

ABSTRACT

This project aims at exploring the impacts of tourism to the local community. The study will be carried out in Laikipia County and will explore the social, political, environmental and economic factors that affect the relationship between tourism and the local communities. Tourism has huge impacts on communities globally especially in emerging countries and is considered as a major tool of development and a way of improving the lifestyles. It is a dominant economic activity in some communities yet, the impacts of tourism to a community are not widely understood, even where tourism is growing dramatically and should be of the greatest interest or concern. From the economic perspective tourism generates wealth and jobs but the wealth leaks from the community and the jobs are mainly low income. From the socio-cultural perspective tourism brings together people from different backgrounds, cultures and traditions and this promotes peace. But at the same time due to globalization many communities have lost their cultural identity and gave way to modernization of their villages. Tourism helped create national parks and protected areas, where unique examples of flora and fauna can be found but tourists have also been proven to be a problem because of the pollution they generate. Tourist entrepreneurs can also be blamed for a total disrespect to local traditions and the environment. The main problem from these negative impacts is that the local community is the only side that picks up the check for all the damages on the culture, tradition and most importantly the environment. The objectives of this study are therefore to present some observations on the good and bad impacts of tourism and how they affect the local communities in Laikipia County. For the last 20 years, Laikipia has used tourism to address her economic development, social inclusion, conservation and sustainability. Laikipia has risen to become a tourist destination of unrivaled offerings, style, innovative environmental management and strong social responsibility.