

Analysing the impacts of tourism Slump on local livelihoods in a tourism dependent community: A case study of Shimoni-Mkwiro and Vanga in Coastal Kenya

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STUDENT: The potential of tourism to contribute to local livelihoods and wellbeing is well established. However, tourism is a fickle industry, which is vulnerable to collapse due to political instability or other events. This latter problem has led to concern over tourism dependency in which any declines in tourist numbers could have a devastating effect on the wellbeing of local people at the destinations that rely on tourism. A further concern is that the loss of tourism-related livelihoods upon occurrence of tourism collapse might result in a switch of local livelihoods towards alternative activities that are detrimental to the ecosystem. This research therefore was designed to take advantage of a unique opportunity of 2014 tourism collapse in Kenya and to fill in the gap towards the impacts of collapse of tourism to local livelihoods and wellbeing. Resolving this gap in the literature is an urgent research priority because a better understanding of tourism dependency and associated impacts on the natural environment would help to inform nature-based tourism policy and practice. Research was done in Mkwiro and Vanga in south coast of Kenya; Mkwiro is an active tourism site because of the Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Park and reserve. Vanga on the other hand, sees tourism as one of the potential economic activity that has not started. A number of methods were used to collect data that included household surveys targeting the tourism household heads, focus groups, key informant interviews, and observations as well as detailed secondary data from local boat owners, hotels and Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS), and pre-tourism household data in the areas of study. The results showed there was 25% drop in international tourist numbers which was associated by years and not seasons Year (F ratio 11.003, P value= $<.0001$), seasons (F ratio 0.4589, P value= NS) while domestic tourism continued to rise with more Kenyan visiting the areas. However, all forms of tourist activities were affected, for instance, men moved to more profitable occupations and number of women increased in less profitable sector. Both international and domestic tourism are important to the economy therefore the government institutions need to ensure there is a good political stability and strengthen existing tourism bodies.