

CHANGING THE FACE OF TOURISM IN MOMBASA

BY IMPROVING LOCAL LIVELIHOODS
AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES



ENSURING A WARM WELCOME FROM LOCALS MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

Where interactions between local people and visitors are warm and friendly, it can be a real asset for a destination and its hotels. However, our research has shown that when tourists feel overcrowded or hassled by beach or market sellers, it makes them less likely to return to the same destination and prompts them to share their negative experiences with friends and online. By helping market, or beach-sellers, to make a living from tourism, destinations can also improve the holiday experience for tourists.

Our research¹ has shown the impact of tourist hassle on:

Visitor numbers:

A third of people surveyed said that a country's reputation for tourist hassle would put them off taking a holiday there.

47% of those that had encountered hassle said that it had influenced their decision not to go on holiday there again.



Negative reviews:

79% of respondents said they normally share bad holiday experiences.

- › **61%** through word of mouth,
- › **37%** through website reviews (like TripAdvisor),
- › **27%** using social media

The holiday experience

57% of visitors who experienced hassle said it reduced their enjoyment of their holiday

Getting it right

Half of the people surveyed felt that meeting and chatting to local people contributed to their overall holiday.

62% said that feeling welcomed by the local people helped them decide to go on holiday to the same destination again - "a great deal".



“If visitors are not hassled then when they come they will get to know Mombasa better, feel safer on our beaches and get to know our people and our culture better. In all they will enjoy Mombasa so much more and hopefully return again’.

HON BINTI OMAR, COUNTY EXECUTIVE, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

1. We commissioned Explore Research to carry out 518 online interviews from 3 to 13 December 2013 with respondents from their consumer panel who had taken an overseas holiday in the previous three years.

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This case study shows how the Kenya Coast and Tourism Association (KCTA) has worked with the Travel Foundation to improve opportunities for local beach-sellers and enrich the experience for visitors to the Mombasa coast. Together, we have

helped beach-sellers to improve their ability to make a living from tourism, while ensuring that tourists enjoy the experience of interacting with them, without feeling 'hassled'. As a result of the project, customer complaints have been reduced,

holidaymakers are benefiting from a more relaxing holiday, the relationship between hotels and beach-sellers has been transformed and beach-sellers have gained vital new skills and opportunities.

'Currently we are rebranding Mombasa and we could not have done this as successfully without the work of the project. Mombasa's beach product is not just sun and sand, it is about the environment which the visitor is in whilst they are here. The beach operators play a big part in ensuring this environment is positive.'

HON. BINTI OMAR, COUNTY EXECUTIVE, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.



WHAT WE DID

Bringing stakeholders together

The ability of local stakeholders to work together to create a better holiday product was vital to the project's success. As an independent charity, we were able to support hotels, tour operators, the tourist board and local police to come together to find solutions to improve the relationship between local sellers and visitors.

Supporting formal guidelines

We worked with the eight trade associations for beach-sellers to introduce a code of conduct that all members must sign and agree to follow. Beach operators are now not allowed to approach a tourist on a sunbed, sunbathing or sitting down and are required to wear a uniform, so that they look smart and approachable. Plus a fair rotation system for approaching potential customers is in place so that holidaymakers are not overcrowded.

“I have been here for 20 years and I never would have dreamt of a day where I could see my guests lying on a sunbed on the beach without being disturbed. It is honestly like a dream come true.”

CATRIN SCHWERRING, GENERAL MANAGER, BAHARI BEACH HOTEL

Training

We trained over 500 beach-sellers in sales techniques, product development and business planning. Beach-sellers now have a greater understanding of a tourist's needs and of the importance of not overcrowding. Peer-to-peer learning is ensuring that skills are passed-on to new members, with one trading association now even running their own training course.

Relationship building between hotels and beach operators

We supported hotels and beach-sellers to work together for their mutual benefit, including to improve security on the beach. Agreements

have been put in place to allow beach-sellers to set up stall inside hotels on specific days of the week. In one area, part of the beach has been designated as 'the market' where beach-sellers can display their wares allowing space for the first time for sunbeds on one side and for uninterrupted views from the hotel on the other.

The project approach was based on a similar, successful initiative run by the Travel Foundation in Sri Lanka. We have also produced a manual which helps destination authorities and hotels run their own schemes to reduce tourist hassle available on our website – travelfoundation.org.uk



THE BENEFITS

Following the project, our research³ showed that the destination was able to offer a better holiday product:

- › tourists benefited from **an improved holiday experience and a safer environment**
- › the destination and hotels benefited from **improved reputation and increased customer satisfaction**
- › the beach-sellers benefited from **new income-generating opportunities and skills as well as greater confidence and self-esteem**

'The first people now to assist the security managers are the beach operators. They tell us if there is any problem on the beach. The relationship has improved tremendously.'

MR BENSON KILONZO, GENERAL MANAGER, PLAZA BEACH HOTEL.



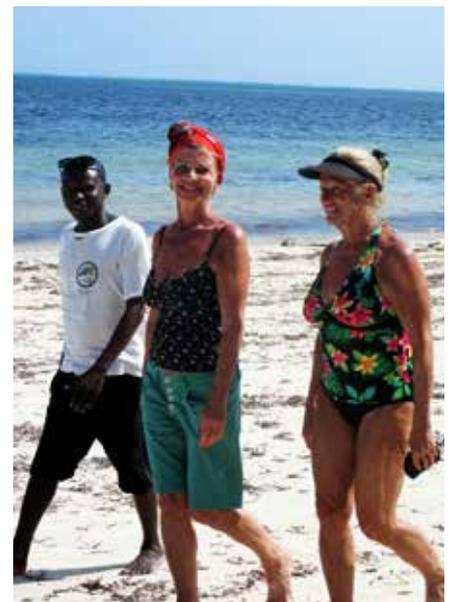
Improved holiday experience and a safer environment:

- › Visitors reported a reduction in hassle compared to visits they had made in previous years and all beach-sellers spoken to

commented that tourists do not want to be overcrowded, so they now approach tourists one at a time.

- › In the Bamburi beach area, a key achievement has been the reduction in security threats, as beach-sellers and hotel security staff are now working together to police the beach.
- › There has been a reduction in crime and all 15 hotel managers spoken to reported that they felt levels of security in their hotels and on the beach were much higher.

›



3. Results are from research conducted by the Travel Foundation in December 2015 with 44 beach-sellers, 27 other stakeholders including hotel staff and government bodies, and 49 tourists.



‘We were warned about the hassle by our families, but we have not found it a problem at all. We have travelled to lots of places, but we just love it here. We have been on the phone recommending it to everyone! We were only coming for 7 days but have just extended our trip for another ten days’

JABAH AND KHURSHID MUSSA

> **Increased customer satisfaction and improved reputation.**

- ▶ There has been a marked reduction in negative feedback about hassle from beach vendors on Trip Advisor.
- ▶ At Bahari Beach hotel there has been an **80% reduction in customer complaints** regarding the beach.
- ▶ Guests who bought excursions from beach-sellers were overwhelmingly positive about the experience. **75% of guests** rated their tour as very enjoyable, with **74%** stating they would recommend booking a trip with a beach operator to other guests, compared with **55%** in 2013.

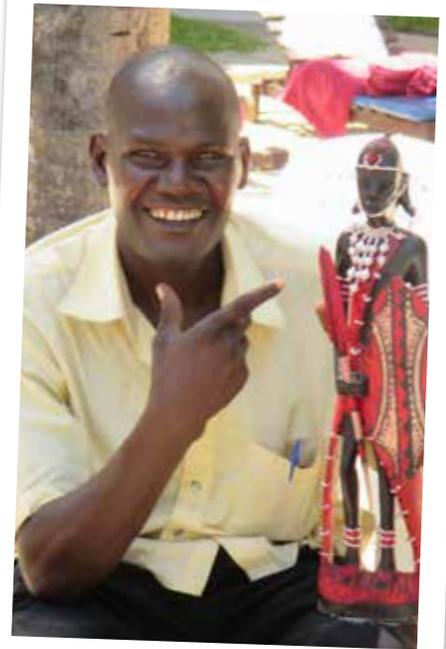
Improved opportunities for beach-sellers

As well as the improved sales and marketing skills gained, beach-sellers are now permitted higher levels of access to hotels, improving

income generating opportunities. One group of beach-sellers operating outside Bahari Beach Hotel reported that sales conversion rates were up by **10-20%**.

- ▶ Some beach-sellers are now continually improving their product range.
- ▶ The training has also enabled the sellers to introduce longer-term financial management and business planning practices. It has helped them understand the benefits of running more than one business to survive during a tough business climate.





‘The project taught me about business planning. It taught me to have a plan A and a plan B and even a plan C. As we have not had so many tourists this year, I now also have another business selling second hand shoes in my village which means I can fund my children’s education. My wife looks after this when I am working on the beach.’

Ben Mwsya, Curio Seller for 15 years, Bamburi Beach Hotel. Since taking part in the project, Ben has been able to fund his two eldest children to attend secondary school.

Improved confidence and self-esteem amongst beach-sellers

› Beach-sellers feel that the hotels now have more respect for them and see them as professionals with a service to offer. It is now common for the security staff from hotels to vouch for the beach-sellers and give

assurance to the tourists.

› Beach-sellers now proudly see their role as stewards of the beach, running regular beach clean-ups and supporting security staff. Hotel managers have also found that the beach-sellers are now much more responsive to their requests.

‘I think people see us differently now. Now we are recognised by the government, but before nobody thought it was really a job, they just thought we were street boys selling on the beach. They thought it was like a hobby.’

PATRICK KATAWA, SAFAI SELLER, BAMBURI BEACH HOTEL.

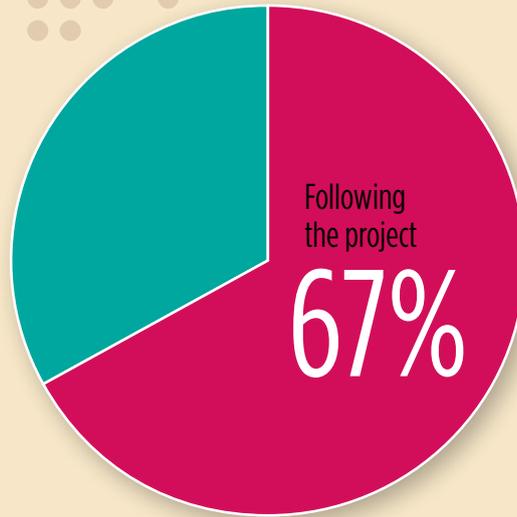
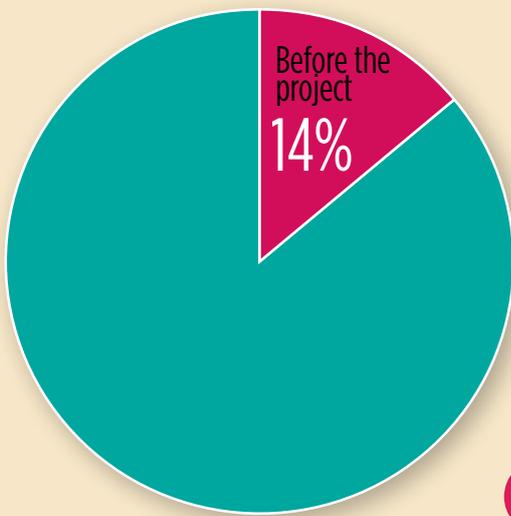


The Mombasa project was funded through a ST-EP Destination Management Fund, a partnership between the Travel Foundation, UNWTO and the ST-EP Foundation, and was led by the KCTA.

THE NUMBERS



% of visitors who said their overall impressions of the beach-sellers were very positive or positive:



75%

of guests who booked a tour with the beach-sellers rated it as very enjoyable

97%

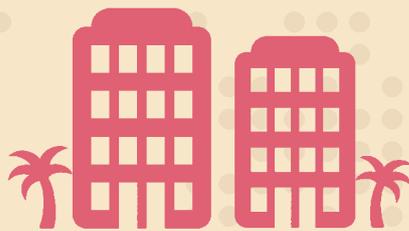
of tourists stated they would be happy to return to Mombasa and would also recommend it to a friend.



573

number of beach-sellers trained

74%



said they would recommend booking a tour with a beach-seller to others

15/15

hotel managers interviewed reported that they felt levels of security in their hotels and on the beach were much higher since the project.

Wider adoption

Since the project's completion, the training has been adopted by two other destinations neighbouring Mombasa. Kwale County has delivered training to 200 beach-sellers and during 2016 kiosks will be built for beach sellers. Lamu County has run training for 50 beach sellers and has developed a code of conduct and ethics.



To find out how the Travel Foundation can help you to address issues such as tourist hassle, please contact us at admin@thetravelfoundation.org.uk or Tel: +44 (0)1179273049 thetravelfoundation.org.uk