Contribution of Mombasa Marine National Park and Reserve to the socio-economic development of the neighbouring local communities

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Mombasa Marine National Park and Reserve (MMNP&R) in Kenya was established in 1986 but came into operation in 1991. The Marine protected Area (MPA) was established to enhance biodiversity conservation, to attract tourists and to improve the local community livelihoods. This study was conducted to determine whether the objective of improving local community livelihoods is met. The study was conducted at Bamburi 5 km to the MPA and Jumba which is 10 km away, for comparison. Questionnaires, Focused Group Discussion guide and observation schedule were used to obtain primary data. Descriptive data analysis was used to describe the distribution and frequencies of income levels in the communities. The Regression model of respondents income = f (distance from MMNP&R, level of education, gender, age and occupation of the respondents) was used. The findings show that the average income from marine activities per day is higher in Bamburi (KES 1325) compared to Jumba (KES 449). The results revealed that 36% of the respondents in Bamburi strongly agreed with the perception that MMNP&R contributes to the local community livelihoods contrary to 20% at Jumba. The findings further reveal that MMNP&R has contributed to increase in fish abundance 75% (as indicated by respondents) thus contributing to the improved catch 38% for the local community. Accordingly, this study recommends that Jumba resident to adopt more conservative approach to fishing to ensure sustainability of the fish stocks. This should be done through implementation of a no-take locally management marine area (LMMA) as a conservation initiative. Moreover, the Jumba residents should focus on attracting more tourists by investing more on tourists’ facilities to increase their income levels. MPA officers should build a positive rapport with the local communities by addressing their concerns including contribution of MPA to their livelihoods.