

ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the involvement and participation of local communities in tourism development in Kenya using a case of Siana. To explore this research topic, the thesis examines three key concepts: community participation in the tourism development decision-making process; community participation in the sharing of tourism benefits; and the contribution of tourism development to poverty alleviation. To gain a rich understanding of the context of the research, the thesis employed a case study approach, which enabled: investigation at the community level to bring together perspectives from the grass-root level, where little research on this topic has been done; involvement of multiple stakeholders that explores perspectives from a range of stakeholders; and the use of multiple methods. Quantitative data generated from these techniques were analyzed, integrated and compared, and were used to complement each other. Based on the findings obtained from multiple methods, this research concludes that local people wish to play a role in the tourism development decision-making process. In general, local people want to see decisions about tourism development in their area made jointly by government officials and local leaders in consultation with the local community. Tourism development is contributing positively towards poverty alleviation, and has made improvement on accessibility, prices of goods and services, employment, entrepreneurial training, income-generating projects, household incomes and general quality of life though the extent of contribution vary from one aspect to another.