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Trends in community driven conservation and Tourism in East Africa- Perspectives of Conservation NGOs

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East Africa is re-known as a rich wildlife tourism destination with diverse species numbers and densities. Local communities are critical in tourism since about 70% of wildlife population is on unprotected community land (Western, 1989). However, for many years, communities living with wildlife have never benefited much from this resource apart from a few elites. Communities incur the costs of living with wildlife including crop raiding, livestock predation and human deaths. As a result, communities have developed a negative attitude towards wildlife and engage in retaliatory killings, habitat destruction, poaching among other strategies to keep wildlife away. These practices threaten the future of tourism development in the region.

Loss of critical habitats including dispersal areas and corridors makes sustainability of wildlife conservation difficult. Notably, wildlife populations in areas that do not receive benefits have declined by over 55% while areas where benefits are accrued have an increase in wildlife numbers over the past 30 years (Norton-Griffiths, 1995). Wildlife-based tourism, a form of land use must realize benefit to the land owners since tourism contributes about 12% to the DGP in Kenya and 14% in Tanzania (GoK, 2015; Republic of Tanzania, 2015). In Kenya, tourism is the pillar for Vision 2030 (GoK, 2007). Despite that, governments are not doing enough to secure wildlife outside protected areas. Protected areas are also threatened with increasing infrastructure development such as the Standard Gauge Railway, water and oil pipelines, highways, powerlines, LAPSSSET Project, mining, oil exploration, among other threats. These coupled with expansion of cultivated areas and human settlements, put tourism in limbo.

Governments have limited human and financial capacity and lack clear policies and legal frameworks on community engagement in conservation and tourism development. As a result, involvement of the private sector has taken a center stage in community tourism development initiatives. Non-profit organizations support resource mobilization, established of community conservancies and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA); providing general wildlife security through recruitment and training of community scouts, establishment of tourism facilities, securing corridors through lease program, wildlife censuses and lastly supports research for policy and informed decision making. The role of community conservancies and WMA are to: maintain a historical corridor and wildlife dispersal area that links with protected areas, conserve the ecological integrity of the wildlife corridor and dispersal area, promote vegetation recovery and regeneration, promote wildlife and livestock interface as the optimal and sustainable land use where feasible non-profits are also involved in the development of management plans and strategies for sustainable land management.

In conclusion, East Africa governments must take community-based tourism seriously since the future of tourism is highly dependent on communities' engagement in wildlife management. Formulation of policies that are beneficial to the communities who support over 70% of the wildlife population that is the bedrock for tourism development in East Africa is crucial.

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Open Skies Policy Within the East African Community (EAC)

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Air transport plays an important role in world trade. It has long been recognized as a key driver of international tourism. Moreover, it provides unprecedented connectivity that positively impacts people all over the world. As businesses expand their operations internationally and tourism continues to grow, air transport will continue being a crucial player in international commerce. According to Dobruszkes and Mondou (2013) air transport's regulatory regimes are fundamental. They may restrict the range of routes operated by airlines and prevent competition and control fares, thus restricting tourism business and influencing its spatial patterns. Air travel regulation remain an enduring constraint to tourism growth, but its liberalization can promote tourism. Given the importance to the tourism industry of having efficient airlines to move tourists, the tourism industry should thus be in favour of increased air liberalization (Dobruszkes and Mondou, 2013).

While there has been substantial liberalisation of aviation, the process is still far from complete (Forsyth, 2006). European liberalisation is one of the few examples of extensive regional liberalisation, but even so, entry is restricted to European carriers. Many bilateral agreements remain restrictive, especially outside Europe and North America (Forsyth, 2006). While there are many "open skies" agreements, most of these restrict entry to the airlines of the bilateral partners. Therefore, there is significant scope for further liberalisation, and international aviation policy is still a live issue with most countries. Whereas Europe and the US have made significant progress in liberalising the North Atlantic, other regions such as ASEAN, MALIAT and AU are moving towards open skies (Forsyth, 2006; Fund, 2016).

Elsewhere around the world, many liberalisation proposals are being considered. Governments are gradually moving away from a reciprocity approach to agreements, and are increasingly asking whether they gain or lose in economic terms from specific liberalisation options. The benefits and costs of options being assessed include benefits to in-country travelers from lower airfares, and costs to the home airline industry from reduced profits (Forsyth, 2006). East African Community is no different. Its current bilateral agreements "ignore the new realities" of the Single EAC Aviation Market. In order for the region to ensure that its air transport system is able to meet the needs of international trade and tourism, its regime on bilateral exchange of traffic rights must be re-examined. As such, policy reforms are needed to liberalize EAC's air space. East Africa Tourism Platform (EATP) advocates for an alternative aviation policy that will ensure a strong competitive industry and further develop a plan to improve the industry's prospects. EATP vision is a shift from bilateral air transport agreements to a comprehensive multilateral agreement within the EAC region.

Quality of air travel, within EAC is affected by high costs, low frequency and routing of airlines, which reduces competitiveness of regional tourist destinations. Further, air liberalization is partially implemented and stunted by protectionism as EAC partner states protect their national airlines from competition. Moreover, connectivity within the region does not serve the interests of trade and tourism. Air transport is generally inadequate and provides limited connectivity to many parts; hence limiting trade, tourism and inward investment. In some areas there are no direct flights. For instance, there are no direct flight connections between Burundi and Tanzania. To fly between these two countries, a connection must be made in Kenya. With better air connectivity, countries like Burundi could form part of regional tourism itineraries.

In addition, regional air travel is expensive. For example, the cost of a flight between Nairobi and Kigali is similar to a direct flight to Europe. Air fares are expensive partly due to taxation, traffic rights limitations and lack of competition. The current regulation is restrictive due to the limited BASAs, low levels of liberalization and the inability to designate foreign owned carriers. The removal of restrictions on fifth freedom flights would form an important step in addressing these issues. Progress towards liberalization has been made incrementally via the Northern Corridor initiative (NCIP).

Open sky policy is a step in the right direction. An open sky policy will support easier movement of people and cargo within the EAC for improved tourism, trade and socio-cultural exchange. Air liberalization would allow

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greater cooperation, joint ventures, equity sharing and mergers. This can improve the long term viability of the airline industry in East Africa. Open skies would improve trade between countries, increase tourism traffic, stimulate employment, boost the quality of service provided by carriers and increase the general economic competitiveness of the EAC region. There has already been tangible evidence of lowered fares. For land-locked countries, air service is critical to connecting them with the global economy. Lastly, air liberalization can lead to great regional and international air service, boosting tourism, trade and business development. Importantly, EAC attracts visitors from around the world due to its tourism offerings, however, the industry would most certainly do better; should air access improve and in turn subject international travelers to lower fares.

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Watamu Community Solid Waste Management and Recycling Enterprises

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The Watamu Community Solid Waste Management and Recycling Enterprises originated out of awareness and a recognized need to tackle the problems related to solid waste pollution impacting the Watamu Marine Park beaches and the local community environment. Government capacity to manage and dispose of solid waste is often limited, and investment in recycling is minimal resulting in threats to both environmental and human welfares. The enterprise is significantly reducing these threats by employing the 3 R's principle to waste management – Reduce, Recycle, Reuse. The enterprise purpose is to provide a solid waste free environment for the benefit and welfare of the local community, the local tourism industry and the environment.

The enterprise has a plastic recycling facility and operates a plastic crusher machine and provides part time employment to 25 local community group members as waste collectors and recyclers. The collector's income is provided by sales of processed plastic to plastic recycling industries in Mombasa and Watamu tourism industry sponsorship. Solid waste materials targeted for recycling are primarily plastics and glass. These waste materials are collected from Watamu Marine Park beaches, hotels and resident's private houses and processed for resale or reuse. This enterprise provides a service to the community, the tourism industry and the County Council.

The enterprise focuses initially on the recycling of hard plastics and glass for: processing hard plastics for resale; production of arts and crafts from plastics and marine debris waste for sale and creating glass bottle blocks for buildings construction. The enterprises serve as an example of successful cooperation between community organisations and the local tourism industry in creating a plastic recycling value chain. The results are cleaned-up beaches and reduced environmental threats and employment opportunities for women and youth. Besides the measurable environmental and conservation benefits, the project provides the tourism sector a valuable service in keeping Watamu Beaches waste free. This encourages tourists to visit the beach which in turn supports hotels and promotes local beach operators and other community business enterprises.

In addition to providing a waste recycling facility, the enterprise is further developing the land as a demo site for small environmental technologies and best practices. It showcases alternative charcoal technologies such as bio-fuel briquettes made from waste paper, sawdust and other waste products, bio-char production from waste coconut husks, bio-gas production from manure and organic waste, compost gardens growing medicinal plants and herbs and tree nurseries. The enterprise is currently constructing a building where local community groups can make medicinal products from neem tree and coconut palm oils. A shop displays the products for sale to the public, hotels and tourists. The building is unique and possibly the first in Kenya to be made from recycled glass and plastic bottles.

The environmental centre known as Eco-World Watamu is open to the public and as a tourist attraction and invites government and educational institutions to use it as a case study and centre for learning. The centre is already receiving national and international recognition and acclaim and is set to become a regional showcase for waste management and environmental best practices and sustainable tourism.

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Sustainability in Planned Events: A Content Analysis of Event-Related Research across Closely Linked Fields

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The sustainable concept has gained prominence in the recent past in diverse industries and sectors including events. This has likely been propelled by growth in event tourism, a sector that has been adopted by many economies at a national and/or regional level. The sustainability concept, commonly referred to as the *Triple Bottom Line* (TBL) considers a three prong approach to planning and executing events. It specifically examines the anticipated costs and benefits to the society/community, the environment, and the economy of the region where the event will be hosted.

Events can be classified as mega events, major events or minor events. Firstly, mega-events have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance for example, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup. Secondly, major events can be a series of international festivals or sporting events that are held mostly annually and staged in known locations for example, Nairobi's Concours d'Elegance and Moshi's Kilimanjaro marathon. Lastly, minor events usually take place on a local level like in villages, towns or even cities, and don't often attract very many visitors (Roche, 1994). They are considered the smallest category of events. However, such events may have significant contribution to the socio-cultural welfare of the community even though their economic effects may be considered insignificant (Van Winkle & Woosnam, 2014).

It is largely assumed that interest in sustainable events will drive academic research. For example, Mair and Whitford (2013) projected that future research on planned events will likely focus on the environmental impacts of events as well as their overall sustainability (Mair and Whitford, 2013). To determine the extent to which the concept of sustainability has been applied to event-related research, it is necessary to conduct a content analysis of relevant peer-reviewed articles. Therefore, the present study selected and analyzed peer-reviewed articles from major fields associated with planned events: tourism, arts and culture, hospitality, leisure and recreation, and sports (Getz, 2013).

The study indicated that only 16.5 percent of all the event-related articles identified in the study examined the sustainability concept at varying levels. This was contrary to widely held opinion that sustainability was a major concept in resource use and development decisions in most organizations and has driven event-based research (Mair & Jago, 2010). A ranking of the three components of sustainability by number of event-related articles revealed that social sustainability had the highest interest (40.7%), followed by the economic (33.3%) and environmental (11.1%) components. The holistic TBL concept had the least (3.7%) number of event-related research articles. Articles that combined any two components of sustainability formed the remainder.

In conclusion, a potential disconnect may exist between viewing sustainability as a dominant concept in many industries and the notion that the concept is driving research particularly in the case of planned events. Additionally, the limited number of sustainable event-related articles may indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that the effects of events are well understood. Pursuing a more holistic approach to research rather than examining in isolation individual components that make up sustainability may lead to better representation of the long-term contribution that an event makes to a place or region.

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Enhancing Sustainability of Kenya's Coastal Tourism Product Through Cultural Heritage

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More often than not, the tourism industry tends to offer a selection of certain types of products to their clients, assuming that these were the choices these particular clients would prefer (Boniface, 2001). For instance, a look at the visitation patterns in Kenya would suggest that the idea of what is beautiful and worthy of admiration has not fundamentally changed over the past five decades. The contemporary issue has been to attract the masses, to lodge them and to take them round with little being done towards renewing the existing tourism offer. Thus, despite the Kenyan coast having diverse cultural and nature-based attractions, only a limited image of this destination is presented to the market.

Notably, conventional coastal mass tourism rarely develops a sustainable differentiation. The usual product semantics of *'idyllic, white sandy beaches'* only leads to destination homogenization persuading potential clients think that they have already experienced such a product elsewhere (Hazbun, 2008). Such semantics obscures the very essence of destination identity and only represents minimal variation of a highly standardised product (Robinson & Smith, 2006). Therefore, there is need for new attractions to be constantly developed beyond the mainstream. This paper proposes the need to develop cultural and heritage tourism in order to contribute to the attractiveness of the coastal tourist destination; enhance tourists' experience and act as a differential tool for destinations. Nevertheless, the reality is that many cultural sites are faced by several challenges related to business competitiveness and sustainability in terms of product development, quality and relevance to tourism demands, and marketing.

One of the key findings from the World Bank Report on Kenya's tourism sector is that Kenya's beach tourism is a 'tired' and less competitive product in today's marketplace; but could rebound if the necessary rehabilitation is achieved (World Bank Group, 2010). One way to achieve this is through a holistic presentation of coastal destinations by seeking external alliances and building a critical mass of attractions and activities, to make them more appealing and complete – extending the coastal tourism product. It is about identifying old attractions like archeological sites by bringing them into the fold of the present-day tourism industry through the creation of regional packages, circuits and thematic routes. Thus, presenting a destination in totality would be the starting point in achieving the sustainability principle of visitor satisfaction. This paper therefore opens up the debate on destination presentation, management and conceptualization especially with regard to coastal tourism product and sustainability.

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Analyzing Sustainable Tourism Approach in Kenya - Defining Factors

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Kenya has been recognized as a leader “Mzee” of ecotourism (Honey, 2008). Kenya hosted the first global ecotourism conference organized by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 1998; it registered the first ecotourism society in Africa in 1996 and it established the first voluntary eco-certification scheme in Africa in 2002 (Ecotourism Kenya Strategic Plan, 2016). By achieving several firsts in sustainable tourism awareness, promotion, and practice in Africa, it can be asserted that Kenya has capitalized on this recognition and is setting trends for Africa.

An ecotourism score-card of Kenya in 2008 clearly showed the challenging areas of sustainable tourism practices in Kenya (Honey 2008). Kenya scores highly in promoting travel to natural areas, but scores poorly on minimizing negative impacts of tourism, providing direct financial benefits for conservation, community empowerment and sharing benefits with community, respect for culture, and support for human rights and democratic movement. The country receives a mixed score on building environmental awareness.

The issues raised through the 2008 score continue to dominate sustainable tourism thinking in Kenya and globally. More than 60% of the criteria in Ecotourism Kenya certification program focus on these issues. The focus on such areas is reflected in the criteria and indicators of global certifier of sustainable tourism certification programs, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Countries and national certification programs are making effort to be GSTC recognized. Kenya has made attempts to comply with GSTC standards and has had its criteria recognized by ITC.

Factors typically used to describe a successful and/ or credible sustainable tourism programs include: separation of roles between certification body and facilitating body; qualified independent assessors; compliance with globally acceptable standards; ability to measure progress of certified over time; a clear process for renewal of certification, inclusivity; and, and influence on policy. Objectives and goals of the end user have been assumed. This is the “why” question.

The criteria as set out in GSTC and Ecotourism Kenya Eco-rating scheme do not have provisions for understanding the “why” behind business actions. Without holding businesses accountable to what they claim, certification could remain a technical exercise that contributes little or no change in behaviour, and may even foster green-washing. This paper argues that the measure of sustainability must go deeper than measuring compliance with a checklist, it must evaluate the sustainability of organizational systems that enable the achievement of criteria, and that sustainability must be sustainable. Further, effective sustainable tourism program should have altruistic objectives and goals. As such, existing approaches need to be reviewed by introducing systems that can be used to hold businesses accountable for sustainability of their actions. Sustainability evaluation questions should also change from “leading questions” to “hypothetical questions.” Only then can sustainable tourism effectively contribute to healthy communities, healthy environments, healthy businesses and ultimately, sustainable development.

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Envisioning Urban Sustainability in the East African Community

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The concept of sustainability has maintained a stronghold as a widely held notion for guiding societal development. Generally, sustainability is the ability of a system to meet the present human needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In pursuit of urban sustainability, perhaps the main concern is whether it is possible to design communities that balance concentrated human settlement needs with ample presence of, access to and a satisfying experience of nature? The question of how cities can coexist with nature is also pertinent to understanding sustainability transition in urban planning and development. But why parks and greenspaces in defining sustainability transition?

Parks and greenspaces can play a big role in contributing to sustainability and human wellbeing in cities in terms of economic productivity, social inclusion and preservation of the natural environment. Urban park and greenspaces provide of habitat for useful wildlife (Brenneisen, 2006), moderate harsh weather including temperature regulation and wind-breaking (Heidt & Neef, 2008), sequester carbon (Strohbach, Arnold & Haase, 2012), regulate storm water (Chiesura, 2004), conserve biodiversity (Rudd, Vala & Schaefer, 2002), and improve property values (Colding & Barthel, 2013). Further, an expanding body of literature confirms the connection between exposure to nature and human wellbeing; physically, psychologically and emotionally. Popular among these is the work Wilson (1984), Kellert (1993) and Kaplan (1995), who explore the concepts of biophilia and other the soft fascinations of nature. Parks also provide places for rest and recharge (Van den Berg et al., 2010), spiritual renewal (Thompson, 2010), and promotion of social integration and cultural diversity (Van Herzele & Wiedemann, 2003).

It is against this backdrop that a study was conceived to attempt to assess the how sustainable East African cities are, beginning with the largest metropolis in each state (i.e. Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Kigali and Burundi). Trends in these five cities, and media reports draw a picture of some of the fastest growing cities in the world in terms of population growth, real estate boom and economic expansion. However, the biggest question is whether the five cities are positioned to harmonize such growth with provision of essential amenities to the urban residents, preservation of green open spaces, and protection of the natural environment for sustained ecosystem services.

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Rethinking Nature-Based Tourism in Africa: Time for a Different Approach

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The tourism industry has experienced tremendous growth globally both in terms of arrivals and tourism receipts. As a result, the industry has continued to generate immense economic activity, currently accounting for almost 10% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 9.8% of total employment (WTTC, 2016). Owing to this phenomena, more and more countries are turning to tourism. This is more so the case in Africa, due to the fact that traditional economic sectors, such as agriculture, have failed to bring about meaningful economic growth and development. The tourism industry in Africa, which is projected to grow a rate of 5% over the next decade, is now valued at over USD 197 billion or about 8% of the continent's GDP and accounts for 7.1% of the total workforce (WTTC, 2016). Whereas these facts may appear impressive given the sluggish development in the past, Africa's tourism global share has been, is still and is projected to remain small. For example, Africa only accounts for 3% of the USD 7.6 trillion global value of the tourism industry. Moreover, with a global market share of 4.6% and 3.2% share of international tourism receipts in 2005, and 4.5% market share and 2.4% international tourism receipts in 2015, the continent's global share of the tourism industry has actually fallen in the last 10 years (UNWTO, 2016).

The past and projected tourism development trends in Africa could be attributed to a number of challenges, chief among them, the narrow range of tourism products that are predominantly nature-based. Arguably, therefore, whereas the rest of the world, more so, the emerging destinations in the East, such as United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, are constantly diversifying their respective tourism portfolios, the African continent continues to heavily rely on her natural endowments. This could be as a result of embracing an arguably colonial model of tourism development that saw the creation of national parks in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, primarily targeted at the Western market. As a result, there has been nothing spectacularly unique about Africa destinations, with the minor exceptions of say, Ethiopia and Egypt. Whereas, nature-based tourism may have played an important role in tourism development in the past, there are now indications that this approach may not be sustainable, given the over-development of facilities in some destinations and especially given the high numbers of tourist arrivals that Africa destinations are striving for.

Hence, for the continent to uphold sustainability related issues and for it reverse the forecasted decline in the global share of the tourism industry, it will be important to rethink the heavy reliance on nature-based tourism in favour of other forms that have, for instance, informed the rapid development of destinations in the East. Thailand, for example, a country with less natural resource endowments than some of the leading destinations in Africa, received about 11 million international tourist arrivals in 2005, and in just a decade, now hosts almost 30 million visitors (UNWTO, 2016).

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