

Benefit chains at Messel Pit World Heritage Site: creating a geotourism highlight in the tourism destination Odenwald, Germany

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What is behind the miracle to become a geotourism star for a destination that leads to additional numbers of valuable visitors? The geotourism shown through the collaboration of Messel Pit UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) together with the tourism destination Odenwald is a process, which builds a common appearance through a corporate design with quality offerings of walking activities, overnight stay packages, and public transportation with quality tour guide offerings, locality specific, and showcases regional products. The later to offer enjoyable earth discoveries and geotourism products like e.g., a “rain forest cake” with a cup of coffee, a “Maar crater soup” or Messel Pit revived fossils to former animal shape cookies or too merchandise products like a rainforest painting book, a set of playing cards in a quartet or a “Safari plate” for children after their guided time-travel tour across e.g., the Messel Pit WHS. Like the saying “a swallow does not make spring” – an offering, a museum, and a hotel do not create the benefit in geotourism. It is the interaction, exchange and combination of experiencing the destination by its obvious geotourism highlights in context with the today’s society that makes the success and benefit chains.

These are chains of different contributing partners, exchanging, promoting and benefiting by the quality of their products and service for visitors. Answering the call to such demands, each partner has to establish quality standards. The different partners will have different aims: economic direct or economic indirect, others an identity aim and image, and some are not aware of the side effect – a pride aim like the local residents at a destination. Finally, there is a benefit chain comprising all who participate “a bit”. “Bits” come together to formulate flow of revenue, etc. Descriptive and quantitative data on this development is presented.

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