



SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM

Making tourism count to communities, ecosystems and businesses

Makie Magayu

Kenya Utalii College, Kenya

Community based tourism development - a framework for Kenya

The ostensible failure of mainstream conventional tourism has led many governments of developing countries in Africa to take up alternative means of tourism development. Community based tourism (CBT) has been advocated for as the preferred mode of tourism that will serve as a key catalyst for economic regeneration and poverty eradication. Many developing countries in Africa have recognized the importance of CBT as a panacea to tourism development challenges, providing benefits to local impoverished communities. CBT is gradually gaining momentum in Kenya, a developing country, with tourism as one of its main foreign exchange earners. However, the feasibility of CBT development in Kenya remains questionable with the major hindrances and barriers that CBT is faced with. In addition, with the growing awareness of the importance of CBT, there is a need for community based conservation models and framework guidelines in Kenya and other developing countries where high levels of bio-diversity and population growth co-exist. Therefore, the aim of this research is to develop a CBT framework for Kenya, based on an analysis of selected successful initiatives across Kenya. To achieve this aim, a research analysis on selected community based tourism initiatives in Kenya was undertaken in order to establish the factors that lead to the success (and failure) of CBT initiatives. The research also obtained insights on the present nature of tourism development in Kenya, through secondary data collection. The analysis revealed that successful initiatives all share similar success factors. However, there exist political, economic, social-cultural, legal and environmental challenges that pose great hindrances to these initiatives and to community based tourism as a whole. By using this analysis, a community based tourism framework was created in order to provide best practise guidelines for tourism practitioners and stakeholders wishing to engage in community based tourism development. The main conclusions drawn were that CBT is a viable means of development for developing countries. However, for CBT to fully be exploited and for local communities to benefit from it, the hindrances to CBT must be dealt with and eradicated. However, this is a long term process where a „people centred“ approach to CBT development should be adopted aiming at sustainability and diversity as opposed to conservation alone.