and support traditional and indigenous institutions and mechanisms Recognize traditional and indigenous community-based property rights Apply full cost pricing of resources Create a separate integrated policy that addresses all goods and services produced in mountain areas Target development assistance Enact zoning laws Conserve ecosystems Establish a legal framework for protecting sacred sites Protect intellectual property rights of local populations Disseminate information to inhabitants of mountain communities
At a Local Level	Challenge mountain inhabitants and their communities Recognition and appreciation of the indigenous cultures

Moreover, Byers (1995) mentions the following successful strategies for mountain development:

- Understand the local context
- Establish and maintain a cooperative working relationship with government
- Strengthen community organizations
- Build local commitment and encourage local control over development decisions
- Secure access to resources
- Apply an integrated approach
- Focus on small-scale production systems
- Integrate women fully
- Monitor and evaluate sustainable mountain tourism development

The question is: How is Switzerland able to achieve sustainable mountain tourism development in the Alps? Besides those successful strategies mentioned by Byers, and the recommendations by Owen and Maggio above, the author suggests the following feasible options for sustainable mountain development: The basis for success is to have the support of the scientific community that shows the importance of the mountains as an ecosystem. A next step would be to protect those areas by enacting laws. The same is true for inhabitants' rights as well as their cultures that can be protected by laws enacted by the federal government, the cantons, as well as the local

communities. The intellectual property rights of the local population can be respected by giving them a voice, listening to them, and informing them about issues in their region. Town meetings where locals can inform themselves and give input on (tourism) development projects are good options, too. Voting on bigger issues is certainly a viable option as well. Thus, it is important to ensure that the local population is part of the decision making process. This will strengthen their interest in their communities. Local participation in decisions can also be ensured by grassroots organizations and the full integration of women. In order to improve the well-being of the mountain communities, funding from the government needs to be made available. More importantly, the revenues earned from tourism and farming in the mountain communities need to be re-invested in those very same areas. With the money earned those communities can create education systems, improve their infrastructure, including roads and railway systems. It also enables them to support themselves, at least to a certain degree. The mountains in Switzerland border mainly France and Italy – both European Union (EU) members. This leads Switzerland to seek cooperation with EU countries and their policies on sustainable (mountain tourism) development.

To combat the steady movement of indigenous mountain inhabitants to low laying urban areas in the country, the federal government needs to support those people, so they continue not only to maintain tourism in mountain areas, but also their farming, cheese making, and raising cattle, for example. This could be achieved by giving agricultural subsidies to the local population, which would also compensate them for a more expensive process of making (non-mass produced) products. Subsidies would allow farmers to compete with bigger producers in terms of their goods and services produced. In addition, in order to protect the nature and beauty of the mountains, strict zoning laws need to be made and enforced. This allows certain areas to remain free of sprawl and the people who come with it. In short, the federal government needs to ensure through laws that mountain communities are being preserved and that the nature is being protected from mass tourism and large (tourist) developments. Locals need to be further integrated into the decision-making process. Cooperation among countries and different cantons, communities, and towns, as well as their respective policies on sustainable mountain development, needs to be ensured.

Table 7 summarizes outcomes and their respective feasibility in terms of sustainable mountain tourism development in Switzerland. It shows policy makers options that are feasible and effective. The table is broken down into required, desirable, and optional outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In an increasingly urbanized world, mountains are primary tourist destinations not only because of their beauty and their natural and cultural diversity, but also because they provide opportunities to escape from the stresses of modern life. However, as Kohler and Byers (1999) indicate, in the long term, the diversity and attractiveness of the mountains will depend on careful, far sighted and sustainable management of their resources. If this is respected as a basic principle, tourism can provide significant opportunities to maintain the diversity of the mountains and their role as a living space. Moreover, mountain inhabitants have a rich cultural heritage, including traditional practices, buildings, and ways of life.

Table 7: Summary of Outcomes for Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development

Required Outcomes	Support of the scientific community to show the importance of sustainability in the mountains Allow local inhabitants to be part of the decision-making process for tourism development The need for the federal government to give (agricultural) subsidies for community development projects to the local population (e.g. subsides for communication, roads, water pipes and treatment, waste disposal, schools, and public health) Have strict zoning laws that are fully enforced allowing to combat sprawl Reinvest earnings from tourism and farming into the same local communities enabling the creation of education systems, improvement of the infrastructure, etc. Maintain an equilibrium between the three pillars of sustainable development (economy, society, and environment)
Desirable Outcomes	Protection of inhabitants' rights by enacting laws by the federal government and individual cantons Protection of inhabitants' cultures by enacting laws by the federal government and individual cantons Allow input from local inhabitants on sustainable tourism development projects Accommodate community support and gain wide community support by consulting and negotiating with the respective community Fully integrate women into the decision-making process Allow grassroots organizations to be part of the decision-making process Cooperation with EU (border) countries in terms of sustainable mountain (tourism) development Cooperation among cantons, communities, and towns in terms of sustainable mountain (tourism) development Both the construction and operational phases of sustainable tourism development must be monitored and evaluated The need for integrated planning that takes into account other activities and requirements for the region Improve mountain conditions through investments in infrastructure, equipment projects, and land acquisition Integration of economic, environmental, and social dimensions
Optional Outcomes	Inform local people about (tourism) development projects Allow local population to vote on issues concerning development projects in the region

One key element of this heritage is recognized by the existence of many sacred places in mountains, not only for pilgrims, but also for local people. The cultural heritage of mountains is often threatened by tourism, yet tourism can also provide opportunities for people who live in the mountains to maintain their specific identity and to inform and educate tourists about their heritage. In the long term, cultural heritage is a key element of the attractiveness of mountain regions for tourists. Thus, tourists should be made aware of this heritage, which must not be sacrificed for short-term benefits.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that many facets of the tourism industry, from operators to government agencies, have adapted their operations to practice sustainable tourism. However, whether these have accounted for significant or merely cosmetic changes is debatable. Hardy, Beeton, and Pearson (2002) argue that if any real changes are to be made in terms of sustainability, changes must be made by looking backwards and fixing longstanding problems rather than by building more tourism developments that are sustainable. A danger exists that unless sustainable tourism is demonstrated to be attainable by all stakeholders, it will follow the path of ecotourism, whose popularity has arguably suffered as a result of it being perceived as little more than a marketing label. On the positive side, the context in which sustainable tourism evolved signified a change in people's perceptions of nature, which, in turn, affected economic

development and the nature of the tourism industry. Therefore, it could be argued that the concept of sustainable tourism is real and grounded in the general public. Future concepts of sustainable tourism must address whether it is a process whereby balances should be struck between the environment, economy, and community issues, or whether it is up to the community to decide where the balance should lie. In the context of sustainable tourism, this is a philosophical debate, which requires resolving the potentially conflicting concepts of an empowered community versus balanced decisions being made for the greater good. Thus, more discussion and research is needed to resolve this issue.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - THE STRATEGIC GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ALPINE REGIONS

Careful use, preservation and renewal of the natural landscape and the habitat of a region
Preservation of biological diversity
Minimization of environmental and resource consumption (energy, air, soil, space, water)
Strengthening of development and the developmental capability of the regional economy, particularly tourism
Bolstering competitiveness by increasing the innovative capability of the regional economy, particularly tourism
Healthy public finances should be striven for as the building blocks of sustainable regional and economic development
Tourism should contribute to securing the regional economy in line with the needs of the specific location and its environment and to preserving the cultural landscape
Tourism should contribute in the long-term to positive added-value for the region, thus generating income and creating jobs in the region
Tourism should make an important contribution to maintaining local supply channels and to preserving the "public service" in peripheral regions
Social Capital (IDT): Satisfying the social needs (relationships, quality of life) of the local inhabitants
A just distribution of roles and involvement of all interest groups should be striven for while upholding the principle of gender mainstreaming
The regional population should not become victims of tourism development
Tourism should contribute to the quality of life and to satisfying the socio-cultural needs of the local population
A high quality, innovative, and up-to-date range of services along the entire tourism spectrum should serve to enhance the appeal of a region
Efficient and goal-oriented marketing of the range of tourism services (communication, value for the money, product differentiation, securing market access, branding)
Tourism requires efficient and cooperation-oriented management of tourist organizations (destination management)
Heightened awareness of tourism among the population, which is projected outward
Wide participation of many actors as a prerequisite for long-term learning in the region
Regional and interregional network particularly in the tourism industry
Appropriate institutions and management structures in the regions to strengthen sustainable tourism development
Free access to information and transparent decision-making process as the foundation for good cooperation among the various actors
Efforts are to be made to achieve cohesion from a social, geographic, and time standpoint

Johnsen, J. B., Umbach-Daniel, A., & Schnell, K. D. (2003). Monitoring System for sustainable tourism in Swiss Alpine regions. *In Proceedings of the 43rd Conference of the European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Jyväskylä, Finland, 2003*. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

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APPENDIX B - TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDICATORS – SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND
Key indicators
Population (millions), 2007...7.3
Surface area (1,000 square kilometers) 41.3
Gross domestic product (US$ billions), 2007 ....427.1
Gross domestic product (PPP, US$) per capita, 2007 ....41,264.7
Real GDP growth (percent), 2007...3.3
Environmental Performance Index, 2008 (out of 149 countries).........................1

Travel & Tourism indicators		
T&T industry, 2008 estimates		2009–2018
	Percent of total	annual growth (%, forecast)
GDP (US$ millions)	24,652	5.3 ... 1.8
Employment (1,000 jobs)	316	7.1 ... 1.2
T&T economy, 2008 estimates		
GDP (US$ millions)	58,120	12.6 ... 1.7
Employment (1,000 jobs)	712	16.0 ... 1.0

Source: World Travel & Tourism Council, TSA Research 2008

International tourist arrivals (thousands), 2007.................8.448
International tourism receipts (US$ millions), 2007 12,182
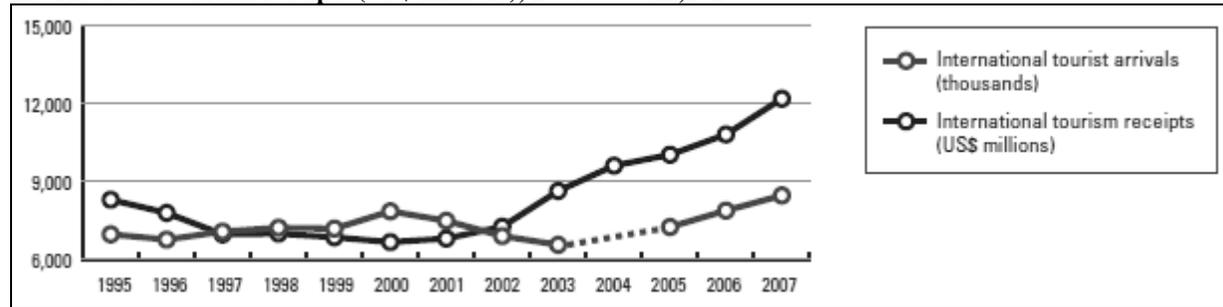
Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization

Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index

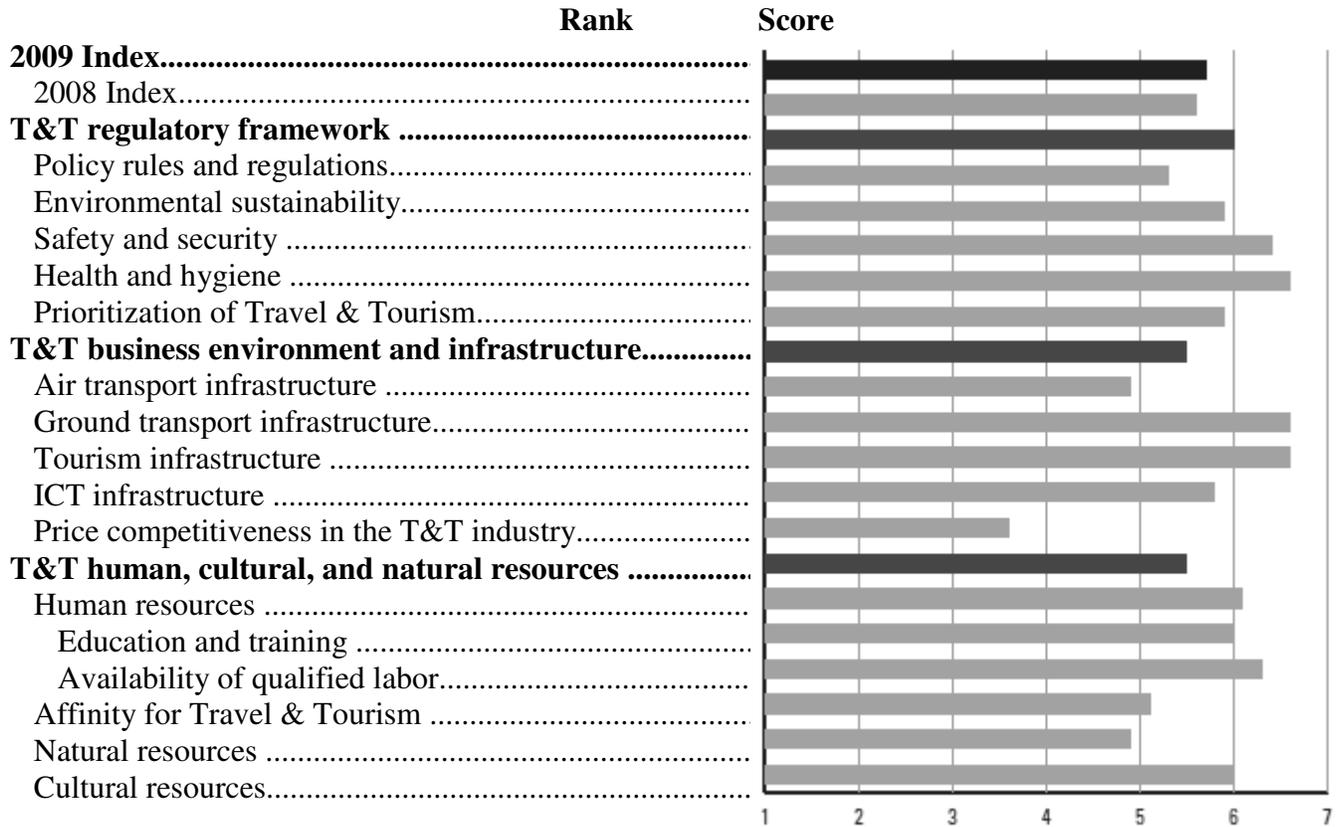|	Rank	Score
2009 Index..		
2008 Index...		
T&T regulatory framework		
Policy rules and regulations..............................		
Environmental sustainability..............................		
Safety and security		
Health and hygiene		
Prioritization of Travel & Tourism....................		
T&T business environment and infrastructure..............		
Air transport infrastructure		
Ground transport infrastructure.........................		
Tourism infrastructure		
ICT infrastructure		
Price competitiveness in the T&T industry......................		
T&T human, cultural, and natural resources		
Human resources		
Education and training		
Availability of qualified labor.......................		
Affinity for Travel & Tourism		
Natural resources		
Cultural resources..		

*Note: For descriptions of variables and detailed sources, please refer to "How to Read Country/Economy Profiles."

Student Profile: Benedikt Schorner

Benedikt Schorner grew up and went to school in Basel, Switzerland where he also obtained an equivalent of an Associate in Business Administration degree. Benedikt graduated with a B.A. in International Relations and minors in Microcomputer Systems and International Business from Grand Valley State University in December 2002 and with a Masters of Education in General Education with emphasis in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), also from Grand Valley in August 2004 prior to obtaining his Master of Public Administration degree with concentrations in Public Management and Urban/Regional Policy and Planning.

Since 2004, Benedikt has been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classes at various institutions of higher education. He would like to get back into the administrative division of institutions of higher education or of government since I enjoy assisting people and do administrative work, which was the reason he decided to pursue his MPA at GVSU.

The courses he liked most in the MPA program were PA 620 - Metropolitan Politics and Administration, PA 690 - Public Administration Internship as well as PA 643 - Strategic Management and Planning, and PA 619 - Management Seminar. The concepts of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and New Urbanism with its mixed use inspired him to get the Urban/Regional Policy and Planning concentration in my MPA. Another course he enjoyed, PA 690, was the internship, which he did at the Village of Spring Lake. Benedikt currently teaches English and ESL at Davenport University, and also works as a Professional Tutor/Assistant Lab Manager in the Open Computer Lab at Grand Rapids Community College. In the future, Benedikt would like to either work for an international organization or non-profit organization using his organizational and language skills.