

## **SOCIAL TOURISM: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE - İZMİR CASE**

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### **Abstract**

The common ground where social tourism meets with sustainable tourism is their inclusionary and participative nature. The construction of socially sustainable tourism especially, is closely relying on the socio-economic dimension of sustainable tourism. Following the perspective of social tourism in Turkish Tourism Strategy 2023, a policy document handling the Turkish tourism from the sustainability perspective, the study is based on proposals for the practice of sustainable social tourism in İzmir city of Turkey. The basic reason for the sustainable social tourism policy not reaching practical value in İzmir is found out as lack or inadequacy of all the concerned stakeholders' inclusion. Thus on the supply side, a more participative and inclusionary socially sustainable tourism structure is proposed. Additionally, on the demand side, sustainable social tourism products in accordance with the needs and expectations and ideas of the potential social tourism participants living in İzmir are suggested.

**Keywords:** Social Tourism, Sustainability, İzmir, Turkey, Sustainable Social Tourism.

### **Introduction**

The turning point of social tourism in the World is the adoption of an International Convention for the paid holidays by ILO (International Labour Organisation) in the year 1936. But the first pioneers of social tourism goes back to the second half of the 19th century. In 1875, the first campers have left London for their first adaptation. The answer to the question if the social tourism existed earlier is given as yes and no. Yes as some people could discover collectively used facilities and no according to the availability of the facilities to only certain groups. Additionally, the first forms of social tourism were organized by the associations (e.g. Alpine Clubs) with a socio-educative character (Lanquar&Raynouard, 1978;

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11-12). In 1883, the son-in-law of Marx, Paul Lafargue, wrote the first lampoon supporting the workers' right for leisure; against the doctrine of work: "The right for idleness" (Lanquar&Raynouard, 1978:13). This is proving the importance of getting a rest sometimes, away from work.

However, following the period of the mass tourism, the aim and scope of the social tourism change and become related with a wider inclusiveness for the tourism participation. Hunzicker (1951 as cited in Minnaert et al. 2011 and Minnaert 2014) defined social tourism as: "The relationship and phenomena in the field of tourism resulting from participation in travel by economically weak or otherwise disadvantaged elements in society"; which is known as the earliest definition.

Minnaert (2014, 283) brings a more up-to-date definition as follows: "In practice, social tourism refers to budget-friendly holidays in the own country, either individual or as part of a group, or in some cases day trips to theme parks, museums and attractions, that are funded or made available at highly reduced rates, by charities or agencies in the public sector".

In fact social tourism is evaluated as a constituent of sustainable tourism (Baumgartner 2011; Griffin&Stacey 2011, Jolin&Proulx 2005). Thus, the definitions of social tourism become more inclusionary: "programs, practices and actions making real the right for holidays, the accessibility of all groups of the population especially the young, the families, the retired, the disabled, the people with low-income, etc. but at the same time, aiming the quality of relationships between the host community and the visitor" (Jolin 2003:6; Delisle&Jolin 2007: 43; Jolin&Proulx 2005: 2).

The social tourism with a more sustainable character is emphasized to be joining together the society rather than excluding the disadvantaged groups in different facilities with an inferior quality of service (Baumgartner, 2011). Additionally, the new generation tourism demand as exemplified by Caire (2005) proves the denial of the old-fashioned exclusionary system of the social tourism offers by the new generation so-called second generation in France which is more demanding, consuming more, deciding in later periods, and individualist.

McCabe et al. (2011:185-190) have emphasized four important points for the sustainability of social tourism practices. According to their suggestions, there is a need for:

- An intermediary institution for matching the correct demand with suitable social tourism supply,
- Basis on strong financial resources created by the public-private partnership,

- Avoiding the social tourism to become profit-oriented by privatization and lose its reputation.
- Understanding the changing structure of the target market of social tourism.

### **Barriers to and Benefits of Social Tourism**

In today's world there is a wide range of the society who miss or even never catch the opportunity to participate holidays and the reasons for barriers are basically economic in today's consumer society struggling to survive with high costs of living and limited budgets. The financial reasons for non-participation to holidays are especially mentioned in studies as disadvantaged people or families in need, with budget constraints, low income or not able to afford to holidays (Hughes 1991, McCabe 2009, Smith&Hughes 1999, Hazel 2005, Minnaert&Schapmans 2009). Studies also exist examining relationship between decisions of holiday participation, income and expenditure allocated to holidays (Mergoupis &Steuer 2003, Melenberg&Soest 1996).

Social tourism, with the idea of inclusion of all for participation to tourism is the best way to enable these people to benefit from the holidays. Holidays are seen as a need for recovering from the difficulties of life such as daily stress and tiredness by offering people to have a rest and breathe in their lives before returning to work and daily life again. In this respect, its benefits are mentioned as its contributions to subjective well-being and quality of life (McCabe et al. 2010, McCabe&Johnson 2013). This is not the only benefit of the holidays; social tourism is seen as a source for developing community well-being, family social capital (Minnaert et al. 2009), increasing the productivity of the workforce and improving emotional attachments of families (Smith&Hughes 1999, McCabe 2009). In this respect, the linkage between the sustainability and social tourism is made on the socio-economic and community well-being level. Especially by the inclusionary nature of social tourism, it is included in the sustainable tourism practices.

### **İzmir, Turkey and Social Tourism**

Some of the SDGs for tourism (Sustainable Development Goals for Tourism) mentioned in İzmir (the third biggest city of Turkey, located in westernmost part on the Aegean Sea bay) Sustainable Development for Tourism Conference in 2018 organized in collaboration with the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism include: "Protection of cultural and community values, accessibility for all, supporting the local economy and fair commerce, create employment, supporting of the local businesses". These goals are the shared goals in any way, by the social tourism and sustainable tourism.

Turkey is a candidate country to European Union since 1999 as announced at Helsinki Summit, and the membership negotiations continue since October 2005 (Taş et al. 2016). Efforts have been made to allow a political structure with participative democratic consensus with for example, city council participation. As indicated by Altun&Toker (2017) within their research on the participation of the community and NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) to city councils, efforts are made in Turkey in order to increase the participation in local administration and thus empowering the principles such as democracy, transparency and accountability, but unfortunately they have not reached to the point of contributing in decision-making processes yet (Altun&Toker, 2017). Thus it can be concluded that, for a sustainable social tourism planning and policy in Turkey, there is a need to have more voice of the society thus more participation by the local community both on the decision-making level and on the operational level.

The social tourism in Turkey has been basically created by enabling of the participation of officers working for the government and the paid workers of private sector to the summer camps of their own department (Usta, 1982). The sixties and seventies were the years when the government credits would be by tourism banks given to both at the macro level for the investment of public summer camps and at the micro level as credit to holiday participators who were mostly government officers to go on holiday in the camps of their own department (Kuşçu, 1980). At the moment, many summer camps of those periods are closed down and/or inactivated. Very few continue at very basic service level such as those camps belonging to police and military departments of government.

In latest sustainable policy document; Turkish Tourism Strategy 2023-Action Plan 2007-2013, social tourism planning and implication at the very minimum level was mentioned as action number 19 “supporting of social tourism”. The explanation is cited as “The social tourism projects for enabling the participation of the disadvantaged groups will be developed” (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007). Since then, most basically, the summer youth camps for especially children and teenagers on the socio-educative side are tried to be operationalized in Turkey. Apart from this, excursions to museums or sites in cities organized by the culture and tourism departments of municipalities can be counted as social tourism activities. For a more inclusionary practice mentioned in the above action plan covering the disadvantaged groups, a more participative model is needed. This study is made in order to make suggestions on the way to realize a sustainable social tourism application in İzmir.

### **Methodology of Research in İzmir for Sustainable Social Tourism**

This research is mainly focusing on the analysis of the demand side findings. Additionally, to allow a holistic view of the situation of social tourism in İzmir, important findings related to supply side analysis (Sonuç 2016, Sonuç & Oral 2017) is shared to avoid any gap in the mind of the reader.

For the supply part of the research, the scale for the data collection is developed through sustainable tourism criteria of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2013) and scales of social tourism used by Surrey University researches (Minnaert 2007, Minnaert et al., 2007, 2009, 2011). The data collection was realized with semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews in 2015 with the related professionals of social tourism defined according to the “Turkish Tourism Strategy 2023- Action Plan 2007-2013”. The content analysis was used to analyse the data which was coded and inscribed with qualitative analysis program Nvivo11. As there is not any concrete practical improvements towards the application of a more inclusionary sustainable social tourism since then, the still valid results of the supply analysis (Sonuç 2016, Sonuç & Oral 2017) are partly shared and analysed accordingly with the demand analysis in this study.

The focus of this study is more on the demand side. An exploratory qualitative research is used in order to find out the nature of the demand for travelling in İzmir especially those who are candidates of social tourism participation. As the qualitative research is used to analyse systematically the meanings arising from the experiences or in-experiences (as employed by Minnaert, 2014) it is preferred as a technique of analysis (Ekiz, 2003).

Research is done in different districts of İzmir mainly, in and around the city center. The demand side is researched through a written face-to-face filled qualitative questionnaire with open-ended questions compiled from the analysis of the literature about the social tourism. The data collections have realized in 2018 in İzmir at places such as metro, boat stations, open-air or covered shopping centers, streets, banks, student dormitories, homes of families and relatives of the students. 300 questionnaires are analysed and evaluated in the framework of social tourism with the content analysis.

As the social tourism is identified with the motto of “tourism for all” as adopted by the International Social Tourism Organization (ISTO), it means that there can be participants from all ages. Even so, to discover the nature of the audience, the age is asked.

Another point aimed to find out in the framework of this study was the reason for non-participation to the holidays. Some options are given here such as

the health or budgetary problems and it is left open to see if any other responses would be given.

For fixing the level of experience of tourism participators, many countable or quantitative measures are suggested in previous academic studies such as the number of travelling times (Filep & Greenacre, 2007), or only international tourism experiences (Chen, 2001). Additionally, the level of tourism inexperience on the anxiety levels of social tourism participators are examined by Minnaert (2014). In this study, as it is an explorative study trying to find out the global nature of potential social tourism participators in İzmir, one of the aims was to discover if the people have ever had a travel experience by asking the last time they went on any holiday by giving options such as day-trip or a-week holiday and additionally leaving the answer part left-open for them to write any other possible answers. Also the type of holiday that they would be eager to participate is questioned.

Their ideas are also asked about the reasons of and ways to find the solution to non-participation to holidays and the role of public, private and non-governmental organizations and their own-self.

#### **Analysis of Findings for a Sustainable Social Tourism in İzmir**

Many people have problems hindering them from travelling such as budgetary, health problems (physical e.g. dysfunction of organs or psychological e.g. depression) or disabilities, limited or lack of time, socialization (e.g. not having a companion or not able to fix common time with friends or family members for holiday because of work schedules), having a child that needs to be cared, busyness (loaded working hours), anxiety because of the early booking, decision on type of holiday and payment arrangements as discovered according to this study and so many other reasons. The most emerging need for holidays is financial and social support. Especially when the problem is financial, the people may not ever have had any holiday or travel plans in their lives at all.

On the demand side, the findings resume the level of the knowledge and awareness of the people living in İzmir about the social tourism. Their opinions about the right for holidays and their ideas about the role of different stakeholders for enabling them to benefit the holidays and their experiences, if they've had any, about the holidays.

The views of the tourism academicians and sectoral stakeholders show the current situation of social tourism in İzmir as well as the suggestions of practical implications for the functionality of the published tourism policy decisions targeted through specific markets such as women travelling solo, families with children, young people and the aged. Additionally, it is found out that the sustainable policy decisions defined on the theoretical basis unfortunately do not reach practical value

because of an absence or inadequacy of all the concerned stakeholders' inclusion (Sonuç&Oral 2017, Sonuç, 2016).

- **The demographic information of the respondents:**

The respondents were aged between twenties to over sixties. Level of income (monthly) of the participants vary between: 0 to 1000 \$. The people with zero income represent usually the students, housewives or women at home and other unemployed people including unemployed youth. If the owners of no income are considered, they are economically looked after by their partner, parents or families; thus the income level of those families also show a hidden decrease.

As the exception group, very few people told to have an income of 2000\$ and above and are excluded from the study as they indicate to have no budgetary hindrances to travel and they do travel at least once a year and plus not only nationally but also abroad. On the other hand, few people of this group complain about lack of time to go on holidays, and also the difficulty to fix common time with friends which can be considered as a hindrance.

The respondents included the students, officers, private sector employees (those who complain about the loaded working hours, work stress and low wages) and the unemployed. Holiday experiences were little or none at all. The holiday experience at least once varies from excursion, 2/3/4/5 days to 1 week, and only domestic trips.

- **Characteristics of Potential Demand for Social Tourism**

Many different sub-groups appear when the results of the questionnaires are analysed. The diversion in the groups will have to be categorized into different sub-groups by further analysis in order to develop products matching the needs and expectations of each group.

- **Passionate for travelling**

*“If I want to travel, I can, nothing can stop me” (Between 20s and late 30s)*

Those who are attached with travelling and seize really the beneficial effects even they seem not to afford it financially are in this group. The way through holiday for them passes from hitch-hiking, the safety of which is questionable. Those between 20s and late 30s ask for increasing the number of camping sites, they expect the holidays combined with many activities such as festivals, concerts, and entertainment.

- **Hopeless and offended**

*“I have never been on holiday in my life, this is our faith, family with three children. We can never imagine it. This is our life” (A father)*

*“Holiday is luxury” (A waiter aged 20)*

*“Holiday is useless, it is just for show-off! It creates useless costs and expenditures! However if I had time, I would prefer a relaxing holiday”*

Hopeless or offended persons or families exist like this. A low-income person, a father at his 40s-50s regretting never having holiday in his life and never having a chance to take his family. A waiter, which is also low-income, is hopeless about going on holiday.

- **Demanding, unrealistic expectations**

*“Everything served on my table” (A lady) “Room service” (A man)*

*“All inclusive”*

On the other hand, the ones who have very demanding or who do not have realistic expectations as given above, will never be satisfied with the social tourism offers. They either will be in the odd-one-out or will need to receive more education about the social holidays before they integrate into a group. Other examples of unrealistic expectations of the people from various age groups (retired over 50 or young 20s) include:

*“30 days/90 days holidays Europe or abroad e.g. USA, Italy”*

*“Sex tourism in Far East Asia, massage”*

*“Alcohol service”*

*“I would like to go on a trip to Greek Islands with my family members”*

*“All inclusive”, “Lunch included”, “With no extra charges”*

The social holidays are aimed to create a more healthy and prosperous society. Thus, instead of offering the unhealthy and risky options of activities; beneficial exercises or sportive, artistic activities or workshops may be offered in order to stimulate their brains work better.

- **Realistic Social Tourism Expectations and Barriers to Eliminate Related to Public/Government**

Besides those unrealistic expectations, very realistic ones exist which most possibly will be guiding the practitioners through the application of social tourism on defining the limitations and barriers to participation as well as for the adjustments on the planning and policy procedures such as:

*“Trying to save time and money for holidays as a personal effort”*



- “Going on at least one week holiday per year”*
- “Government support of one salary plus for enabling holidays”*
- “Increasing the paid holiday periods”*
- “Government and private sector’s support for the holidays such as incentive holidays, lotteries, rewards”*
- “Elimination of taxes on holiday related expenditures”*
- “Increasing and improvement of the natural areas open for camping”*
- “Free entrance to the public beaches”*
- “Discount on the fees of museum cards and entrance fees of cultural sites”*
- “Logical price&quality ratio and affordable prices for domestic holidays and holiday packages”*
- “Support and adjustments are needed for people with disabilities”*
- “Facilitation and discount on visa procedures for going abroad”*

As may be understood from these needs and expectations, mostly the role and effort is loaded to government for new regulations on holidays and areas, wages, taxes, working hours, rewards. Additionally, they require from government and private sector support about holidays such as by increasing the wages, improving the economy (decreasing exchange rates and taxes). Better and more quality service expectations are cited such as more comfortable beds at hotels, more concerned service personnel (e.g. waiters’ behaviors towards guests), equal rights to a justified price quality ratio.

*“Discounts on tour packages”*

*“Escorted/Guided tours”*

Private sector discounts are required on the tour packages to be realized by travel agencies, transportation companies and hotels. Sponsorship is another suggestion that is expected to help. Equal rights and access with the foreign tourists are desired by the domestic tourists. The prices offered to international tourists are found far more advantageous and affordable. This creates offended domestic tourists towards the tourism businesses and other tourists.

- **Barriers and Expectations related to specific group: The Third Age**

Even if the holiday is seen as a need, some people over sixties give as pretext the house duties, ageing and health problems to avoid from holidaying. On the other hand, a group of over sixties exist who never give pretext their age, on the contrary,

they indicate that, if they had the opportunity (meaning if they could afford), they would participate more to cultural tours for discovering different regions. Another sub-group asks the tours to be organized on more relaxed and less tiring itineraries instead of too many spots with too loaded programs to visit.

- **Barriers and Expectations Related to Budget and Families with Children**

The “need” for going on holiday is emphasized by nearly all the respondents.

*“If I had the means, I would like to take all my family to holiday together”*

Many low-income people about their 40s-50s have never been on holiday wish to go on holiday with their families.

*“Who will take care of the children?” (A mother around her 30s)*

Parents see the little children as an obstacle for the holidays. They do not have an idea to benefit holidays with them and even do not consider asking for child-care options at several hours of the day during their participation to for example a relaxing activity as they wished such as massage. They just want to get away from it all and simply rest and relax.

On the opposite, the grown-up children are not seen as a hindrance by some other families. The families with grown-ups desire to afford to holidays together with all members of their families even with children and with the grand-children all together. The support of “social and family capital” as mentioned in Minnaert et al. (2009) can be applied to the possible sustainable social tourism products offered to these kind of possible social tourism participants.

- **Personal Barriers and Expectations Related to Life**

The socialization is seen as another hindrance for and also benefit of the participation to holidays. Working people find it difficult to fix common schedules for the holidays with their family, friends or any accompanying person. Finally, most of the time even though they do not prefer, they stay obliged to go alone. Additionally, people have an expectation to socialize during the holidays and they see it as a must.

- **Other Barriers and Ways to Eliminate**

Other problems mentioned about the participation of tourism for all are the women rights, the security issues, the stress of holiday organizations such as early reservation and similar procedures and not being able to fix common time for holidays with family members.

*“If the government does not agree to change the rules and regulations,  
nothing will happen, all and everything follow its will”*

The role of the government is emphasized to be on the forefront. Because the control of the economy, ministries, private sector, NGOs, everything is under control of a centralized government. Thus, the application and improvement of the convenient pricing policies, discounts or incentives, or the adjustment of the working hours and the holiday schedules can only be realized through the government approval.

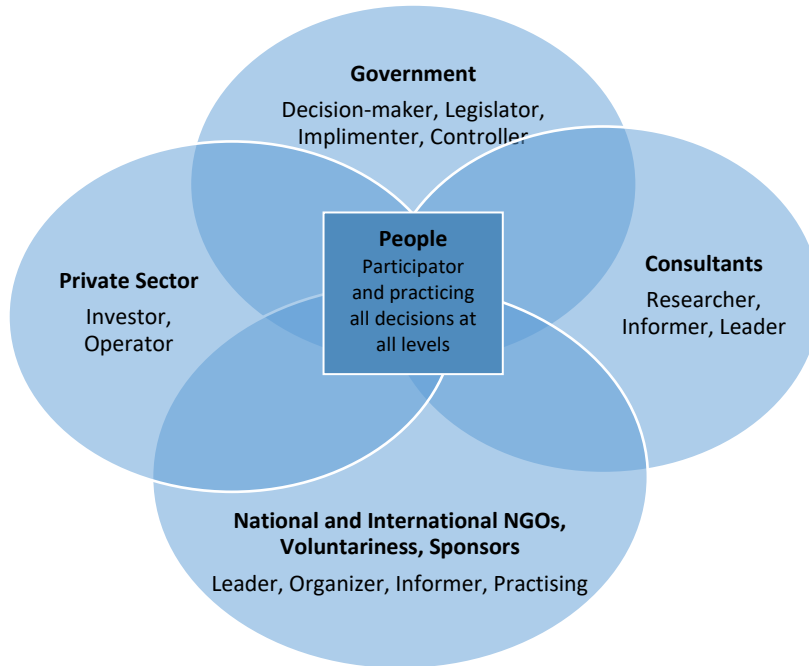
If 30 years ago, people with middle income had the opportunity to afford to buy secondary vacation homes at the seaside in Turkey, it means that the affordability was far higher than at present. Today as a result, still people over 60-70 exist which pass their summer time at their secondary homes. This is the only holiday that they afford varying from 15 days till several weeks in summer. Because, the pensions are also low.

Also, a Tourism Bank existed in the first years of the Republic for supporting tourism investors as well as the vacationists. Additionally, incentive travels, public facilities existed in this country. And so, what happened to the efforts of social tourism? Then, there must be solutions to increase the affordability of people for holidays.

Suggestions exist about the NGOs working and communicating to government more effectively through enabling the “fair and sustainable tourism for all”. School trips are suggested to be increased as a solution to increase participation. People also include that they can contribute by giving their ideas if it is asked in the production process of the social tourism holiday packages. The informative and educative efforts are among other suggestions to improve social tourism.

In this respect, the supply and demand analysis results reach a common ground on the creation of a more participative model including all the stakeholders as may be exhibited in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Sustainable Social Tourism Stakeholders and Their Roles



Source: Reproduced by Author's creations; Sonuç (2016).

### **Proposal of Social Tourism Product&Target Market in İzmir**

As a result of the demand analysis, Table 1 including the social tourism products is created according to the expectations of the respondents. The age categories are suggested in line with the needs and expectations of potential participators. When put into practice, even in the same age group, exceptions may exist and some people would like to prefer a product offered for another age group. The interviews may help at that point to select and match the people with correct product. However, before the suggestions are put into practice, a deeper demand analysis for matching the correct product with correct audience is advised.

**Table 1:** Suggestion of the target market&product suggestion match according to the expectations of the demand for Social Tourism

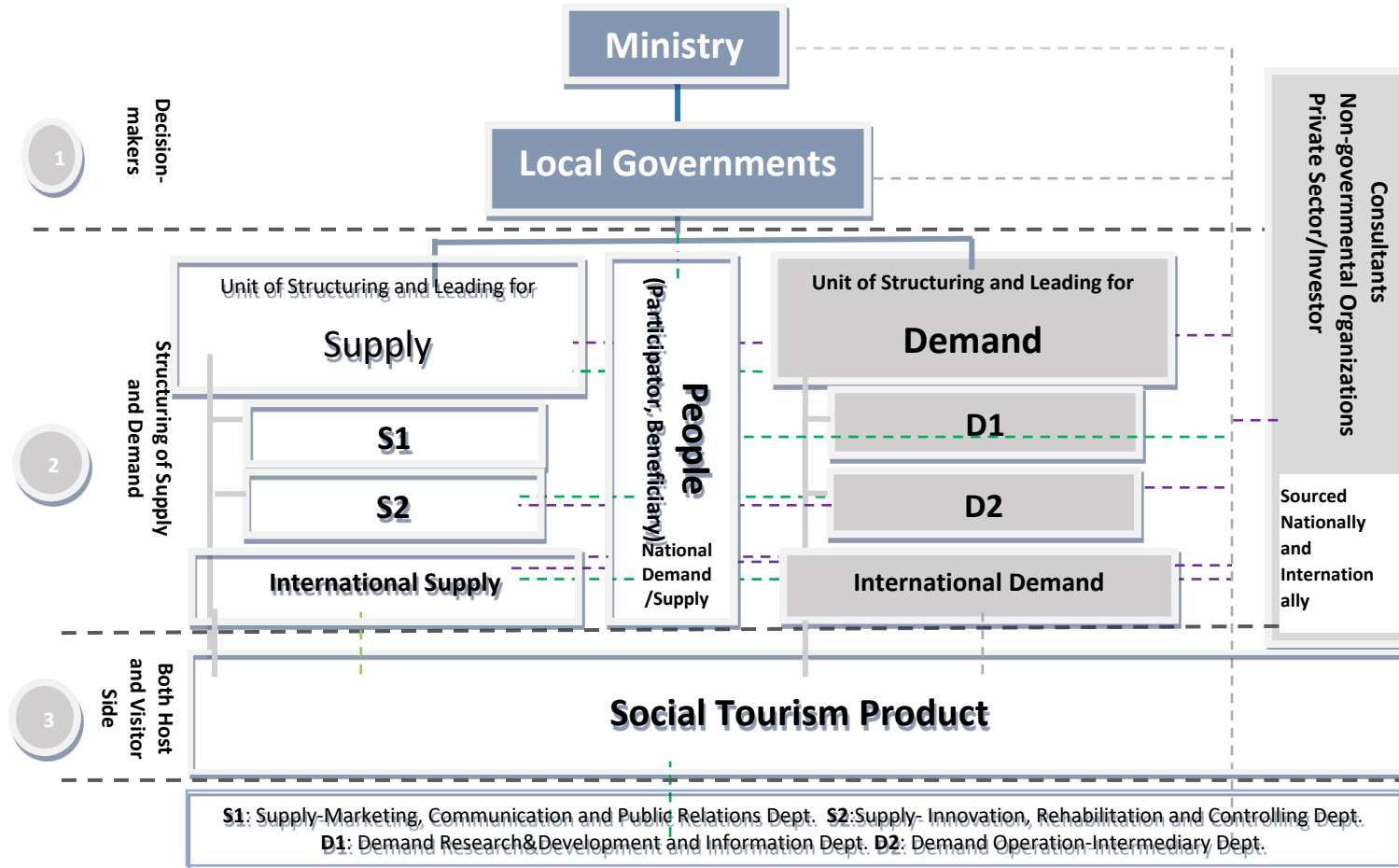
Holiday Product Suggestion		Aged	Content Specifications
Cultural Holidays: Discover different regions on guided trips to first Turkey's destinations and why not on the long term abroad by integrating to the European Social Tourism Projects.		60 and over, families	More relaxed pace, less loaded itinerary
		40-60, families	May include local special interest activities with a more intensive itinerary
Sun-Sea-Sand (3S) : (Two sub-categories)	Relaxing	20-39, 40-60	Resting and getting away from it all
	Animated	20-39, 40-60, families	Special interest activities, live music, popular entertainment
Snow/Skiing Holiday		20-39, families	Snow and winter tourism
Thermal Holidays		20-39, 40-60	Spa, Massage, Health-related well-being activities
Camping in Nature		20-39, families	With or without festivals and /activity/entertainment according to the will

Source: Author's creation.

- **Proposal of a Participative Model for Sustainable Social Tourism in İzmir**

The more centralized structure on the governmental level, the less easier to have a sustainable social tourism application functioning in an opposite direction which has to be inclusionary, participative and co-creative in the way it is applied. The local authorities empowered with the coordination of government bodies and regulations as well as the private sector and NGOs and the potential participators, the beneficiaries and the employees, the investors, all the shareholders that are possible to be affected by social tourism has to have their word to say in the construction of the new model of sustainable social tourism (Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** Suggestion of a More Inclusionary and Participative (Sustainable) Social Tourism Management Model



Source: Reproduced by Author's Creations (Sonuç&Oral 2017, Sonuç 2016)

### **Conclusion**

An insight into the situation of social tourism is tried to be given in this study from the sustainability perspective in İzmir, Turkey by a complementary analysis of demand side following up the previous research (Sonuç 2016, Sonuç&Oral 2017) done on supply side.

NGOs have little or no role in the functioning and application of social tourism in Turkey. Government and private sector as well, prefer the profit-based short-term economic benefits of foreign exchange derived from international tourism rather than improving sustainably the domestic tourism by a more participative social tourism model. The current unsustainable tourism practices makes Turkey a less expensive destination among its rivals on the Mediterranean Riviera even though possessing unique and countless natural and cultural resources which are consumed and even destroyed and damaged unfortunately because of unsustainable ways of utilisation. While on the other hand, these resources may be utilised in a more sustainable way, with a fairer price-quality ratio, if a socially sustainable tourism is applied.

Social tourism may be suggested if managed in a sustainable way, as a product which enables first the domestic tourism with the analysis of the different target markets and offering of products. In this sense, the Flanders (in Northern Belgium) model (Minnaert et al. 2011, Minnaert&Schapmans 2009) can be suggested for Turkey. A model similar to TPC (Tourism Participation Centre) which is an intermediary centre working within the central tourism organization for providing the liaison between public, private and social sectors in order to match the correct demand (social tourism participator) with the correct supply (social holiday/vacation offers) can be created in Turkey.

And then in the future, through the social tourism projects integrating together with the European and International partners especially for thermal, cultural and natural options of tourism packages for specific target groups and products can be created.

The educational part is also really important. At first sight, social tourism may not be appreciated as it is perceived as a non-profit based product type by the government and private sector. But this false perception needs to be corrected. To do so, seminars may be organized by national and/or international non-governmental organizations taking part in Turkey. And then, the trial projects may be done in convenient pilot localities. It is not easy to change the perception of the main central authorities in tourism such as government bodies (central government, ministry of tourism) and private sector (hotels, travel agencies, transportation companies) and profit-oriented NGOs (such as the association of hotels, travel

agencies, tour guides). It is also not easy to create NGOs in its real sense working for realization of “tourism for all”.

The research is limited to a local analysis of current state of social tourism at a specific destination; the third biggest city of Turkey, İzmir which can be referenced since the history as a pioneer for many socio-cultural and socio-economic organizations and investments and having an open view to develop a healthier society. Further comparative studies can be made in the future for other localities.

The gap between the theoretical objectives and the practical implications as well as the stable, centralized and exclusionary divided nature of the stakeholders show that, there is a need for a more inclusionary policy on defining the stakeholders’ role for a more successful application of social tourism practices that are suggested according to the findings and results of the study. Innes&Booher (2004) mention five basic objectives of the participation: First the understanding of the decision-makers about the preferences of the society; second to incorporate the local information to the decisions enabling the decision-makers to be more decisive and creating more participative decisions; the third is to ensure the fairness and justice; the fourth to increase the legitimacy of the public decisions by empowering the civic society and the fifth to add participatory solutions in line with the laws and regulations. If the participative decisions are important for a sustainable social tourism development, these suggestions would be useful to consider in the practical implications.

Additionally, the demand side analysis also show that there is a need for working on education, communication and co-creation to let both sides (supply and demand) cooperate in order to co-create a good functioning new sustainable social tourism model or plan for İzmir. Some suggestions are also made for the creation of social tourism products according to the results of the demand side analysis. Cultural tours, 3S holidays, camping holidays, thermal holidays and snow/skiing holidays according to the needs of different age groups and families with low income. Further detailed analysis for social tourism demand can be made if the sustainable social tourism model in İzmir can be put into practice in the future by the suggested parties.

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