



**FIGURE 12.1**  
Host community resources.

shared among residents and visitors. Residents and visitors often enjoy the same beaches, rivers, lakes, and mountains. This blending of local people and their resources with outsiders can have many social and cultural impacts, some positive and some not so positive.

## Social and Cultural Benefits of Tourism

In addition to economic gains, tourism can provide many social and cultural benefits. By bringing people from a wide variety of places and cultures together, visitors and locals learn about each other, their differences, and their similarities. They also become aware of new tastes and ways of thinking, which may lead to increased tolerance among the hosts and the visitors. After 18 years, the United States lifted the travel ban on Libya in February 2004 because of its progress in fighting terrorism. In April 2004, a Dutch firm signed a \$2 billion contract to develop four new tourism resorts on the coastline of Libya. Libya now has a Tourism Ministry to oversee its infant tourism industry. Although tourism flows were staunchly due to civil unrest and a regime change, only time will tell whether citizens of the world will feel comfortable traveling in the previously controversial region.<sup>24</sup>

Another important cultural benefit of tourism is the attainment of the “critical mass” of interest necessary to maintain the viability of a society’s culture, especially the culture’s authentic art forms.<sup>25</sup> The opportunity to sell native crafts or to perform to an enthusiastic audience can entice local artisans to continue traditional art forms that otherwise may no longer be seen as a viable means of income. For example, in Fiji, islanders have turned their crafts of palm mats and shell jewelry into lucrative tourist businesses. They also earn additional income by performing folk dances, including fire walking.<sup>26</sup>

In many cases, the growth of tourism in developing countries, such as Turkey,<sup>27</sup> has led to improved standards of living and greater educational opportunities, especially for women and young people who were formerly “enslaved” by tradition. In Spain, for example, growth in tourism led to the employment of many young women outside the home and gave them lifestyle choices other than the homemaker role that had been their only option in the past.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, tourism provides the opportunity to preserve the region’s historical and natural sites. Revenues from tourist fees and taxes afford the host area the ability to produce income and create jobs from lands and historic sites that would otherwise have