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# Tourism and Socio-economic Development in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Mombasa Resort in Kenya

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This paper looks at issues surrounding sustainable tourism as a tool for local socio-economic development in Kenya, using the case study of Mombasa Resort Town. Illustrated by primary data from field interviews and surveys in Mombasa, backed by secondary data, it finds that due to the nature of the Kenyan tourism industry (external control and management of tourism establishments, limited local involvement and high leakage rates), the industry has not played an effective role in local socio-economic development. Ways forward are suggested.

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**Keywords:** tourism in developing countries, sustainable tourism development, socio-economic development, Kenyan tourism, community tourism

## Introduction

The concept of sustainable tourism strives to harmonise and reconcile issues of intergenerational equity, and the goals of economic growth, environmental protection and social justice. It recognises the need for fairness between local individuals and groups, and between hosts and guests (Mbaiwa, 2005). If the concept of sustainable tourism is transformed into action, it is expected to contribute to the sustainability of the environment, social and cultural resources and overall socio-economic development. The increasing popularity of the concept derives from the widely held view that there is a need to alter current forms of consumption that perceive existing resources as being infinite.

A lot of attention has been paid to the economic and ecological aspects of sustainable development, especially at the national level (Roe & Khanya, 2001; Scheyvens, 2002), but little has been given to the analysis of the implications of sustainable tourism on specific local communities and on the industry's impact on the quality of life and on socio-ecological aspects of communities that are directly affected by the tourism industry, particularly in developing countries such as Kenya. This paper addresses those issues.

## Tourism development in Kenya

Kenya provides a good example of a developing country that has embraced tourism as a tool for socio-economic development. Kenya has increasingly become a popular tourist destination for visitors from Europe, North America and

emerging tourist-generating regions, particularly South-east Asia (Table 1). The country receives over 6% of the total international tourist arrivals to Africa, and the relative importance of tourism in Kenya's economy has risen steadily over the last 40 years (Kenya Government, 2004). However, to be of any meaning to marginalised local communities and individuals, especially in developing countries such as Kenya, tourism development should be part of a broader alternative policy framework that is designed to achieve a sustainable society. Sustainable tourism development should, therefore, not be seen as an end in itself, but as one of the several alternative development strategies that can assist local communities overcome their socio-economic and developmental weaknesses, preserve their strengths and enhance their developmental opportunities.

**Table 1** Departing visitors by country of residence and purpose of visit, 2000–2001 ('000)

<i>Country of Residence</i>	<i>Holiday</i>		<i>Business</i>		<i>Transit</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001
Germany	187.0	179.7	4.4	4.2	24.7	19.0	206.1	202.9
United Kingdom	119.9	115.2	17.3	16.6	11.0	14.3	148.2	146.1
Switzerland	19.9	19.1	2.6	2.5	3.4	4.4	25.9	26.0
Italy	24.6	23.6	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.6	30.3	30.1
France	18.9	18.2	2.7	2.6	3.1	4.0	24.7	24.8
Scandinavia	16.1	15.5	2.2	2.1	2.7	3.5	21.0	21.1
Other Europe	147.6	141.8	3.3	3.2	15.4	20.0	166.5	165.0
<b>Total Europe</b>	534.0	513.1	35.4	34.0	53.1	68.8	622.5	615.9
USA	44.7	43.0	5.1	4.9	4.3	5.6	54.0	53.4
Canada	14.2	13.6	1.9	1.8	2.2	2.9	18.3	18.3
<b>Total North America</b>	58.9	56.6	7.0	6.7	6.5	8.4	72.3	71.7
Uganda	14.3	13.7	21.2	20.4	4.4	5.7	39.9	39.8
Tanzania	25.2	24.2	5.7	5.5	11.7	15.2	42.6	44.9
Other Africa	30.8	29.6	17.5	16.8	14.3	18.5	62.6	64.9
<b>Total Africa</b>	70.3	67.6	44.4	42.7	30.4	39.4	145.1	149.6
India	12.1	11.6	2.4	2.3	2.3	3.0	16.7	16.6
Japan	10.4	10	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.4	12.8	12.6
Israel	5.9	5.7	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	7.2	7.0
Other Asia	12.7	12.2	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.9	29.2	19.3
<b>Total Asia</b>	41.1	39.5	7.7	7.4	6.8	8.8	55.6	55.7
Australia and New Zealand	13.9	13.4	1.7	1.6	1.8	2.3	17.3	17.3
All other countries	54	51.9	0.8	0.8	4.9	6.3	59.7	59.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>772.2</b>	<b>742.0</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>103.5</b>	<b>134.1</b>	<b>972.7</b>	<b>969.3</b>

Source: Economic survey, 2002.

Mombasa is the leading tourist centre in Eastern Africa, with the highest concentration of tourism and hospitality facilities and infrastructure. Mombasa and adjacent townships receive over one third of international tourist arrivals to Kenya. However, Mombasa in particular, and the Kenyan coastal region in general, is classified by the government as one of the regions with a high incidence of poverty and poor living conditions for local people (Kenya Government, 2004). It has been estimated that over 50% of the residents of Mombasa live below the poverty line, earning less than US\$ 1 per day. In the Kenyan context, the poverty line is the level at which an individual's income does not meet 'a minimum standard required to meet his or her basic needs such as food, shelter, sanitation and clean water supply' (Kenya Government, 2004: 195).

Over half of Mombasa's 500,000 residents cannot afford a decent meal, do not have access to clean water or basic sanitary facilities and can neither afford basic health care nor pay school fees for their children. Often the people living below the poverty line have no regular employment, their income is small and irregular and they lack basic capital to start micro-scale business enterprises in tourism and other sectors. Quite often, the children of people living below the poverty line do not attend school and even when they do, the dropout rate is quite high. Hence, most of the children rarely go beyond elementary school. The consequences of this abject poverty and social deprivation is reflected in an increased incidence of insecurity, theft, drug-taking and trafficking, prostitution, hunger and malnutrition, high mortality rate, high levels of illiteracy, an increased incidence of child labour, domestic violence and family breakups (Kenya Government, 1999a, 1999b).

In this regard, it should be asked, if tourism is a main economic sector in Mombasa and other centres in Kenya, what role is the industry playing in the improvement of the living conditions of the local people? Is tourism an appropriate tool for sustainable local socio-economic development? This study addresses some of the critical issues on sustainable tourism development, particularly as it relates to equitable distribution of the tourism benefits to different stakeholders, local participation in tourism decisionmaking processes, the leakage rate and multiplier effects of tourism and its marketing.

## **Methodology**

This research uses a case study of Mombasa and adjacent townships to analyse the role played by tourism as an option for sustainable local community development. It examines tourist motivations for visiting Mombasa, their responses to the area and sets this study against local residents' views of the tourist industry.

The study population consisted of: (1) local people living in Mombasa and the adjacent area and (2) tourists in the same area. Cluster sampling was applied to select the sampling units (i.e. Kisauni, Likoni and Changamwe) where most local people reside. Convenience sampling techniques were applied to recruit respondents from each sampling unit. Data collection was by a combination of questionnaires, interviews and field observation. Questionnaires and field interviews were administered in locations such as hotels and restaurants, entertainment centres, attraction sites and along the streets and residential areas.

In addition, scheduled interviews and structured dialogue was conducted with selected private and public sector representatives, local community leaders and politicians.

Two types of questionnaires were administered – one for local people and the other for tourists. Each questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section covered general sociodemographic attributes, while the second section addressed overall issues on tourism development such as existing tourist attractions, forms of interactions between residents and tourists, and the use of local tourism resources and recreational facilities. The last section of the questionnaire probed the role of tourism as a tool for local socio-economic development including existing forms of tourism employment, local decisionmaking processes, ownership and management of tourism resources, forms of tourism marketing and the distribution of tourism revenues among various stakeholders.

This study was undertaken from June to July 2002. Two hundred and twentyseven international tourists and a similar number of local residents were interviewed. The data collected was organised, tabulated and analysed using computer statistical packages.

## **Research Findings**

### **International tourists**

A summary of findings is given in Table 2. Eighty percent of the international tourists were travelling under an inclusive tour package. As is usually the characteristic of all-inclusive tour package travel arrangements, most international tourists (87%) stated that they were staying in high-class resort hotels and condominiums (i.e. 3- to 5-star hotels) for a period of 7–21 days. Most of these grand tourism and hospitality establishments are under the ownership and management of multinational and foreign investors including Hayes and Javuis, Lonhro Corporation, United Tour companies, Kuoni, Africa Club, Universal Safari Tours, Pollmans, Franco Russo and Grand Viaggi.

A significant 53% (Cramer's  $V = 0.541$ ) of the international tourists stated that it was mainly the unique and diverse wildlife attractions that motivated them to visit Kenya. Eighteen percent listed the country's pleasant weather conditions and 15% listed unique indigenous cultures. It can be argued that these motivational attributes derive from and/or are influenced by the marketing strategies used by overseas tour operators, particularly when marketing Third World destinations such as Kenya. Commercials appearing in print and in the electronic media market Kenya as a tourist destination for the 'Big Five' (Elephant, Lion, Rhino, Leopard and Buffalo). Little effort is expended in giving meaningful information about Kenya's diverse cultural and nature-based attractions.

When asked to name what they liked most on their trip, 40% of the tourists listed the friendly character of the local residents. Other aspects that the tourists liked included visiting Fort Jesus (an imposing 17th Century Fort built by Portuguese sailors), the tranquil and pristine tropical beaches and the warm and pleasant weather conditions.

**Table 2** Interview responses of international tourists

<i>Item</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Reasons for visit</i>		
(a) Unique cultural attractions	29	15.2
(b) Pristine tropical beaches	26	13.6
(c) Unique wildlife attractions	101	52.9
(d) Pleasant climate	35	18.3
<i>Purpose of the visit</i>		
(a) Holiday	170	91.9
(b) Visit friends and relatives	6	3.2
(c) Business	3	1.6
(d) Attend conference	–	–
(e) Study tour	–	–
(f) Others	6	3.2
<i>Type of accommodation</i>		
(a) Five star hotel	34	18.2
(b) Four star hotel	92	49.2
(c) Three star hotel	38	20.3
(d) Two star hotel	18	9.6
(e) Campsite	1	0.5
(f) Guest house	3	1.6
(g) Staying with friends and relatives	1	0.5
(h) Others	–	–
<i>Trip duration</i>		
(a) 1 day	3	1.7
(b) 2–3 days	17	9.4
(c) 4–7 days	40	22.2
(d) 8–14 days	98	54.4
(e) 15–21 days	16	8.9
(f) 22 days or more	6	3.3
<i>Mode of travel</i>		
(a) An inclusive tour package	145	80.1
(b) Individual travel arrangements	36	19.9
<i>Services in packaged tour</i>		
(a) Return ticket	142	29.3
(b) Accommodation	132	27.2
(c) Car rental	1	0.2
(d) Meals at restaurants	127	26.2
(e) Tickets for park entry, museum and other attractions	33	6.8
(f) Local tour (transportation)	50	10.3
(g) Others	–	–

It is, therefore, interesting to note that although initially most of the international tourists had indicated that they had decided to visit Kenya because of wildlife attractions, they mainly listed social and cultural attributes (i.e. the friendliness of the local residents and visiting Fort Jesus) as the trip attributes that they liked most. Perhaps this is clear indication that although Kenya's cultural attractions are rarely marketed by overseas tour operators, there is overwhelming latent demand for these attractions. It can therefore be argued that Kenya's rich and diverse indigenous cultures have great potential for tourism

development. Tourism research has shown that cultural attractions are becoming main motivational factors for global tourists. Furthermore, changing demographic and economic trends, including increasing levels of affluence, educational and cultural awareness encourages public demand for cultural attractions.

International tourists gave various ratings on product quality, from below average (the lowest rating) to excellent (the highest rating). Overall, an overwhelming 86% stated that they had received value for money in terms of service delivery in the hotels, unique cultural attractions and pristine sand beaches. Attributes that were rated below average included transport infrastructure and the level of cleanliness of Mombasa and adjacent townships. This should not be surprising. In areas adjacent to the resort hotels and other tourism establishments, there are slum settlements inhabited by local residents. It has been estimated that over 60% of local residents in Mombasa and adjacent townships live in slum settlements which lack basic amenities (Kenya Government, 2002). Paradoxically, some of these settlements have, in recent years, sprung up in areas adjacent to the luxurious tourist hotels and condominiums. Grinding poverty and social deprivation is so extreme that, quite often, there is a mismatch and miscommunication between tourism developers in the public and private sector and marginalised local residents. This scenario creates despondence and disenchantment among local residents as vividly captured by the following remark by a local resident in one of informal settlements in Mombasa:

Look at the magnificent hotels that surround us with all the accompaniment of luxury and grand living enjoyed by international tourists. Even the lawns and flower gardens are constantly sprinkled with water to maintain their aura of beauty and greenery. Yet we the indigenous people lack basic necessity of earning a simple and decent livelihood. We continue to wallow in extreme poverty and destitution having no access to basic amenities and services such as clean running water, sanitation services and power supply.

Such a disquieting scenario demonstrates the material and socio-economic differences between affluent tourists staying in high class resort hotels and economically deprived and marginalised local residents living in slum environments. Unplanned urban structures continue to mushroom in Mombasa, used by local vendors to sell goods and services, including souvenirs, groceries, agricultural produce and even local brews and foodstuffs. Moreover, waste disposal facilities are poor, resulting in haphazard dumping of waste in available open spaces, reducing the level of cleanliness and the aesthetic beauty of the town.

Over 53% of the international tourists stated that poverty is the most serious problem confronting the local residents; 32% listed unemployment and poor living conditions. They indicated that poverty and living conditions of the residents were worse than they had anticipated.

### **Local residents**

Seventy percent of the local people affirmed that poverty is the most serious problem that they face. Paradoxically, 91% of them stated that tourism has, over

the years, benefited the people of the region. When asked to state the forms of benefits that accrue to local people from tourism, 58% listed employment opportunities, followed by 34% who listed the availability of business opportunities (Table 3). In this regard, it is generally accepted that the development of tourism creates employment and business opportunities for both the local community and other tourism investors. Moreover, proponents of tourism contend that,

**Table 3** Interview responses of local residents

<i>Item</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Reasons for visit</i>		
(a) Climate	99	25.8
(b) Beach	108	28.2
(c) Historical features	64	16.7
(d) Variety of attractions	60	15.7
(e) Cultural aspects	20	5.2
(f) Excellent tourist facilities	16	4.2
(g) Friendly people	9	2.3
(h) Holiday	7	1.8
<i>Benefits to the local residents</i>		
(a) Employment creation	129	57.8
(b) Business opportunities	76	34.1
(c) Development of infrastructure	10	4.5
(d) Cross-cultural understanding	8	3.6
<i>Tourism impacts</i>		
(a) Drug trafficking	113	11.6
(b) Prostitution	157	16.1
(c) Pimping and hustling	64	6.6
(d) High prices of commodities	98	10
(e) Acute housing shortage	13	1
(f) Overcrowded streets	23	2.4
(g) Police harassment of vendors	53	5.4
(h) Increased crime rates	69	7.1
(i) Water and pollution problems	21	2.1
(j) Environmental sewage	18	1.8
(k) Creation of jobs	108	11.1
(l) Preservation of culture and nature	74	7.6
(m) Increase understanding	56	5.7
(n) Undermining social values	70	7.2
(o) Natural environment pollution	39	4.0
<i>Who benefit most from tourism</i>		
(a) The Government	102	36.0
(b) Hoteliers	97	34.3
(c) Tour and travel firms	61	21.6
(d) Local residents	23	8.1
<i>Point of interactions with tourists</i>		
(a) Place of resident	5	2.2
(b) Place of work	105	64.3
(c) Business premises	14	6.2
(d) Streets of Mombasa	29	12.8
(e) Tourists attractions	38	16.7
(f) Entertainment centres	26	5.9



since the industry is labour-intensive, it has great potential in creating employment opportunities, particularly in economically depressed regions. Hence, in many developing countries, the tourism industry is perceived as a major source for much sought-after employment and other source of income. However, the majority of local residents who work in the tourism industry in Mombasa and other centres in Kenya tend to occupy unskilled, servile and lowly paying positions including waiters, gardeners, porters, janitors and security guards. In most instances, the well-paying job positions, at supervisory and managerial level, are occupied by expatriates. It should be noted that approximately 50% of the total population in Kenya is under the age of 15 years, and as a consequence, the working population has to support a large and growing number of young people.

## **Discussion**

At its face value, the development of tourism in Kenya in general and Mombasa in particular may appear to be successful and to a certain extent, the tourism industry can be said to contribute to socio-economic development at both the national and local level. The international tourists who were interviewed indicated that they had had a good value and quality experience. Likewise, the local residents contended that the tourism industry brought benefits to the local community in terms of job creation and business opportunities. However, a critical evaluation of tourism development in Mombasa and its role in sustainable local community development presents a less optimistic scenario; local people are faced with insurmountable barriers to seizing economic opportunities created by tourism development. The next section of this paper discusses the issues involved.

### **Local empowerment and participation in tourism**

Kenya's governments (local and national) have mainly promoted large scale, capital-intensive tourism and hospitality projects such as beach resorts, high-rise grand hotels, lodges and condominiums. Most have been initiated through foreign and multinational investments (Akama, 2004; Sinclair, 1990) and have tended to preclude local participation in tourism project design, planning and management (Bachmann, 1988; Sindiga, 2000). Moreover, the formulation of tourism policy and planning in Kenya is highly centralised, mainly involving top officials, elites and foreign consultants hired by central government. Local people are rarely involved in the provision of the core and profitable tourism and hospitality services such as transportation, accommodation, catering services and management of tourism facilities. Commenting on Third World tourism, Goodwin (1998: 4) states:

Local people are denied any significant opportunity to participate in the tourism market. Tourists are not accessible to the local community when they are within their hotels, coaches, safari vehicles or inside sites and attractions such as museums. These are all enclave forms of tourism, where those wishing to sell to tourists are often reduced to hawking at the enclave entry and exit points. Cruise ship passengers and tourists on 'all inclusive'

packages are particularly difficult for local entrepreneurs to access (and these sectors are growing rapidly).

Mbaiwa (2005) denotes enclave tourism as a form of internal colonialism where tourism resources in a destination mostly benefit outsiders while the majority of local people derive insignificant or no benefits. Mbaiwa correlates the increase in poverty among the host population in developing country destination areas with enclave tourism involving hefty transfer or repatriation of revenue to developed countries.

Such scenarios are common in Mombasa, where local residents mainly engage in marginal and informal business activities (generating minimal profit) such as hawking and vending of souvenirs along streets. The provision of core tourism and hospitality services is controlled and managed by foreign investors. Exclusion of local people from these core business areas significantly aggravates the gap between the 'fewer' rich and the 'majority' poor. Further, within Kenya, it is estimated that the 10% of the country's top income earners make 36 times more than does the bottom 10% (Aseto *et al.*, 2003). This makes Kenya one of the countries with the highest income disparities in the world. The lack of knowledge of various facets of tourism product development and marketing inhibits effective participation by local people in tourism. The lack of democratic space and corruption makes it almost impossible for marginalised people to play any meaningful role in tourism development.

Sen (1997) argues that one factor which exacerbates the gap between rich and poor is the powerlessness of the poor people who are usually unable to challenge the functionaries of the existing anachronistic tourism structures and hold them and the politicians accountable. Local people, particularly the more vulnerable groups, such as women and youth, need to be provided with a chance to build individual and collective capability in order to gain access to economic opportunities and basic living conditions. The lack of strong social organisation makes this capacity-building difficult. Legislation alone cannot empower people. They need an enabling environment through education, motivation, empathy and support from enlightened political and professional organisations that work with them on their behalf (Pyakuryal, 2000). Enhancing the existing human and social capital base of the local residents will enable them to systematically interact with those wielding power on a more equitable and informed basis, and negotiate more effectively on issues that affect their wellbeing.

### **Local economic development**

The economies of developing countries, particularly African countries, are highly vulnerable and are affected by the processes of globalisation and increasing dominance and control by multinational corporations (Rodricks, 2001). Debbage (1990: 515) postulates, 'the increasing oligopolistic structure of the international tourism industry indicates the intrinsic value of the profit cycle in explaining how oligopoly can shape the product-cycle of a resort'. The development of tourism in most African and other developing countries is increasingly being influenced by the unpredictable processes of global oligopoly (the increasing control of the tourism market by a small number of multinational companies). They can shift international tourism demand among destinations

**Table 4** Declining days and per capita expenditure of tourists in Kenya

<i>Year</i>	<i>Average length of stay (days)</i>	<i>Total expenditure per person (US\$)</i>	<i>Expenditure per person per day (US\$)</i>
1987	16.0	536	33.5
1988	16.0	567	35.4
1989	14.4	571	39.6
1990	14.4	572	39.8
1991	13.7	537	39.0
1992	13.4	565	42.2
1993	13.9	500	36.0
1994	13.6	488	35.9
1995	12.2	657	53.9
1996	13.3	554	41.7
1997	11.8	400	33.9
1998	9.6	376	39.2
1999	9.4	271	28.8
2000	8.7	260	29.9
2001	8.4	305	36.3

Source: Kenya government statistical abstract and economic survey, 2002.

in developing countries, depending on profit considerations, causing unforeseeable disruption to tourism development in third world countries.

Further, the marketing of Kenya's tourism product in tourist-generating countries, particularly in Europe and North America, is mainly under the control of overseas tour operators and travel agents (Sindiga, 2000). To maximise their profit margins, overseas tour operators mainly market inclusive tour packages to Kenya, whereby visitors pay them for a complete travel package. As a consequence, there has been significant leakage of the tourism revenues to western metropolises. Leakages of tourism receipts to overseas companies operating inclusive tour packages may range from 40 to 70% (Bennett *et al.*, 1999; Kenya Government, 2003; Sinclair, 1990).

High receipt leakages are linked to the declining per capita tourist expenditure in the recent past (Table 4). Overseas tour operators have taken advantage of the rapid depreciation of the Kenyan currency to maximize their profit margins (Kenya Government, 2003; Sinclair, 1990). Since the late 1980s, Kenya has experienced poor economic performance, high inflation rates and a decrease in the gross domestic product (GDP). Overseas tour operators and travel agents have continued to negotiate tour package contracts to Kenya in terms of Kenyan shillings, a currency which has rapidly depreciated against the US dollar, leading to falling real receipts (Dieke, 1991; Kenya Government, 2000; Sinclair, 1990).

Goodwin (1998) and WTO (2002) suggest the following measures to counteract tourism revenue leakages:

- (1) Encouragement of local ownership and management of tourism resources, and small and medium enterprise development.
- (2) Enhancement of linkages (both inter- and intra-linkages) and partnerships to the local economy. Strong linkages between tourism stakeholders and the poor will enhance the multiplier effect, thus contributing to increased revenue retention and creation of employment opportunities for local people. Hoteliers and tour operators need to work with local communities and local

government to develop forms of tourism that would bring sustainable local development and provide richer experiences for both domestic and international tourists. Such partnerships can benefit both host communities and the tourism industry, retain tourism earnings in the local community and ameliorate socio-economic problems. Tourism enclaves should be avoided. Partnership with local communities is particularly crucial; quite often the most vulnerable and marginalised groups have weak management skills and appreciation of travel industry requirements.

- (3) Develop local sources of supply to the tourism establishments. Most of the goods required are usually supplied from outside sources, retaining little expenditure locally. Engaging with local suppliers by using local capital and resources and developing the skills necessary to deliver quality goods and services, consistently and at comparative prices, can increase retention of tourism revenues.

Local economic development requires that tourism benefits be distributed beyond local or national elites to those who find employment in their hotels and agencies (Goodwin, 1998). Unfair and unequal benefit distribution brings more poverty.

### **Marketing and promotion**

The marketing and promotion of Mombasa's tourist attractions is mostly under the control of overseas tour companies and their local subsidiaries with little input from local residents on what and how attractions should be marketed in tourist-generating countries (Sinclair, 1990; Sindiga, 2000). The tour operators have specialised in designing and promoting destination images of developing countries such as Kenya, aimed at communicating particular messages and information. Hence, the image of Mombasa that appears in tourism brochures, on television and on websites is usually constructed and presented by external interest groups that may not necessarily represent the economic interests and cultural values of the local people. Equally, the lack of knowledge and understanding of the global tourism market, and financial constraints, preclude local people from these processes. As a result, the messages and images used by multinational companies in the marketing of tour packages are usually based on existing dominant Western cultural values and economic systems. They also reflect the historical and economic relations that exist between the developed and developing countries, relations that date back to the colonial period.

Morgan and Pritchard (1998: 6) state:

Tourism image (as constructed by multinational tourism firms) reveal much about the power relations underpinning its construction, as it does about the specific product or country it promotes. The images projected in brochures, billboards and television reveal the relationships between countries, between genders and between races and cultures. They are powerful images that reinforce particular ways of seeing the world and can restrict and channel people, countries, genders and sexes into certain mind-sets.

Preconceived ideas about marketing and promotional images of developing countries are used to promote sales that increase their profit margins (Akama,

1997; Sindiga, 2000). Thus, although Mombasa and its surrounding areas have diverse cultural and nature-based attractions, only a limited image of Mombasa is presented, concentrating on the grand hotels and facilities that are owned by foreign investors. Other aspects of Kenyan culture that have great potential are rarely featured: sometimes, scenes of tropical sand beaches, and Fort Jesus and Haller Park are presented without any mention of local people and indigenous cultures.

It can therefore be argued that local people have been disenfranchised in the commodification and marketing of local tourism resources. They are not involved nor are they represented. This raises fundamental questions particularly about the authenticity of cultural tourism products and the ultimate equitable distribution of the revenues that accrue from these products. When the international tourists arrive in Mombasa, they already have preconceived ideas and expectations based on tour operators' marketing materials (Kenya Government, 2003; Sinclair, 1990). A trip to Mombasa by most tourists is usually a routine and predictable affair, spending most time on the beaches adjacent to the hotel and possibly including brief organised excursions to Fort Jesus, Old Mombasa Town and Haller Park, before leaving Mombasa for more extensive wildlife safari excursions in the inland parks and reserves. The spatial distribution and movement of international tourists in Mombasa and other tourism centres in the country is highly restricted.

It has also been observed that international tourists are usually given inaccurate and exaggerated information concerning the local security situation. Tour guides inform tourists that areas with high concentrations of local residents have high rates of crime and mugging. This is intended to discourage tourists from venturing into any other areas of town apart from prescribed sites. However, this may be contrary to the real situation: most of the tourists interviewed indicated that local people were friendly and welcoming.

## **Conclusion**

This case study shows that current forms of tourism development in Kenya have not reduced poverty or contributed to the socio-economic empowerment of local people. Large scale capital-intensive tourism projects have led to increasing control of the country's tourism resources by powerful external interest groups and the propagation of enclave tourism. Consequently, there is a high percentage of overseas leakage of tourism revenues, and limited linkages to the local and national economies. Local people are usually not involved in product development and product marketing, and derive minimal benefits from the tourism industry while bearing many of the costs. No clear tourism strategies and policies have been devised to enhance sustainable socio-economic development for local people.

If tourism is to contribute to sustainable local community development, there is an urgent need for tourism development strategies centred mainly on (1) expansion of local employment and self-employment, (2) expansion of informal sector opportunities, (3) development of partnership amongst public and private sectors, NGOs and local communities, (4) improving social and cultural impacts, (5) increasing local access to infrastructure and services provided for tourists,

(6) increasing participation of local people in decisionmaking process and (7) capacity-building to enable their participation. The success of tourism should therefore not be measured in terms of increased numbers of international tourist arrivals and gross tourism revenues, but should be evaluated according to how the industry is integrated with the local and national economy, and how the industry contributes to the overall development of local people at grassroots level.

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