

## CHALLENGES FACING ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES: THE CASE OF VILLAGE MUSEUM IN TANZANIA

**Noel, B. LWOGA**

*University of Dar es Salaam, 35050, Tanzania*

*Noelight79@gmail.com*

**Bertram B. MAPUNDA**

*University of Dar es Salaam, 35050, Tanzania*

*Mapunda.bertram@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

*Serving people with disabilities is vital to fully attain equality and equity, which are pillars of sustainable tourism development. However, this is not a straightforward endeavour as sites are faced with challenges, including the dilemma of site modification versus the preservation concerns of experts. By drawing largely on the Village Museum site in Tanzania, this study uses the barrier approach to examine the challenges faced by cultural tourism sites in their endeavour to cater for people with disabilities as visitors. By employing mainly a qualitative case study, the study found that, to a certain extent, the site caters for people with disabilities, although inadequate designated facilities are among the challenges that the site faces in its endeavour to cater for people with disabilities, as well as inadequate funds, and lack of personnel skilled in communicating with visitors with disabilities. The barrier approach revealed the presence of doubts about jeopardizing the heritage's authenticity when installing specially designed facilities. The paper recommends that the site and the cultural tourism sector at large takes appropriate measures to address the concerns and barriers that the disabled encounter when visiting the sites. It also provides recommendations for further research.*

**Key words:** *accessible tourism, cultural tourism, Village Museum, people with disabilities.*

**JEL Classification:** *L83;O15;Q30;Q56;Z32.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the past few years special attention has been paid to alternative forms of tourism (such as cultural tourism) to develop sustainable tourism. The democratic changes in global society have introduced the principle of the equality and equity of people as one of the key foundations for sustainable development (Zhelyazkova, Yarkoval et al, 2007). Definitely, such political and social changes create conditions for the tourism sector to consider people with disabilities. The global concern for people with disabilities has been highlighted in the: a) United Nations agreement on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reached on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2006, as the first human rights treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which emphasizes the protection and enhancement of the rights and opportunities of the world's estimated 650 million disabled people; b) Article Seven of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism stresses that people with disabilities should be encouraged and facilitated to participate in tourism; c) the International Bureau of Social Tourism (1997) - Montreal Declaration; d) The Bali Declaration on Barrier-free Tourism for People with Disabilities (2000); and e) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Sustainable Social Development, Disability &

Ageing (Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, Anon.).

As a result of disability movements and global emphasis, most places in the developed world have adopted policies and measures aimed at promoting the rights of people with disabilities, which include their full and equal participation in social activities such as visiting various tourist sites. In the developing world, relatively few tourist places provide access to people confined to wheelchairs, and information to those who are visually and hearing impaired (Zhelyazkova, Yarkoval et al, 2007). However, other countries have made progress in introducing disability-related legislation in different contexts. In Europe and America, the tourist industry has been seeking ways to ensure that its infrastructure, facilities and products are accessible (Darcy and Dickson, 2009). In these continents, the efforts to cater for people with disabilities have culminated in a particular tourism approach, known as accessible tourism, which seeks to address the needs of those wanting to access tourist sites with ease (Darcy and Dickson, 2009). The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (2003) has recognized people with disabilities as an emerging market, and countries such as Australia (Tourism Australia, 2008) have established accessible tourism to provide for that niche.

As a country in sub-Saharan Africa that supports sustainable development, Tanzania adopted the National Policy on Disability (NPD) in 2004 with the aim of providing a conducive environment for people with disabilities to engage in productive work for their development. Disability provisions in Tanzania are also included in the general legislation, such as the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1998, National Employment Promotion Service Act (1999), and the Vocational Education and Training Act (1994). Furthermore, Tanzania passed ‘the Disabled Persons (Care and Maintenance) Act No. 3 of 1982’ which gives legal support, as well as obliging the respective families to provide support to persons with disabilities. Also, the Act provides for the registration of persons with disabilities and institutional settlements operated by local authorities and voluntary organizations. The Act also established the National Fund for Disabled Persons to provide for the maintenance, education, benefit or advancement of disabled persons, to assist any disabled person and financially assist voluntary organizations that provide for the welfare of disabled persons and to assist with the establishment and maintenance of any settlements and other institutions for the disabled (URT, 2004). At the international level, Tanzania is a signatory to the Rights of People with Disabilities (1975), Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), and Plan of Action for the African decade of Persons with Disabilities. It is also a member of the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) (URT, 2004). Unfortunately, with exception of older people, the National Tourism Policy (1999) of Tanzania does not highlight the concerns of people with disabilities at large.

Notwithstanding the country’s efforts and concern for people with disabilities in different aspects, their participation as visitors in tourism, particularly cultural tourism, is limited. Interestingly, disability issues in relation to tourism have received little rightful research attention (if any) in sub-Saharan Africa. Research has dominantly focused on stimulants or the motives of tourists who arrive at a destination, not on the would-be tourist who is left behind (Darcy, 2002). Thus, few studies have considered the point of view of people with disabilities in Europe and America in examining the challenges of their participation in tourism (Darcy, 2004; Darcy and Daruwalla, 1999; Yau et al., 2004). The challenges identified include intrinsic challenges, such as lack of knowledge, negative attitudes and psychological dependency, economic challenges, such as inadequate income, and physical challenges such as architectural and ecological or environmental barriers, access problems and transport barriers (Darcy and Daruwalla, 1999; Smith, 1987; Yau, McKercher et al, 2004). The *barrier approach* to gaining an understanding of the challenges as proposed by Knudson et al. (1995) and Timothy and Boyd (2003)

expands on the physical dimension in the developed world where infrastructure and access are in a relatively good condition. It has unfortunately received limited research attention in the developing country context that lacks the basic infrastructure, facilities and other tourist amenities that are needed to cater for people with disabilities, which creates a dilemma for tourist sites. In addition, the dominant focus on actual and potential tourist perspectives and the limited focus on the cultural heritage site and barriers have limited the understanding of the concerns of conservation experts at the sites have been incorporated to a limited extent when discussing redesigning them to cater for people with disabilities. It is thus unclear whether conservation concerns have been accommodated in the process of catering for people with disabilities at cultural heritage sites. This study, by drawing greatly on the Village Museum Site in Tanzania, sought to examine the challenges facing cultural tourist sites in their endeavour to cater for people with disabilities using the *barrier approach*.

An examination of the challenges facing cultural tourist sites in their endeavour to cater for people with disabilities using the barrier approach may lead to a better understanding of the factors influencing visitors, and further inform the earlier destination image and choice models. The advantage of considering people with disabilities as visitors can result in the government receiving more economic benefits and revenue from tourism. According to the World Health Organization’s formula of 1 in 10 persons being disabled in some way, Tanzania with the population of 34,569,232 (according to 2002 census) is estimated to have 3,346,900 people with disabilities (Ministry of Labour, Youth Development and Sports – United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2004), who may form a notable domestic tourism market segment. What if one considers international visitors with disabilities? It is estimated that more than 600 million people in the world are disabled (about 10% of the global population). Eighty percent (80%) are in developing countries (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1999). Effective participation of people with disabilities in tourism will not only result in economic benefits for the tourist industry, but will also assist in the move towards full social integration, equity, equal human rights, sustainable tourism development and sustainable development in Tanzania and related countries.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is underpinned by the research philosophy which promotes equity, equality and social justice in and through tourism. Furthermore, the study recognizes that serving people with disabilities is vital to fully attain equality and equity, which are pillars of sustainable tourism development. In that regard, the study understands that people with disabilities include the four groups categorized by Harrison (1994): the wheelchair bound, the blind and partially sighted, those with hearing difficulties, and the elderly and less mobile. The study considers that these groups have the right to travel, visit, participate in and enjoy cultural tourist sites and activities. Cultural tourism is conceptualized as experiential tourism based on visiting and being involved in and stimulated by the cultural heritage, such as the performing arts, visual arts, festivals, visiting historic buildings and monuments, museums, sites of important past events like battles, traditional landscape and indigenous wildlife, language, traditional lifestyles including food, drink and sport (du Cros and McKercher, 2015).

The prevailing political and social changes have created conditions for the tourism sector to consider people with disabilities (Zhelyazkova, Yarkova1 et al, 2007). Moreover, equality and equity and the rights of human beings are among the pillars of sustainable tourism development. Notwithstanding this philosophy which promotes dignity, respect, equality and social justice (Richards et al, 2010), disability issues in relation to tourism have not received their rightful attention. Research that has addressed this situation has raised the following economic, physical and attitudinal challenges as being critical (Darcy and Daruwalla, 1999). Economic aspects that limit accessible tourism include inadequate funds, lack of equipment to hire and limited time at sites. Physical aspects include limited access to physical infrastructure, inaccessible accommodation, limited access at the destination or sites and the lack of accurate information and interpretation (Darcy and Daruwalla, 1999). Attitudinal or psychological aspects include intrinsic barriers resulting from the tourist's level of cognitive and psychological functions, such as misconception, fear, insecurity, stereotyping and discrimination. The combined effect of such barriers may reduce the amount of satisfaction and leisure derived from tourism (Darcy and Daruwalla, 1999; Smith, 1987).

When seeking to consider people with disabilities as visitors at the sites, the European Commission (2004) stated that removing unnecessary barriers should be the starting point when thinking about access, that is, using the *barrier or physical approach* which focuses on the physical constraints. Based on the *barrier approach*, promoting accessibility for people with disabilities means that destinations or sites need to make physical changes (European

Commission, 2004). The physical barriers are considered by Knudson et al. (1995) and Timothy and Boyd (2003) to be external and interactive barriers. These barriers are physical and environmental in nature and consist of external limitations resulting from the interaction between the visitor and the immediate surroundings. According to Smith (1987), interactive barriers include skill-challenge incongruities and communication barriers.

Despite the fact that the intrinsic and external barriers complement rather than contradict each other in explaining the challenges of catering for people with disabilities, most of the few available studies on accessible tourism have focused on intrinsic challenges emerging from tourists' point of view. Tackling this research direction, Yau, McKercher et al. (2004) explored the experience of tourism of individuals with mobility or visual impairment and noted that they experience the following challenges in the process of becoming travel active: personal, re-connection, tourism analysis, physical journey, experimentation and reflection. Richards et al. (2010) analyzed the tourism encounters of individuals with vision problems, and identified the positive impacts these can have on their emotional well-being, as well as the challenges they encountered whilst travelling. Although obtaining the point of view of disabled tourists provides useful insights into the challenges they face, the focus was on examining the intrinsic and psychological barriers (Kennedy, Smith et al, 1991; Smith, 1987) and less on the external physical barriers at a heritage site.

Many studies have been done in the developed world focusing on external barriers (European Commission, 2004; Hartley, 1995), but their findings may not be directly applicable to the developing world context, which is different in terms of socio-economic and cultural aspects. However, these studies provide useful insights when examining external barriers in other contexts. According to the European Commission (2004) car parking space for disabled drivers needs to be larger than other parking spaces, so that people have enough room to transfer from their wheelchair to their car and vice versa. They should be indicated by a wheelchair symbol. The parking spaces should be at least 3.3 metres wide. The distance of the designated parking space from the entrance should be 100 metres if the path is covered and 50 metres if it is not.

According to the European Commission (2004), regarding the dimension of interpretation, the standard printed information should be in simple, straightforward, non-technical language. Alternatives should be provided for people with visual impairment or reading difficulties. The standard information, such as fire alarm procedures or guide books, could be provided in Braille. Audio recordings would assist people with visual impairment and people who have difficulty reading. An induction loop system would

help people who wear a hearing aid by reducing or cutting out background noise. The use of exhibits that can be touched would enhance the experience of people with visual impairment. Places to rest should be provided every 50-60 metres over flat terrain. In addition, routes need to be clearly marked and signposted, and the use of pictograms can help many visitors.

Hartley (1995) noted that there are devices capable of assisting people with disabilities in hearing interpretive presentations. However, in addition to mechanisms that help people to hear, feel and access interpretation, it is important that interpreters are trained to have a sensitive manner (Cox, 1994). Careful use of terminologies and words demonstrates that tour guides care about the feelings, needs and experiences of all visitors. Likewise, visually impaired people like to hear descriptions of objects and colours because, although some might be able to see a little, this might enable them all to imagine and remember the images described. The Heritage Lottery Fund (2008) emphasizes that heritage interpretation should be accessible to all, that is, *universal design* of interpretation. The aim is to design things and places that can be used by as many people as possible. This means that interpretation for people with intellectual, sensory and physical disabilities should be integrated into a scheme rather than being presented as *special* or separate, as separating people for presentation might lead to the *stigmatization* of disabled visitors. *Universal design* also means being aware that different people have different ways and speeds of taking in information (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2008).

The above concepts inherent in the *barrier approach* are significant for tourist sites, particularly cultural tourism sites, in their attempt to cater for people with disabilities as visitors. The sites' failure to provide such facilities and services mentioned by the concepts would mean that they cannot cater for people with disabilities. Definitely, there must be reasons for failing to do so. Thus, what remains to be addressed in the body of knowledge relating to accessible tourism is the extent to which tourist sites in developing countries respond to the barriers. This paper, therefore, takes the *barrier approach* and borrows its concepts to examine the challenges faced by cultural tourism sites in their endeavour to cater for people with disabilities.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research used the case study design along with the qualitative research approach to study a site's facilities and respondents' views on whether visitors with disabilities are taken into consideration. The site chosen was the Village Museum (Figure 1) located in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania as the case study. In Tanzania, there are no recent data on the situation of persons with disabilities. However, some available

statistics may be useful, but do not give an accurate picture of the actual prevalence. According to the National Bureau of Statistics web page, the 1981 Census of Disabled Persons in Tanzania, undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the mainland, identified 193,599 disabled persons in the 20 regions, representing approximately 1% of the population at that time. Three facts stood out in this census: the majority of disabled persons were of working age, illiterate and unemployed. Approximately 45% of disabled persons identified were women. According to UNESCO, in 1995-96, about 3% of disabled persons in Tanzania had received basic education (World Databank on Education, IBE's web page). The August 2002 Population and Housing census contained a question on disability. The official results are not yet known. However, according to the World Health Organization's formula of 1 in 10 being persons with disabilities, Tanzania with a population of 34,569,232 (2002) is estimated to have 3,346,900 people with disabilities (URT, 2004). The number is viable, having certain implications for the tourism sector if disabled people are not fully involved or considered.

The Village Museum, the tourist site this study focused on, was established in 1966. The site is situated along Ali Hassan Mwinyi road in Dar es Salaam. It contains 25 true-to-size furnished traditional houses of Tanzania and related material culture. The traditional houses are of various tribes, including the Wahehe, Wagogo, Wafipa, Wangoni, Wazaramo, Wamwera, Waha, Wairaqw, Wakwere and Wadoe, Wamakua, Wayao, Wachagga, Maasai, Wasambaa, Wazanaki, Wasukuma, Wahaya, Wabena and Wanyakyusa. Traditional plantations have been planted close to the houses. Furthermore, the site has various plant species, such as coconut palm, marula, tamarind tree, mango tree, guinea grass, false brand bush, pawpaw tree, banana tree, African blackwood, alovera, lozela, neem, cashew nut tree, baobab tree, hare lettuce, bush night fighter and wild custard apple, to mention a few. Most of these plants are properly labelled explaining their features. Artists and craftsmen engage in various productive activities and sell their products at the museum. Traditional performances are conducted at weekends and on public holidays. However, they may be performed at the special request of visitors who pay the performers. Other attractions at the site include an iron-smelting kiln, ngalawa, children's cooking centre, nature trail, indigenous food, vegetables and medicinal plants. The Village Museum also provides a venue for weddings, cultural shows, meetings, modern music, and lessons in painting, cooking and traditional music and dance, as well as handcraft shops.

As indicated in Table 1, the Village Museum receives more resident visitors than foreign visitors. In 2004 the site received 2,117 foreigners and 26,796 residents. The site noted more female visitors than male

visitors in both categories of foreigners and residents. Although the site has not categorized visitors' status with regard to disabilities, it is estimated that the site receives a fair number of elderly and less mobile foreign visitors and a few wheelchair-bound resident visitors. Furthermore, the site receives more local children with disabilities because it has a programme designed for them. The presence of this programme and the receipt of visitors with disabilities were the key reasons for selecting this site for the study.

**Table 1. The visitor numbers at the Village Museum for year 2004**

Nationality	Sex	Numbers
Foreigners	Males	1052
	Females	1065
Total		2117
Tanzanians	Males	11733
	Females	15063
Total		26796
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>28913</b>

Source: Village Museum (2006)

In order to obtain an insight into the efforts being made to cater for people with disabilities and the challenges they faced, in-depth interviews with four purposively selected officials were conducted for two days in August 2008. Interview questions were open ended and designed to be easily understood by the interviewees. The questions were as follows: how do you ensure that people with disabilities are satisfied when visiting your site? What challenges are faced in catering for people with disabilities as visitors to your site and how do you deal with them? Each interview lasted about an hour. The officials were approached by the researcher during the working day at the site. After introducing the study objectives, the respondent's consent to participate in the study led to the interviews being conducted. The researcher used a tape recorder to capture the actual words. Photographs were taken to graphically record the interview context and evidence that could be photographed regarding, for instance, the available facilities used by visitors with disabilities and the physical barriers. The suitability of the available facilities used by visitors with disabilities was observed in order to assess the barriers they face when visiting this site. During observation, a measuring tape was used to measure the width and length of several facilities, such as car parking space, to assess whether they meet the suitability standards described in the literature review.

Data analysis proceeded the moment the researcher started the first interview. At the end of each interview, the interviews were transcribed using the same words used by the interviewees to avoid paraphrasing. The five-stage data analysis method by Yin (2010) was adopted to analyse the data, which involved compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting and concluding. The first stage involved

compiling and sorting the field notes into some order. The disassembling stage was a recursive process involving breaking down the compiled data into smaller fragments which were assigned codes. Yin's (2010) deductive and inductive coding process was applied. The codes assigned to the data were primarily named with ideas borrowed from the literature. Another round of coding was conducted involving coding the phrases using emerging codes. Reassembling involved reorganizing and recombining disassembled codes into substantive categories (themes).

#### IV. FINDINGS

##### 4.1 Programme for people with disabilities

In 1997, the Village Museum, in collaboration with the centres and schools which take care of children with special needs, designed a special three-day festival aimed at imparting to the children wide knowledge on poverty alleviation through cultural performances and displays. The major objectives of the festival are: to give the children an opportunity to exhibit their artistic work to the public; to change the negative perception of children with special needs that they are dependent and cannot work; create a sense of unity and love among children; and to provide them with an opportunity to learn about Tanzania's cultural heritage. As an indicator of the success of the programme, a total of 600 children from thirteen centres and schools participated in the event in 2006. The children participated in games, watched cultural and theatrical performances, saw a display of handcraft products, and listened to proverbs, riddles, sayings and legends. The programme gave the children an opportunity to exhibit their artistic work.

##### 4.2 Challenges in catering for people with disabilities as visitors

###### *Absence of indication of parking space*

The Village Museum has sufficient car parking space (of more than 3.6 metres wide) which allows disabled drivers to transfer to their wheelchair from their car and vice versa. The car park is wide and level. The site's entrance and car park are both suitable for visitors with disabilities, particularly the wheelchair bound. However, as indicated in Table 2, their parking space has no wheelchair symbol, which means that the specially designated space could be used by other drivers. Moreover, during weekends, the car park is congested, extending to nearby traditional buildings, as the majority of visitors who come for meetings (wedding parties) take up all the spaces (Plate 1).

**Table 2. Facilities observed in the context of access by people with disabilities**

Attribute	Village Museum
Parking Space	No special reserve provision for people with special needs, but it is sufficient with wide space (more than 3.6 metres), undulating and level surface.
Entrance	Entrance is a normal and wide with level surface.
Reception	Enough space with sufficient light, desks are not highly elevated
Pathways	Well structured, level ground surface to the traditional houses, but narrow pathway to the nature trail;
Toilets	No special or reserved toilets for wheelchair borne visitors
Resting/seating Places	Not well designed, however, there is sufficient open space
Mobility vehicles/equipments	Not provided
Interpreters	Well trained and willing to serve visitors with special needs but no lack professional skill in communicating to such visitors with hearing impairments.
Interpretation Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of performances and theatrical events which involve Character-based events and traditional performances.</li> <li>• Text labels, framed printed materials are placed at least 0.5 to 1 metre high, the printed information is in simple, straightforward, and use both technical and non-technical languages (English and Swahili). However, other text labels have small font size.</li> <li>• Use of arts media such as poetry, songs and drama notably used in the special program for children with special needs.</li> <li>• No special interpretation services targeting visitors with special needs in particular the blind and visitors with hearing difficulties.</li> <li>• There is no use of Audio-visual equipments such as Video shows.</li> <li>• There is no reference materials and reading room.</li> <li>• Partial sign language usage</li> </ul>



**Plate 1. Parking nearby houses**

*Unsuitable nature trails*

The Village Museum entrance has a level surface, with no bumps or potholes. From the car park entrance to the reception, the ground is level and wide, suitable for those in wheelchairs. Furthermore, the reception has enough space with sufficient light, suitable for the partially sighted, and the front desk is not too high so that even those in wheelchairs can access it. The paths (Plate 2) to the attractions are well structured and level without any obstacles, especially the paths to the traditional houses. However, the researcher observed that a narrow path to the natural attractions (nature trail) is unsuitable for those in wheelchairs and the elderly.



**Plate 2. Wide and level pathway**

*Absence of resting and seating places*

Although the Village Museum has no properly designed resting and seating places, it has sufficient open space with the potential for constructing some. The absence of these facilities creates problems for visitors with special needs, such as the elderly, those less mobile and children who may need to have a rest after a short walk within the site. Moreover, these facilities could also be used by other visitors who are physically fit, as the trails, both natural and cultural, are long enough to cause someone to be in need of a rest.

*Absence of well-trained interpreters using sign language*

The Village Museum provides guided walks, tours and demonstrations, when an interpreter talks directly to an audience upon request and payment. The interpreters at the site are well trained and are willing to serve visitors with disabilities, although there are no interpreters who are able to communicate with visitors with hearing difficulties.

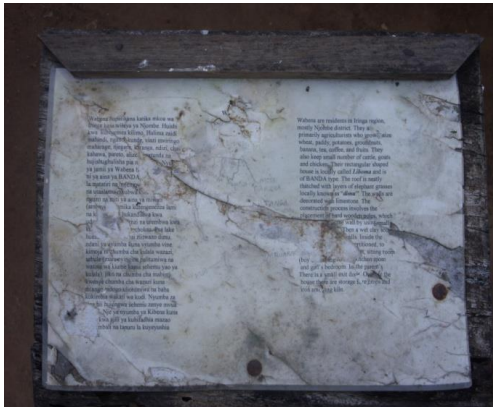
*Inappropriate interpretation for people with disabilities*

The site has labels identifying an object, artifact, traditional building and other features. Some are fixed on a vertical surface and others are in frames that are placed at an angle 0.5 to 1 metres high so that they can



be easily read by visitors in wheelchairs and children. Although the printed information is simple and straightforward, and uses both technical and non-technical languages (English and Swahili), some of it cannot be easily read by visitors with visual impairments or reading difficulties due to their small font size and poor maintenance (Plate 3). Furthermore, the site has arranged for some artistic and handcraft groups to exhibit and sell their products at the site. Again, this service is accessible to all visitors except those who are blind, and to some extent those with hearing impairment.

In addition, the site has no special interpretation services targeting visitors with disabilities, particularly the blind and those with hearing difficulties, because it has not installed touchable media for the blind, has inadequate supplementary audio and reading materials, and no devices that enable them to hear presentations.



**Plate 3. Improperly maintained label**

#### *Inadequate funds*

Although the Village Museum gets financial support from the Government and international partners, it still suffers from the lack of a sustainable funding source, which greatly hinders the site from developing special facilities, services and personnel to serve and handle visitors with disabilities. One of the respondents reported that, "...yes we get some funding from the government, but it is not enough to fund all the activities here, and especially those related to improving the facilities to cater for people with disabilities here. We are in need of sustainable financial support to ensure the sustainability of a special programme for children with special needs. The money we receive from the entrance fee is insufficient" (A museum curator). This respondent's report indicates that financial support is required if the site is to install adequate special facilities and services, and to train or recruit interpreters to serve visitors with special needs.

#### *Dilemma of preservation versus site modification to cater for visitors' needs*

Interviews with site officials indicated that preservation concerns conflict with site modifications intended to

respond to visitors' needs. One of the interviewees reported that "...just imagine if we are to put Braille beside the prevailing interpretation labels or on the wall of each traditional house here...also constructing places to rest within the site...the labels and resting places will to a great extent interfere with the traditional scene" (A museum curator). This indicates that conservation experts fear that the installation of special facilities for people with disabilities, such as touchable media for the blind and others, may jeopardize the authenticity of the heritage.

## **V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

By applying the barrier approach, this study was aimed at examining the challenges faced by cultural heritage sites (drawing on the Village Museum) in their endeavour to cater for people with disabilities as visitors. By drawing on the Village Museum, the study found that cultural tourism sites struggle to cater for people with disabilities as visitors. However, the findings indicate that one way the sites do this is by designing special programmes that cater for visitors with disabilities. They also indicate that the Village Museum puts into practice the concept of *universal design* as it includes children who are physically fit along with children with disabilities. The integration of people with intellectual, sensory and physical disabilities with those who have no such disabilities is a good practice that helps to avoid *stigmatization* of disabled visitors.

Despite such good practice that shows the site's awareness of and willingness to cater for people with disabilities as visitors, the findings show that there are several challenges. For instance, the site does not have suitable facilities for addressing the challenges of the disabled relating to their cognitive, physical and psychological functions. Furthermore, the site is faced with the challenges of inadequate funds to invest in specially designed facilities and ensure the sustainability of special programmes, the lack of interpreters who are able to communicate with visitors with special needs, and the fear of jeopardizing the authenticity of the heritage by installing specially designed facilities at the site.

The fear of jeopardizing the heritage's authenticity was an interesting finding as it highlights the tension between conservationists and tourism developers at cultural heritage sites. Indeed, while from the point of view of tourism developers the installation of specially designed facilities to cater for people with disabilities would create more opportunities to attract diverse groups of tourists and their expenditure, from the point of view of conservationists the installation means interfering with the heritage. This calls for a partnership between the two sides to agree upon the most appropriate way to develop the site to cater for visitors with special needs. The findings imply that, to

ensure that cultural tourism sites cater for visitors with disabilities effectively, tourism managers should take into account the negative effects that developments might have on the authenticity of the heritage. Thus, managers should upgrade their car parks, interpretation facilities, resting places and trails, but in close collaboration with those involved in conserving the heritage. With this in mind, the following recommendations (based on the barriers identified in the findings section) are therefore made to the management of the Village Museum and related sites if diversifying and increasing the number of visitors is the desired goal.

The Village Museum and related sites should design car parking spaces for wheelchair-bound visitors and ensure that they are labelled appropriately. The sites should introduce or improve their leaflets, booklets and guidebooks so that they can be used by visitors with hearing impairments. They should also display audio media, which are used in audio tours, and listening points, where visitors with special needs, such as the blind, can pick up a handset and listen to the audio presentation. Furthermore, tactile media should be introduced, such as etched metal plaques, Braille and embossed paper, which visitors who are visually impaired can feel. This includes 3D models for visually impaired people (and others) to feel, thereby gaining an understanding of a building or landscape. Audio-visuals, which include the use of still images, films and videos with a soundtrack and sub-titles, as well as reference materials and reading rooms should be introduced. These will help visitors with disabilities such as those with hearing impairment, the elderly, those less mobile, the wheelchair bound and others to comfortably access and explore books, archive materials, photographs, oral history and other recordings.

To enhance the understanding of the cultural heritage of visitors with hearing impairment, objects for handling or dressing up with touch trays, original and replica artifacts for visitors to touch and handle need to be introduced. Guide or orientation stations should be situated at the entrance to orient visitors (including those with disabilities) before they begin a guided or self-guided tour. Moreover, they should be situated strategically to provide assistance to self-guided visitors with disabilities. The use of sign language along the paths, at stations and other locations that would allow people with hearing impairment to communicate should be emphasized. The font size of some of the labels, if using a computer, should be in the range of 16 to 22 points and should be in the Sans Serif Font.

The sites should improve their resting and sitting places. The Village Museum in particular has a wide space for developing resting places, which should be constructed using local materials to maintain the authenticity of the area and located strategically at the

site. In addition, resting places should be provided every 50 to 60 metres over flat terrain. In addition, the paths especially to the nature trail should be widened, clearly marked and signposted.

Cultural tourism sites should develop promotional information targeting people with disabilities and ensure that it is disseminated to people with disabilities. The information should allow disabled people to judge for themselves whether or not a facility is accessible to them. This would provide immediate benefits for such people who can access the facility or destination in its prevailing state, as well as increasing the market potential of the tourism sector.

The sites should train their staff to handle people with disabilities. It is worth noting that many barriers could be easily overcome with careful consideration and at little cost. For example, disability awareness training will not only help ensure that services are sensitive and inclusive, but it will also train staff to identify access problems and suggest improvements. Apart from training staff, the sites should carry out visitor surveys frequently to discover the changing trend of visitors' needs and requirements. Furthermore, as far as people with disabilities are concerned, the sites should conduct specific research to assess their needs and requirements so that they can offer satisfactory products to this market segment. People with disabilities are a special domestic market segment that, if well developed and catered for, may increase the domestic tourism market.

The sites should ensure the sustainability of programmes for people with special needs and, if possible, be effectively promoted and offered frequently each year. The Village Museum specifically should aim to extend the programme nationally. By improving some facilities and services to cater for people with special needs and strategically informing the public and target groups, the site will surely receive many visitors with disabilities, and contribute to the sustainable goal of developing tourism. The Village Museum should also extend the concept of *universal design*, apart from special programmes, to other facilities. This is very important because it is already known that people have different ways and speeds of taking in information, as some visitors will prefer to read while others will prefer to listen to an audio presentation. This emphasizes that people with sensory and physical disabilities should be integrated into an interpretation scheme rather than being separated as 'special', which can lead to *stigmatization*. Therefore, the site should use a variety of methods for interpreting the heritage including the use of audio and visual aids, reference and publication materials, and a reading room/library. The Village Museum and related sites could also provide mobility vehicles for such visitors, either by charging a fee or offering them free of charge. This would improve the uniqueness of the site and add to its funds (when it charges a fee) that could be used to



maintain its services.

From the policy perspective, it is without doubt that the government has made notable efforts to provide for the basic and vital needs of people with disabilities in terms of employment, care, education, health, human rights, legal protection, awareness creation and financial provision (development funds for people with disabilities). The government has also emphasized that the construction of public buildings, roads, playgrounds and other facilities should consider people with disabilities. According to the National Tourism Policy (URT, 1999), sustainable tourism development is the leading approach to tourism development in Tanzania. Among the key principles of sustainable development, the equity of people's participation, through sharing costs and benefits, is greatly emphasized. However, the concern for people with disabilities in the policy has been partial. Although its strategies for cultural tourism include an emphasis on "designing special programmes for different people, especially the youth and aged, to visit local tourist attractions and thereby learn to appreciate their culture and nature" (URT, 1999), for a long time, people with disabilities, such as those in wheelchairs, those with hearing impairment and the blind, have been left out of the pool of visitors in the tourist industry. It is recommended that people with disabilities should be taken into consideration when the National Tourism Policy is reviewed.

Furthermore, implementation of the statements in the National Policy on Disability (2004), the National Tourism Policy (1999) and the constitution in the context of equity of participation in tourism as a pillar of sustainable tourism has not yet been effective. Therefore, the government, through its public recreation and tourism facilities, such as the Village

Museum, should go further to eliminate the idea that the majority of people with disabilities are poor and cannot participate in and contribute to recreation and tourism activities and earnings. The responsible authorities should take the initiative to promote stakeholders' integrated support aimed at enabling the sites to upgrade their sites to make them suitable for people with disabilities. In addition, the government could select and certify the sites that are suitable for people with disabilities, and emphasize that other sites should make reasonable adjustments so as to be certified.

This single case study provides evidence that the barrier approach is useful, as pointed out by the European Commission (2004), for understanding the challenges faced by tourist sites in their endeavour to cater for people with disabilities as visitors. This may mean that some of the barrier-related issues at tourist sites relating to accessibility by people with disabilities prevailing in the developed world may be similar to those in developing countries. However, the dilemma of preservation versus modification of the site seems to feature prominently in this case study. It should be noted that most sites in Tanzania have not yet begun to utilize interpretation facilities such as Braille. Those involved in conserving sites therefore think, and they certainly should, that the use of these sites has to be done carefully so as not to spoil the authenticity of the heritage. Future studies, especially using the barrier approach, should incorporate diverse disciplines, including architecture and civil engineering, for comprehensive results. In addition, future studies could integrate the point of view of tourists to unravel the complexities of intrinsic and external barriers utilizing multiple case studies.

## VI. REFERENCES

1. British Broadcasting Corporation (1999), *Call for Global Disability Campaign*. British Broadcasting Corporation, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/441912.stm>
2. Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (2003), *Green paper: A medium to long term strategy for tourism*, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, Canberra.
3. Cox, J. (1994), Interpretation for Persons with a Disability. In R. Harrison (Ed.), *Manual of Heritage Management* (pp. 353-355). Butterworth Heinemann: Oxford.
4. Darcy, S., Daruwalla, P.S. (1999), The trouble with travel: People with disabilities and tourism, *Social Alternatives*, 18, pp.41-46.
5. Darcy, S. (2004), Disabling journeys: the social relations of tourism for people with impairments in Australia – an analysis of government tourism authorities and accommodation sector practices and discourses, Faculty of Business. <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/dspace/handle/2100/260>
6. Darcy, S. (2002), Marginalized participation: physical disability, high support needs and tourism. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 9, pp.61-72.
7. Darcy, S., Dickson, T. (2009), A while-of-life approach to tourism: The case for accessible tourism experiences, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 16, pp.32-44.
8. European Commission (2004), Improving Information on Accessible Tourism for Disabled People, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities – Luxembourg. [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/services/tourism/doc/studies/improving\\_information\\_on\\_accessibility/improving\\_accessibility\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/services/tourism/doc/studies/improving_information_on_accessibility/improving_accessibility_en.pdf)
9. Harrison, R. (1994), London Tower Bridge. In R. Harrison (Ed.), *Manual of Heritage Management* (pp. 315 – 319), Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.
10. Hartley, F. (1995), Disabled People and Museums: The Case for Partnership and Collaboration, In E. Hooper-Greenhill (Ed.), *Museum, Media, Message* (pp. 151 – 155), Routledge: London.
11. Heritage Lottery Fund (2008), *Thinking About... Interpretation*, [http://www.hlf.org.uk/HLF/Docs/HelpingYourApplication/Thinking\\_about\\_Interpretation.pdf](http://www.hlf.org.uk/HLF/Docs/HelpingYourApplication/Thinking_about_Interpretation.pdf)

12. Kennedy, D.W., Smith, R.W., Austin, D.R. (1991), *Special recreation: Opportunities for persons with disabilities*, William C. Brown, Dubuque, IA.
  13. Knudson, D.M., Cable, T.T., Beck, L. (1995), *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*, State College, Pa: Venture.
  14. McKercher, B., du Cros, H. (2002), *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, The Haworth Press Inc, New York.
  15. National Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.nbs.go.tz/>
  16. Richards, V., Pritchard, A., Morgan, N. (2010), (Re)Envisioning Tourism and Visual Impairment, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37, pp.1097–1116. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2010.04.011.
  17. Smith, R.W. (1987), Leisure of Disabled Tourist: Barriers to Participation, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14, pp.376-389.
  18. Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (Anon.), *Setting an Agenda for Accessible Tourism Research*, Australia [on-line], [http://www.crctourism.com.au/CRCBookshop/Documents/Darcy\\_accessibleTourism.pdf](http://www.crctourism.com.au/CRCBookshop/Documents/Darcy_accessibleTourism.pdf)
  19. Timothy, D. J., Boyd, S. W. (2003), *Heritage Tourism*. Pearson Education Ltd, London.
  20. Tourism Australia. (2008), *Accessible tourism working group from State Tourism Organizations*. Tourism Australia. <http://www.tourism.australia.com/campaigns/TNLA.aspx?lang=EN&sub=0437&al=2572>
  21. United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2004), *National Policy on Disability*. Ministry of Labour, Youth Development and Sports, Dar es Salaam.
  22. United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (1999), *National Tourism Policy*. Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Dar es Salaam.
  23. Village Museum (2006), *Poverty Awareness through Culture. A Report For Children With Special Needs*, Village Museum, Dar es Salaam.
  24. World Databank on Education, IBE's web page. International Labour Organization (2004), *Employment of People with Disabilities: The Impact of Legislation (East Africa)*. pp 3. <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1188&context=gladnetcollect>
  25. Yau, M.K., McKercher, B., Packer, T.L. (2004), Travelling with a Disability: More than an Access Issue, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31, pp.946-960.
- Zhelyazkova I., Yarkova I. Y., Zheleva, A. (2007), Tourism for Handicapped People – Responsibility and Commitment in the Period of Bulgaria's Accession to the European Union, *Trakia Journal of Sciences*, 4, pp.39-43