

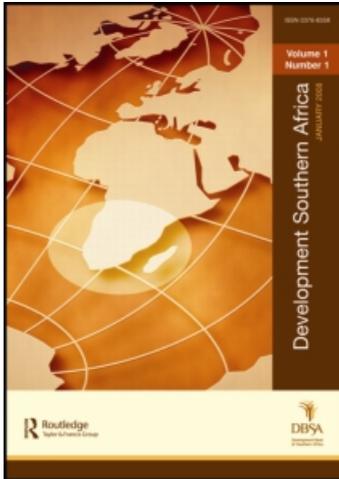
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Tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation: A community perspective from Tanzania

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Tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation: A community perspective from Tanzania

Michael Muganda, Mondher Sahli & Karen A Smith

Taking a micro-level approach, this study questions whether the positive impacts of tourism often claimed at the macro level do indeed trickle down to the grassroots level to lift local people out of poverty. A case study of the local community in Barabarani village, Mto wa Mbu, Arusha, on Tanzania's popular northern tourist circuit, compares the perspectives of local residents and key decision-makers in the community. The extent to which tourism development has affected seven signifiers of poverty alleviation are examined: accessibility improvement (transport and communication), prices of goods and services, entrepreneurial training, income-generating projects, employment opportunities, general quality of life and household income. Most of the local community felt tourism development is having a positive impact and contributing to poverty alleviation, especially in terms of improving local facilities. However, there are variations, with household distance from the main road through the community being a determining factor.

Keywords: community participation; tourism impacts; poverty alleviation; least developed countries

1. Introduction

Tourism is an increasingly popular component of development strategy in southern Africa and the least developed countries (LDCs) more generally, with the potential to boost the economy and alleviate poverty. Macro-level studies dominate (e.g. Chok et al., 2007; Hall, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007; Honeck, 2008), but there is a need to take a grassroots perspective as well and investigate poverty alleviation at the community level. This paper discusses the contribution of tourism development to poverty alleviation in Tanzania using a case study of the local community in Barabarani village, Mto wa Mbu, Arusha. The paper examines the extent to which tourism provides a means of socioeconomic development and poverty reduction in relation to seven key factors identified from the literature. Following the literature review and background on the case study and methodology, the findings present the views of local people and decision-makers within the community regarding tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation. The conclusion also considers the policy implications of these findings.

2. Tourism development and poverty alleviation

Despite their widespread use, the definition and measurement of poverty and poverty alleviation can be quite elusive. In this paper, poverty alleviation is defined as the process that seeks to reduce economic and non-economic poverty in a community.

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There is an increasing recognition that tourism is one of the better placed tools for poverty alleviation, which is a major concern for many LDCs, such as Tanzania (Wilkerson, 1996; Chok et al., 2007; Zhao & Ritchie, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007, 2008; Honeck, 2008). LDCs have abundant tourist assets, both natural and cultural, which can attract tourists, and tourism has become a growth economic sector (Scheyvens, 2007; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2007).

The impact of tourism on socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation can be felt in three key areas. First, since it can serve as a substantial source of foreign exchange earnings and public revenues, tourism contributes to economic development (Scheyvens, 2007; UNCTAD, 2007; Honeck, 2008). Second, tourism activities are generally labour-intensive, so expansion of these activities creates more employment opportunities for people of varying skills, including women (Chok et al., 2007; Nowak & Sahli, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007; UNCTAD, 2007). Third, tourism development generates better opportunities for local residents to gain larger and more balanced benefits when they participate fully in decision-making and ownership of tourism activities (Akama, 2002; Ryan, 2002; Kibicho, 2004; Tosun, 2000, 2006; Simpson, 2008). In these ways, tourism can play an important role in the economic and sociocultural developments that are critical for poverty alleviation.

Until recently, the case for tourism development as a tool for bringing about economic development in LDCs has predominantly been assessed according to its macroeconomic contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP), employment, tax revenues and total foreign exchange earnings rather than by measuring its specific impacts on poverty at the community level. Traditionally, national (or regional) economic growth is selected as the main target of local tourism development, while poverty alleviation is considered either a sub-goal or a natural outcome of national (or regional) economic growth (Ashley et al., 2000). A persistent belief is that as long as the whole country (region) gets wealthier thanks to tourism development, the benefits brought by economic growth will eventually trickle down to the local poor through multiple channels, such as employment, public welfare and family networks (Zeng et al., 2005; Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). Thus policy-makers usually pay considerable attention to the expansion of the tourism sector, but much less to how far tourism development contributes to poverty alleviation in practice (Christie, 2002). As a result, the impact of tourism on poverty alleviation has been indirect and thus unremarkable. In contrast, contemporary approaches such as pro-poor tourism and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty project have been seen to greatly enhance poor people's chances of benefiting from tourism (Ashley et al., 2001; UNWTO, 2002). While both initiatives have generated much interest, few tourism researchers have incorporated this relationship between tourism development and poverty alleviation into their research. It is not until recently that we have seen new research interest in the use of tourism as a powerful weapon to attack poverty at a micro level. These new approaches aim to establish a direct link between tourism and poverty alleviation and to speak for the poor in tourism development (e.g. Ashley et al., 2000; Ashley & Roe, 2002; Reid, 2003; Ashley & Mitchell, 2005; Scheyvens, 2002, 2007; Schilcher, 2007; Zhao & Ritchie, 2007).

Ashley et al. (2000), for instance, claim that poverty has not been part of the tourism agenda in the past, but that it is possible to make tourism more pro-poor, and increase earnings from tourism for the poorest sections of communities in developing countries. They also argue that poorly planned and managed tourism can damage social and cultural

traditions and lifestyles, raise the cost of living for local people and destroy ecological systems. Consequently, community involvement in tourism is essential if tourism development in LDCs is to be sustainable. Community involvement should be encouraged because it makes the planning process more effective, equitable and legitimate, as long as those who participate are representative of the whole community and capable of looking after collective interests as well as those of their own group.

Zhao & Ritchie (2007) present an integrative framework for anti-poverty tourism research which contextualises tourism as a vital tool for poverty alleviation and identifies stakeholders, processes and mechanisms through which tourism development can help alleviate poverty. 'The poor', who are in most cases the local communities in LDCs (Chok et al., 2007), are identified as one of the key stakeholders playing a significant role in tourism planning, development and management. The framework emphasises the need for active local participation to ensure, if proper planning is in place, that the various economic opportunities arising from tourism development can reach the poor.

The importance of community involvement in planning and managing tourism development has been emphasised elsewhere (Tosun, 2000; Ashley & Roe, 2002; Rogerson, 2002; Simpson, 2008; Sebele, 2010). For example, in research at the micro level, two studies of community tourism in Kenya found that the higher the level of community involvement, the bigger the benefits from tourism. A local community's dependence on tourism thus strongly influences their evaluation of its benefits and costs and their attitudes towards it (Kibicho, 2004). People involved in tourism activities have a better perception of its socioeconomic impacts than those who are not. Manyara and Jones (2007) found that although some community-based tourism enterprises have been successful according to some parameters (such as occupancy rates and income generation), their impact on poverty alleviation was still insignificant. Nevertheless, they see community-based tourism enterprises as having potential for, or having already contributed to, the development of local economies, which is particularly important in rural and marginal areas with few economic alternatives.

Kibicho's (2004) study reports impacts from tourism on socioeconomic issues, such as employment opportunities, personal income, standard of living, prices of goods and services, attitudes to work, crimes, honesty in any commercial exchange, and quality of life in general. In Indonesia, Timothy (1999) found that entrepreneurial training and income-generating projects among local people had increased as a result of tourism development. However, lack of education, skills and capital, along with elitism and migrants, have also been identified by various studies as barriers preventing local people from accessing tourism-created opportunities that could lift them out of poverty.

Overall, seven poverty alleviation factors have emerged from these and other micro-studies as areas where tourism could be a vehicle for socioeconomic development and poverty reduction within the communities (Timothy, 1999; Tosun, 2000, 2006; Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002; Kibicho, 2004; Cole, 2006; Manyara & Jones, 2007). These are: *accessibility improvement* (transport and communication), *prices of goods and services* (from both producer and consumer perspectives), *entrepreneurial training*, *income-generating projects*, *employment opportunities*, *general quality of life* and *household incomes*.

As mentioned above, tourism's impact on poverty alleviation has predominantly been studied at a macro level. This paper contributes to the growing understanding of impacts at the micro level. It presents a case study of the local community in Barabarani

village, Mto wa Mbu, Arusha, Tanzania. The study made investigations at the grassroots community level to explore local people's views on the extent to which tourism has contributed to improving socioeconomic issues. The aim was to broaden our understanding of tourism as a poverty alleviation tool and, more importantly, to gain an impression of whether the positive achievements often claimed for tourism at the macro level do indeed trickle down to the community level and improve the livelihoods of local people.

3. Tourism development and poverty alleviation in Tanzania: A case study approach

Tanzania has rapidly become an important tourist destination in the Southern African Development Community. The country has been marketed internationally as a quality nature tourism destination and tourism is identified as a key economic driver. In 2007 there were 719 031 international arrivals (Tanzania Tourist Board, 2007). The emphasis on the tourism sector must be viewed as part of the fundamental restructuring of the Tanzanian economy away from one dominated by primary production (agriculture and mining), towards a more diverse economy in which the travel and tourism industry contributes increasingly to the GDP (UNCTAD, 2008). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that travel and tourism would reach 9 per cent of GDP in 2009. Tourism has recently overtaken agriculture to become the number one foreign exchange earner for Tanzania and it is expected that earnings from international visitors and tourism goods would generate 27.5 per cent of total exports of goods and services in 2009 (WTTC, 2009). In 2007 the industry employed 250 000 people, compared to 132 000 ten years earlier (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2008).

While the government of Tanzania views tourism as a significant industry in terms of poverty alleviation, little is known about its contribution towards improving the livelihoods of local communities. To investigate this at the community level, a case study approach was appropriate. Barabarani village, Mto wa Mbu-Arusha, is located 130 kilometres (a 2-hour drive) west of the regional capital of Arusha Region (Figure 1). Mto wa Mbu, which in English means the *river of mosquitoes* or *mosquito creek*, is one of the 20 administrative wards of the Monduli district. It is located on Tanzania's famous northern tourism circuit between the key attractions of Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti National Park. Consequently, Mto wa Mbu is a common stop for many nature tourism operators.

Barabarani is one of three villages in Mto wa Mbu, which comprises eight sub-villages and covers an area of 1544 hectares. At the time of the fieldwork in 2008, Barabarani's 9270 residents made up 58 per cent of Mto wa Mbu's total population. There are many Tanzanian villages called Barabarani, which in English means *along the road*. Its location on the main access route means that Barabarani has been the focus of tourism activities in Mto wa Mbu. The area's 15 guest houses and eight campsites are situated here, as are many of the restaurants. Most tourism is cultural, centred on the huge curio market.

The decision to undertake this study in Barabarani village, Mto wa Mbu, was based on a combination of four factors. First, the village's location as a stopping point on the northern tourism circuit supports tourism activities and facilities. Second, it is close to Lake Manyara National Park so Mto wa Mbu is an area in which the park's Community Conservation Service outreach programme operates. This programme seeks to involve the local community in tourism through sharing tourism benefits. Third, the area's history

and local ethnic communities support cultural tourism. Fourth, background research identified ongoing tourism activities including community-based tourism activities such as the Mto wa Mbu Cultural Tourism Programme and various tourism working groups. It also has a number of tourism establishments such as tourist hotels, lodges and campsites. However, what was not clear, and became the focus of the research, was whether, and to what extent, tourism in Barabarani village, Mto wa Mbu has helped alleviate poverty.

4. Methodology

The case study approach made it possible to bring together and compare the perspectives of the local community, community decision-makers (village and sub-village government leaders) and multiple stakeholders (including National Parks, the Cultural



Figure 1: Map of Tanzania showing the location of Mto wa Mbu within the northern circuit

Source: Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) www.tanzaniaparks.com/tanzania_map.html, 2009. *Village Office*, June–August 2008.

Tourism Programme, campsites, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), small-scale tourism business groups and some members of the community). Data were collected in June and August 2008. The study triangulated primary and secondary sources, drawing on semi-structured interviews with the decision-makers and stakeholders, an interviewer-administered household survey of local residents, field observations and official documentation, supported by the lead researcher's experience of tourism and community development in Tanzania. It investigated community participation in the tourism development decision-making processes, the sharing of tourism benefits in Barabarani village, and the contribution of tourism development to poverty alleviation, the focus of this paper.

The household survey gathered both quantitative and qualitative data and was administered face-to-face by the lead researcher in Swahili due to low literacy rates in the study area (Kisembo, 2008). Barabarani village had 2480 households at the time of the research and 139 (6 per cent) were surveyed, a representative sample of the research population (Moser & Kalton, 1993). For each of the eight sub-villages, 5 per cent of households were randomly selected, in line with Tosun's (2006) study of community participation in tourism development in Turkey. Respondents were surveyed in their home and an adult family member represented each household. Checks with the electoral register confirmed that each respondent was a resident member of the local community. A village government official accompanied the lead researcher during the survey, but did not influence the sampling process. He introduced the lead researcher to a particular household then withdrew.

The profile of respondents is presented in Table 1. The number of respondents in each sub-village ranged from 21 in Kigongoni (14.4 per cent of total respondents) to 12 (8.6 per cent) in the smallest sub-village, Migungani 'B'. For the analysis, sub-villages were grouped into two categories based on their geographical location relative to the main road which bisects Barabarani village. The five sub-villages along the road accounted for two-thirds of responses, the three more distant sub-villages a third. Males made up 54.7 per cent of respondents, females 45.3 per cent. Respondents were highly diverse in terms of their ages, with age groups 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years and 45 to 59 years being equally represented (27.3 per cent each), and 9.5 per cent of respondents were between 16 and 24 years while 7.9 per cent were 60 years or above.

Other profile variables, including length of residence, education and employment status, showed more homogeneity. Fifty-nine per cent had lived in the village since birth while 32.4 per cent had been resident for 10 or more years; only 8.6 per cent had lived in that area for less than a decade. Thus, respondents were long-time members of the local community. A majority of respondents had a low level of formal education: 59 per cent had completed primary school education while 10.1 per cent had no formal education. In contrast, 29.5 per cent had secondary school education and a very small number (1.4 per cent), had a college or university education. In employment terms, the sample was dominated by peasants or small-scale farmers (64 per cent), of which 6.5 per cent of respondents were full-time employees, 21.6 per cent were in small-scale business activities and the remainder (7.9 per cent) were unemployed.

The residents' perspective, elicited through in-depth semi-structured interviews, was integrated with that of key decision-makers. A snowball sampling technique was used, with respondents selected on the basis of their knowledge, experience and involvement with the study area's development issues. The flexibility of the semi-structured format

Table 1: Profile of survey respondents

Respondent characteristics	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Location		
Sub-villages near road	92	66.2
Kigongoni	20	14.4
Kisutu	21	15.1
Korea	16	11.5
Migungani 'A'	19	13.7
National housing	16	11.5
Sub-villages far from road	47	33.8
Jangwani	16	11.5
Magadini	19	13.7
Migungani 'B'	12	8.6
Gender		
Male	76	54.7
Female	63	45.3
Age		
16 to 24 years old	14	9.4
25 to 34 years old	38	27.3
35 to 44 years old	38	27.3
45 to 59 years old	38	27.3
60 + years old	11	7.9
Education		
Primary school	82	59.0
Secondary school	41	29.5
College/university	2	1.4
No formal education	14	10.1
Period of living in community		
Less than 10 years	12	8.6
More than 10 years	45	32.4
Born in the study area	82	59.0
Employment status		
Peasants/small-scale farmers	89	64.0
Business	30	21.6
Full-time employees	9	6.5
Unemployed	11	7.9
Total	139	100.0

allowed for the emergence of issues not originally included in the interview checklists. For example, one government official identified the importance of the main road as one of the factors that has facilitated tourism activities in the study area; this informed the subsequent analysis.

In the whole project, 28 key informants, drawn from local government, tourism businesses and organisations and the national park were interviewed. This paper focuses on the 13 interviewees who were key decision-makers in relation to tourism and the community. Eleven were village local government officials: two appointed

officials (the ward executive officer and the village executive officer) and nine elected officials (the village chairperson and the chairpersons or secretaries of the eight sub-villages). All 11 were also members of the village executive committee, which is responsible to the village general assembly, the key decision-making organ at the grassroots level. In addition, two interviewees represented Lake Manyara National Park authority and the Institute of Cultural Affairs, the only NGO operating in the study area.

The analysis triangulated the local residents' and decision-makers' perspectives by comparing the findings from the two groups. Using the seven factors identified in the literature review, respondents were first asked to indicate how much tourism had helped them, using a five-point Likert scale. Data were analysed using mean scores, standard deviations (SDs) and collapsed percentages, where findings were grouped together into positive (improved/significantly improved), neutral (did not make a difference), and negative (worse/significantly worse) response categories. The independent profile variables were then used to investigate differences on the basis of location (place of residence in relation to the main road), gender, occupation and education. Survey respondents were also asked to provide comments or reasons for their responses on each of the seven factors, and selected quotations are used in the following sections to illustrate these. The interviews with decision-makers were analysed by identifying key themes and these findings are integrated with the survey results to compare with the residents' perspective. Reference is also made to field observations and informal discussions, where relevant.

5. Findings

Overall, local residents felt that tourism development had a neutral to positive impact on all seven of the poverty alleviation factors. On a five-point Likert scale, the mean scores ranged from 3.04 to 4.39 (Table 2). However, analysis of SDs and collapsed percentage scores revealed a more complex picture, with strong agreement about the improvements in prices and accessibility improvement in terms of transport and communication; more neutral views about the impact on entrepreneurial training, income-generation projects and employment opportunities; and a diversity of views on the impact on general quality of life and household incomes. Comparing the mean scores across four independent variables (location, gender, occupation and education) highlighted the importance of geographical location (Table 3). All the mean scores from respondents in the sub-villages closest to the main road were higher than, or the same as, those for respondents in sub-villages farther away. In particular, those living in the more distant sub-villages had mean scores of below 3 (neutral) for impact on household incomes (2.85) and general quality of life (2.91). This supported the perception which emerged from the interviews with key decision-makers and from the comments of some residents that the benefits of tourism are concentrated on those living closest to the road. Lower means for impact on household incomes and general quality of life were also reported for males and respondents who had no formal education.

Analysis of the open-ended survey questions enabled investigation of the reasons for these scores and provided a more in-depth insight into the local residents' views. Combining these qualitative data with the quantitative survey data revealed the interrelationships between the factors. The findings are discussed in relation to four themes: the prices of goods and services; accessibility improvement in terms of transport and telecommunication; the impact on entrepreneurial training, income-generation projects

Table 2: Local residents' views on the contribution of tourism development to poverty alleviation

From your experience in Mto wa Mbu, what impact has tourism development in the past 5 years had on the following? (<i>n</i> = 139)	Mean ^a	SD	Improved and significantly improved (per cent)	Did not make any difference (per cent)	Worse and significantly worse (per cent)
Prices of goods and services in general	4.39	0.62	96.4	2.9	0.7
Accessibility improvement (transport and communication)	4.06	0.39	97.2	2.2	0.7
Entrepreneurial training (general entrepreneurial spirit and development among local people)	3.85	0.77	72.7	23.0	4.3
Income-generating projects for local people in general	3.78	0.63	80.6	15.8	3.6
Employment opportunities for local people	3.68	0.85	68.4	22.3	9.4
General quality of life of local people	3.12	1.17	49.6	14.4	36.0
Household income of local people in general	3.04	1.04	46.1	15.1	38.8

^a1 = significantly worse; 2 = worse; 3 = did not make any difference; 4 = improved; 5 = significantly improved.

and employment opportunities; and the impact on general quality of life and household incomes. The survey data were integrated and compared with those from the interviews with key decision-makers, field observations and informal discussions.

5.1 Prices of goods and services

The impact of tourism development on the prices of goods and services had the highest mean (4.39, SD 0.62) and 96.4 per cent of residents said prices had improved or significantly improved due to tourism development. Many respondents' comments on the increase in prices were based on their experiences in the marketplace, where food prices had climbed dramatically due to supply shortages and a growing tendency by suppliers to target the tourist market. Informal interviews and field observations suggested that almost all the food consumed in hotels, campsites and restaurants is sourced from the local market and supplied by local smallholder farmers. Analysis of survey respondents' comments revealed two viewpoints on these higher prices: a producer perspective and a consumer perspective, with the former most dominant as almost two-thirds of respondents were peasants. These farmers earn their living from selling produce and should directly benefit from the higher prices. Nevertheless, some producers also recognised the downside of high prices from a consumer perspective, where purchasing goods had become more expensive for locals. The lack of affordability of goods and services,

Table 3: The contribution of tourism development to poverty alleviation, by profile of local residents

From your experience in Mto wa Mbu, what impact has tourism development in the past 5 years had on the following?	Respondents	Accessibility	Prices of goods and services	Income generating projects	Entrepreneurial training	Employment opportunities	General quality of life	Household incomes
	<i>n</i>	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Mean ^a
Location								
Sub-villages near road	92	4.09	4.45	3.78	3.99	3.71	3.23	3.14
Sub-villages far from road	47	4.02	4.28	3.79	3.57	3.62	2.91	2.85
Gender								
Males	76	4.07	4.34	3.84	3.86	3.67	2.89	2.95
Females	63	4.06	4.44	3.71	3.84	3.68	3.40	3.16
Occupation								
Peasants	89	4.09	4.43	3.76	3.87	3.60	3.06	2.96
Businessmen/women	30	3.90	4.23	3.77	3.77	3.73	2.97	3.13
Employed full-time	9	4.11	4.44	3.89	3.89	3.78	3.33	3.11
Unemployed	11	4.27	4.45	3.91	3.91	4.09	3.91	3.45
Education								
Primary school	82	4.05	4.40	3.79	4.00	3.65	3.20	3.05
Secondary school	41	4.10	4.34	3.88	3.54	3.78	3.07	3.05
College/university	2	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.00
No formal education	14	4.00	4.50	3.43	3.79	3.50	2.71	2.86
Overall mean	139	4.06	4.39	3.78	3.85	3.68	3.12	3.04

^a1 = significantly worse; 2 = worse; 3 = did not make any different; 4 = improved; 5 = significantly improved.

particularly compared with other areas of Tanzania, was also recognised by the key decision-makers in the interviews. For example, one said:

You see! Banana plantations are everywhere in Mto wa Mbu. But my friend, we just see them [bananas] going as we can't afford the price, too high. Yes, occasionally you can buy one, but then you have got to go far away until you find the plantation so you can buy from the farmer before they are brought here at the market. Otherwise, if you wait for them here, then be ready to buy at a tourist price. (Government Official A)

5.2 Accessibility improvement (transport and communication)

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of tourism development on accessibility, with 97.2 per cent saying it had improved or significantly improved, with a mean score of 4.06 (SD 0.39). Almost all these comments referred to four major infrastructure developments in the study area: the tarmac road, secondary roads, telecommunication and Internet provision – tangible developments highly visible to members of the community. Most importantly, respondents believed that without tourism there would be no tarmac road through the area, and this view was supported by the interviews with decision-makers. An interview with a National Park official revealed that the motivation for tarring the road had been to improve access around the northern tourism circuit and link key national attractions rather than a desire to boost tourism in the study area, with Mto wa Mbu benefiting due to its location between two national parks.

At a more local level, survey respondents perceived that tourism had led to secondary roads being improved to gravel standard and continually maintained in order to smooth tourist driving, riding and cycling during village tours. One respondent said:

If you want to realise that it is tourism which is bringing all you see here [referring to secondary roads], just pay a visit to another rural area in our country. Don't go to town places – instead, go to any rural area located far from the township like our one. I'm sure you will note the difference.

The interviews with key officials revealed other political motives for these local infrastructure improvements:

Tourism has done nothing on roads, maybe that tarmac [main] road there. All you see here [reasonably well maintained gravel street roads] is just because of [name of one Member of Parliament] who wants to maintain his position as a member of parliament for our constituency. He solicited funds to set up a reliable water supply system too. Yeah, because he knows the area has many people and therefore many votes for him. (Government Official B)

Survey respondents also perceived that tourism has improved telecommunication and Internet access. Whereas many rural areas in Tanzania have no access to a mobile network service, the study area enjoys a level of service coverage similar to or better than many urban areas. This was attributed to tourism development by both survey respondents and local government officials, one of whom observed:

Mto wa Mbu is a hot place because of tourism. Look, all the mobile companies are here . . . If it is because of agriculture, why are they not in other rural areas too, given the fact that agriculture is everywhere in the rural areas? It is true they can't go to invest in a rural area like ours, unless they are sure there is money. (Government Official C)

Finally, survey respondents said tourism had improved Internet services. There were three Internet cafés operating during the data collection period in 2008, and plans were under way to establish another. Observations and informal interviews with Internet café owners revealed that they were mostly targeting the tourist market. Emphasising this point, one local government official said:

You see, now we have things like internet cafés here. I'm told it is so costly in terms of start-up capital, but they [the owners] are sure of getting their money back because of tourists. You see that nice building out there? Next week one bank, I forgot its name, is going to install an ATM machine there. Frankly speaking, we get all these in our area because of tourism. (Government Official C)

5.3 Entrepreneurial training, income-generating projects and employment opportunities

Comments from survey respondents showed that these three impacts are interrelated. They have similar mean scores (3.68, SD 0.85 to 3.85, SD 0.77; see Table 2) and, while a majority said tourism had improved or significantly improved each factor (68.4 to 80.6 per cent), these three attracted the highest percentage of respondents saying tourism had made no difference (15.8 to 23.0 per cent). Respondents who noted some improvement to these interlinked variables argued that tourism development had created more business opportunities, which many people had taken advantage of and started their own income-generating projects. This, in turn, had helped to create employment opportunities for others. In addition, there was a growing spirit of entrepreneurship among local people influenced by the desire to lift themselves out of poverty.

Survey respondents gave examples of improvements made by tourism in their area: an increasing number of tourist hotels, campsites, restaurants, bars, shops and various tourism groups, which were dealing in a variety of cultural goods and services such as souvenirs, cultural dancing, craft shops, tour guides and cycle tours. Interview data highlighted similar initiatives, as one respondent said:

We didn't know that one can make money out of tourism by simply having hired bicycles for tourists ... We didn't have such kind of business before. (Government Official D)

There was a general appreciation that tourism has created many employment opportunities, especially for self-employment such as petty trading businesses (street vendors), involving mostly youths. The growth of these businesses reflects Tanzania's Youth Development Policy of 2007, which estimates that nationally 75 per cent of youths are now involved in such businesses.

Respondents also noted that tourism has increased local people's awareness of business opportunities. The growing tourist numbers create a demand for more goods and services and this in turn creates opportunities for various income-generating projects. These projects were also boosted by the increase in financial aid and loans from sources providing essential start-up capital. Respondents frequently referred to three government initiatives for local communities: the Participatory Agricultural Development and Empowerment Project, the Savings and Credit Cooperative Society and the Tanzania Social Action Fund. In addition, one NGO, the Institute of Cultural Affairs, offered entrepreneurial training, basic business education, loan management, legal advice and awareness of HIV and AIDS. The presence of such institutions was also considered a major catalyst

for cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit and enhancing the participation of local people through capacity building. Although provision of financial aid and loans may not be directly related to tourism, respondents believed that without tourism they would not be considered for such financial assistance since loan payback would be more uncertain.

Those who thought tourism had made no difference to income-generation projects, entrepreneurial training and employment opportunities cited five barriers. The first was a lack of capital among local people and limited access to financial loans due to requirements such as pledging valuable assets (a car, property) as collateral. Second was a lack of education, including insufficient entrepreneurial training, which has limited local people's capacity to start income-generating projects. Third was a perception that entrepreneurial training and opportunities have not been evenly distributed and are concentrated on those living closest to the main road. Fourth were concerns that migrants and those with education were benefiting, but not the majority of local people, who have only a basic primary level education. One interviewee reflected on the perception of hospitality and tourism jobs, saying that:

Local people are holding casual jobs [in hotels]. During the low season, they are set jobless ... Top positions are for migrants and elites. (Government Official E)

Fifth was a concern that tourism in the study area was associated with small-scale investments which had not created enough employment opportunities. Field observations identified 15 guest houses and eight campsites, each employing fewer than 10 people. There were no hotels in the study area, although there were four hotels in adjacent wards and within commuting distance for local workers. The small scale of investments was a reflection of two main factors: local people had no capital to start extensive tourism investments, and outside investors were reluctant to make large investments as tourists stay only a few hours or a day or two in Mto wa Mbu. This reflects Mto wa Mbu's primary role as a transit stop and gateway to Lake Manyara National Park, Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti National Park.

5.4 Household incomes and the general quality of life

The most varied survey responses were in answer to the question about the impact of tourism development on household incomes and general quality of life. These had the lowest means and highest standard deviations (3.04, SD 1.04 and 3.12, SD 1.17, respectively). The collapsed percentages revealed a bimodal distribution: just under half felt tourism development had improved or significantly improved household incomes (46.1 per cent) or general quality of life (49.6 per cent) but over a third felt these had been made worse or significantly worse (38.8 and 36.0 per cent respectively), with smaller percentages feeling tourism had made no difference (15.1 and 14.4 per cent).

Survey respondents who felt there had been some improvement in household incomes and the general quality of life discussed these in terms of employment creation. They said tourism had created more direct employment opportunities, for example, jobs as tour guides and taxi drivers; various positions in tourist hotels, lodges, campsites, guest-houses, bars, restaurants and shops; as providers of cultural goods and services; and as street vendors, whose numbers kept growing. For the indirectly created employment opportunities, improvement was seen in the form of increased opportunities for income-generating projects such as vegetable gardens. Women and youths were seen as particular beneficiaries of these activities.

Improvements were also noted in public services, especially education. First, there has been an increase in the number of children who have access to primary and secondary school education, following building projects with the funds for school construction and renovations often coming from tourism sources (e.g. contributions from tourism businesses, tourists, Lake Manyara National Park authority and NGOs). Second, community visits by tourists have led to sponsorship and donations of textbooks and other school materials. Third, the desire for education among youths has grown rapidly due to increasing awareness of tourism and the need for education in order to access tourism opportunities such as tour guiding. The guide role is viewed by many youths as a stepping stone towards establishing good relationships with tourists; for example, a teenage boy noted during an informal discussion that:

Being a tour guide is advantageous. A lot of youths here get sponsorship from tourists. Me too, I have one . . . he [an American tourist] paid all my school fees, from O-level to A-level education. He has now told me to find admission at any university here [Tanzania] or in Kenya so he can pay for me that one too.

The increasing number of tourists and the development of tourism establishments such as hotels, lodges and campsites has also led to social services delivery improvements (such as water supply and health services), which have also benefited the local community.

The opposite view was that tourism development has worsened or significantly worsened household incomes and the general quality of life. First, there was a concern that tourism has not provided employment opportunities to local people. As discussed above, many such opportunities are taken up by migrants and those with education rather than local residents. Second, the increase in prices of goods and services due to tourism development has meant that the cost of living has also increased. Third, there were concerns that tourism encouraged the spread of HIV and AIDS. This pandemic has led to an increasing number of street children and orphans and four local centres have been established to care for these children.

Survey respondents who felt that tourism did not make any difference to household incomes and the general quality of life viewed tourism development in relation to agriculture. Almost two-thirds, mostly peasants, who are the majority of the local population, felt that tourism had not improved local people's main life-supporting activity: agriculture. Implicitly, they expressed their concern that although prices of agricultural produce were higher at the marketplace, little of this reached them, the producers, instead going to middlemen who control the supply chain. One peasant respondent for example commented that:

We peasants don't get anything from tourism! They [the middlemen] buy our crops at lower prices and sell them [to tourist hotels] at higher prices. We know we are being exploited but we don't have another option.

6. Discussion

This paper has focused on the contribution of tourism to socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation at a local level, examining it from the perspectives of the local people and the community decision-makers. Seven poverty alleviation factors were used to gauge how far tourism has contributed towards poverty alleviation in the study area.

From a community perspective, the findings suggest some convincing indications that tourism is contributing positively. Overall, the respondents felt that all the study

variables, from accessibility improvement (mean 4.06) to local household incomes (mean 3.04), had been improved as a result of tourism development in the area, although their assessment of the extent of the contribution varied (Table 2). This is similar to results highlighted in previous micro-level studies by Timothy (1999), Kulindwa (2002), Rogerson (2002), Mahony and Van Zyl (2002), Kibicho (2004) and Manyara and Jones (2007). The highest mean corresponds with infrastructure developments. The percentage scores show a more complex picture, with over one-third of respondents feeling that tourism development has made local people's household incomes and general quality of life worse rather than better.

Combining the quantitative results with qualitative responses from the survey and interviews with key decision-makers has identified overlapping factors that influence the perception of tourism development's contribution to poverty alleviation. First, local people's views were based on the creation of employment opportunities. Second, there was a concern that tourism has raised the prices of goods and services and consequently the cost of living. Third, there was a concern that tourism contributes to the spread of HIV and AIDS. Fourth, tourism did not seem to improve local people's main life-supporting activity, agriculture. Fifth, there was a general feeling among local people that tourism contributes more towards improving the livelihood of those living in sub-villages close to the main road rather than the village as a whole.

Despite the positive achievements identified, this research highlights a number of barriers that local communities and decision-makers see as limiting their ability to take advantage of opportunities created by tourism, such as income-generating projects, entrepreneurial training and employment. These include lack of education, lack of capital, migrants, elitism and the number and scale of tourism investments. Such obstacles are similar to those identified in the literature by Kulindwa (2002), Mahony and Van Zyl (2002) and Manyara and Jones (2007) in their studies of LDCs, including Tanzania. The location of a particular sub-village and the supply chain of agricultural produce controlled by the middlemen were also identified as barriers to local people's access to tourism benefits that would improve their lives. The issue of middlemen not only indicates disharmony between agriculture and tourism development but also pinpoints one of the reasons why the tourism industry might not seem to offer a means for local communities in LDCs to escape the confines of poverty. This argument may be more convincing if one views tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation in the context of rural areas, where much of the widespread poverty exists and where the majority of local people depend on agriculture. Proponents of pro-poor tourism argue that a good understanding of the relationship between agriculture and tourism is vital to achieving the pro-poor dual objectives of reducing negative impacts while generating net benefits for the poor (e.g. Ashley et al., 2000, 2001; Torres & Henshall Momsen, 2004).

7. Conclusion

This research investigated people's views on how far tourism has benefited their community. It examined seven socioeconomic factors. The case study results and interpretation presented above cannot be generalised and are not presented as indisputable facts; rather, they are opinions based on respondents' knowledge. Nonetheless, investigating one community in depth and involving multiple stakeholder perspectives did reveal the nuances and complexities of tourism development and poverty alleviation at a grassroots level.

The findings provide mixed support for the claim that macro-level benefits of tourism development trickle down to alleviate poverty at a micro level. There are certainly some benefits (e.g. in infrastructure, transport and telecommunication) but the impacts are not all positive and the benefits are not distributed equally amongst the community. Tourism in the study area seems characterised by disparities in access to opportunities and benefits, particularly for people not living close to the main road. These findings are similar to, among others, those of a recent study on tourism and income distribution in East Africa showing that tourism-related industries in Kenya and Tanzania provide substantially less income for poorer households than other export activities, leading to concern that tourism expansion may be detrimental for poverty alleviation in these economies (Blake, 2008).

The paper has implications for policy-makers and development specialists. Some barriers (lack of education, migration and lack of start-up capital) need to be removed in order to foster the positive impacts of tourism. Better policies are needed to address the constraints that make it difficult for people to take advantage of opportunities created by tourism development. Action should be taken to establish a comprehensive and sustainable flow of tourism benefits to local people so that the contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation will be significant and realised by the local community.

Although tourism has strong links with other sectors, this study revealed some concerns, especially from peasant respondents, that tourism development in the study area has not improved their quality of life. However, more research is required to help understand the relationship between tourism development and agriculture in the study area and in Tanzania more generally, especially where agriculture is characterised by smallholder farmers. This would be a stepping stone to establishing whether the two sectors are mutually beneficial in the sense that agriculture supplies basic products to meet the needs of growing tourism development, and tourism provides peasants with funding to optimise and continue agricultural activities.

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