

Preface

Sustainable tourism has never been more important, particularly in Africa. We are living in unprecedented times as we face the existential climate crisis; pollution of land, oceans and the atmosphere; severe declines in biodiversity; and since 2020 the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sustainable Tourism Dialogues in Africa is a timely and welcome addition to the literature on sustainable tourism. The editors have compiled 22 analyses drawn from across the continent, and with a series of case studies and examples that highlight Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. Themes of cultural, wildlife and urban tourism, community-based tourism operations such as homestays, and perspectives of youth are incorporated. The dialogues consider the recent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in Africa in World Heritage Sites and for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The climate change crisis is addressed in two chapters that discuss the urgency of adaptation, and application of Blue Growth in African destinations.

Primary research is included, with dialogues based on analyses of literature, archival methods, observation, stakeholder interviews and workshop discussions. Application of theories (e.g. planned behavior), policy instruments (e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals) and approaches (e.g. the new Landscape Performance Approach) are tested.

Notably in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, authors explain how tourism in Africa affected. Across the region we have seen how international arrivals have evaporated, tourism enterprises have drawn on reserves to sustain salaries of their staff but jobs have been lost. The diverse web of value chain linkages of tourism has been clearly illustrated as local economies have lost the visitors that frequented restaurants, bought craft and used transportation. Tourism revenue that had been used to bolster wildlife monitoring and protection efforts in conservancies and national parks disappeared (see Spenceley 2021a, b). Illustrating this clearly, case study chapter in the book on Tanzania explains how people employed in tourism have been more vulnerable to shocks of the pandemic they lack social protection, and existing inequalities in the labor market threatened to become wider, while there is a fear that gender-related violence will increase.

Despite this, market research increasingly shows that travelers are, more than ever, interested in visiting destinations that contribute to local economies and benefit nature (Spenceley et al, 2021b). People want their trips to leave benefits rather than damage them, but they need guidance and support from policy makers and practitioners to do so. Chapter authors provide series of practical recommendations for planning and policy in African countries to strengthen sustainable tourism frameworks, and support inclusive community benefits and resiliency. These include options for governance, the environment and marketing strategies, in addition to the

role of communities and entrepreneurs, government and private sector in sustainable tourism.

The book will be a valuable resource for academics, policy makers and researchers tackling how to make tourism in Africa sustainable – and of benefit to the people that live there. Certainly, it is a volume that I will include on my bookshelf and refer to regularly.

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