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Article

Re-Imagining Heritage Tourism in Post-COVID Sub-Saharan Africa: Local Stakeholders' Perspectives and Future Directions

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Abstract: Tourism strategies implemented all over the world have often been demonstrably far from sustainable. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and its dramatic effects on the tourism sector worldwide present a unique transformative opportunity to reframe tourism in more sustainable ways. This article uses qualitative research methods and ethnography to advance knowledge on the impacts, both positive and negative, of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and heritage sites, as perceived by local stakeholders living and/or working at six popular heritage destinations in Sub-Saharan Africa, located in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa. The article discusses ways to rethink heritage-based tourism strategies more sustainably, according to the viewpoint of the research participants, and identifies new emerging tourism opportunities triggered by the pandemic, cutting across different local contexts to highlight more widely generalisable research findings. Identified strategies include diversifying tourism products at heritage sites; improving tourism marketing, visitors' experience, and infrastructures; fostering more inclusive, co-operative, and integrated tourism and heritage management systems; increasing awareness of local resources while promoting ecotourism and responsible travel; and supporting economic diversification and local entrepreneurship.

Keywords: sustainable development; heritage tourism; heritage management; sub-Saharan Africa; COVID-19; community tourism



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1. Introduction

Heritage tourism has become an increasingly popular form of tourism in many countries of the Global South, including in sub-Saharan Africa [1,2]. Encouraging tourism is a widespread strategy used to stimulate local development based on cultural and natural resources [3]. Cultural tourism, in particular, is estimated to represent around 40% of the global tourism market [4] (p. 74) and has frequently been used to create new job opportunities and improve local livelihoods [5]. The contribution of tourism to sustainable development is clearly recognised in 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', a global plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and including 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. This international development agenda specifies the ways tourism can support the achievement of SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and SDG 14 (Life below water) through job creation and the promotion of local cultures and products (target 8.9); sustainable tourism management (target 14.7); and the development and implementation of tools for monitoring tourism impacts (target 12.b).

Several scholars have investigated the potential of heritage tourism for sustainable development and for the improvement of local livelihoods, wellbeing, and community resilience in Southern Africa, with reference to the United Nations' SDGs [6–12]. However, such research has also demonstrated that tourism strategies have often generated an unequal distribution of economic benefits; strengthened power asymmetries; increased

social disparities and the marginalisation of certain communities; and overexploited local resources, thereby departing from the principles of sustainability [13–16]. Tourism is a highly vulnerable, unpredictable, and volatile sector [17] (p. 113), and communities counting only on tourism-related economic activities are particularly at risk. Moreover, pro-poor tourism strategies have frequently been ineffective at reducing poverty and improving peoples' lives, despite numerous claims otherwise [18,19].

Since late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected the tourism industry worldwide, representing one of the 21st century's biggest challenges for tourism [20] (p. 1084). At the same time, the pandemic is a "watershed moment" for the tourism sector [21] (p. 611). Several scholars have highlighted how it presents a unique opportunity to reframe the tourism sector more sustainably [22–25]. They have emphasised how socio-economic recovery from COVID-19 could allow the reshaping and restructuring of the tourism industry; revalue domestic travelling; and be beneficial for local residents and the most vulnerable and marginalised communities, thereby contributing more effectively to social and ecological wellbeing and stimulating resilience [26–28]. They have stressed how ongoing transformations could challenge existing power dynamics, reconcile environmental needs with the demands of the tourism industry, and redefine alternative economies [29,30]. To support the achievement of these objectives, they have also called for better alignment of tourism with the SDGs—either considering specific SDGs or the entire SDG framework—to propose alternative and more sustainable tourism strategies [21,23,31–33].

Several studies have explored the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism in sub-Saharan Africa. They have mainly focused on the economic implications of the pandemic for the tourism sector and on the identification of possible recovery strategies, focusing on South Africa [20,34–36], Tanzania [37], Kenya [38], and East Africa [39]. In this context, Rogerson and Baum provided some reflections on reorienting the African tourism research agenda to support the recovery process from 2020 onwards [32]. Other studies have explored the impacts of the pandemic on Southern African heritage sites, focusing on natural sites, wildlife tourism destinations, and game reserves [40–42]. However, little research has investigated the impacts of the pandemic on sub-Saharan cultural heritage sites, on people working in the heritage-based tourism sector, and on local communities. A notable exception is the global study carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on World Heritage properties in different geographical regions, including Africa, through a survey completed by site managers [43].

This article advances knowledge on the impacts, both positive and negative, of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and heritage sites at six popular destinations in sub-Saharan Africa until July 2021, as perceived by 72 local stakeholders (see Section 4). Research participants included people working in the tourism sector, heritage site conservators and managers, and local residents and/or representatives of local communities. Further details about the selection of the case studies and the methodology used are provided in Section 3. This paper also discusses ways to rethink heritage-based tourism strategies for a greater alignment with local people's needs and aspirations and with the SDGs, as perceived and reported by the research participants (see Section 5). In this way, it applies sustainable development concepts to the discussion of current challenges and future directions in heritage-based tourism [44]. The article addresses the following research questions:

- How has COVID-19 impacted upon people working in the tourism sector that benefits from cultural and natural heritage and upon heritage sites and local residents?
- After COVID-19, how is it possible to overcome current challenges and build back a better and more sustainable tourism sector that is respectful towards heritage sites but also towards local needs and aspirations?
- What alternatives to an overreliance on tourism can be identified for poverty reduction, local needs, and wellbeing in a post-COVID world?

In addressing these questions, this article emphasises aspects emerging from the analysis that are essential for thinking beyond the crisis and fostering long-term sustainable changes in the tourism sector to make it more beneficial for local communities and the environment in line with the SDGs. This approach is highly original. Previous publications on tourism and COVID-19 have mainly focused on immediate economic recovery strategies (e.g., cushion strategies, fiscal incentives, and other financial measures) or on practical steps necessary for dealing with the pandemic (e.g., wearing masks, hand sanitising, COVID-19 testing and tracing, and other health and safety procedures).

2. Conceptualising Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism, and Sustainable Tourism Development

The concept of sustainable development emerged during the 1970s in the context of an imminent ecological crisis [45] and a neo-Malthusian movement led by the Club of Rome, concerned about the overexploitation of global nonrenewable resources [46] (p. 199). The concept was recognised on a worldwide scale in 1988 with the publication of ‘Our Common Future’, also known as the Brundtland Report [47,48] (p. 1938). In this publication, the Brundtland Commission defined *sustainable development* as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [49] (p. 37). This definition was further refined at the 2002 ‘World Summit on Sustainable Development’ to state that sustainable development is constituted by three pillars (environmental, social, and economic), which are strictly interdependent [50]. While sustainable development has been the subject of various interpretations and controversies and is still a contested concept [51] (p. 15), it was only after the dissemination of the Brundtland Report that it was applied to tourism through the notion of sustainable tourism and its subsequent conceptualisations [47].

Multiple approaches have been developed for interpreting the concept of tourism in the context of sustainable development [52,53]. This article is framed within the notions of *sustainable tourism* and *sustainable tourism development*. On the one hand, Butler defines *sustainable tourism* as a form of tourism that “can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time” [53] (p. 36). In this way, he distinguishes the concept of sustainable tourism from that of sustainable development and describes it as:

“Tourism which is developed and maintained in the area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and wellbeing of other activities and processes” [53] (p. 35).

Various approaches have framed the notion of *sustainable tourism* in broader terms using the principles of sustainable development, such as economic sustainability; long-term viability; inter- and intra-generational equity; preservation of ecosystems; and public participation in decision making [54] (p. 204), [55].

On the other hand, Hunter [56] (p. 164) explains *sustainable tourism development* as a type of tourism that “makes a positive contribution to all aspects of sustainable development, as far as possible in any given time and place”. Hunter identifies some goals for sustainable tourism development, including the following:

- To meet the needs and wants of the local host community in terms of improved living standards and quality of life;
- To satisfy the demands of tourists and the tourism industry and continue to attract them in order to meet the first aim;
- To safeguard the environmental resource base for tourism, encompassing natural, built, and cultural components, in order to achieve both of the preceding aims [56] (pp. 155–156).

Applying these principles to tourism implies a process of stakeholder involvement and the identification of an effective response to community and environmental needs [47]. It is essential to move beyond individual interests and to challenge existing power relation-

ships [57]. Considering the exploratory nature of this investigation, a qualitative approach was used to guide the research and collect relevant data. Structured and semi-structured interviews and an ethnographic study allowed for the collection of empirical data and for direct engagement with research participants working in the tourism sector. In this way, it was possible to access their views and suggestions on how to rethink the tourism sector according to their needs and expectations and to situate them within the complex relationship between tourism and sustainable development.

3. Research Methods and Data Collection

3.1. Selection of Case Studies

Six case studies belonging to three of the most visited countries in sub-Saharan Africa were chosen for data collection: Cape Town/Robben Island and Kruger National Park in South Africa; Lamu Old Town and Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya; and Zanzibar Stone Town and Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania (see Figure 1). According to the World Bank [58], South Africa was the sub-Saharan country most visited by international tourists in 2019, followed by Kenya (ranked 5th) and Tanzania (ranked 11th). Furthermore, the selected case studies represent iconic heritage sites and popular tourism destinations. They were identified by consulting 10 promotional websites for tourists in sub-Saharan Africa, and then selecting the most popular destinations (before the COVID-19 pandemic) for each country. Moreover, the sample includes a national park/reserve and an urban case study per country. This approach, focusing on the most-visited iconic sites, allowed for trends in heritage tourism to be critically analysed in a meta-analysis across multiple case studies, providing generalisable knowledge and increasing the validity and reliability of the research [59].



Figure 1. Map of Southern Africa showing the locations of the case studies.

An assumption of this study was that different responses to the pandemic, influenced by different national economic situations, could produce contrasting research findings. The three countries were, therefore, also selected because they adopted different governmental strategies for coping with COVID-19: from extremely restrictive measures in South Africa and Kenya to a more flexible approach in Tanzania. In fact, according to the *Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker Stringency Index*, which measures the strictness of government responses to COVID-19 for most African countries, more developed African countries established more stringent lockdown measures than other less developed countries [60]. In addition, even though these countries belong to the same geographical region (Southern Africa), they have significant economic differences, being considered two “lower-middle-income countries” (Tanzania and Kenya) and an “upper-middle-income country” (South Africa), according to World Bank classifications [61]. Finally, these countries were also selected because English is widely spoken in their territories—a factor which facilitated the collection and analysis of data by the researchers.

3.2. Data Collection

The research methodology included the collection of both primary and secondary data. Between January and May 2021, 72 in-depth interviews were carried out with people working in the tourism sector, directly benefitting from one or more heritage site(s) (Group 1); people working on the conservation and management of one or more heritage site(s) (Group 2); and residents living in or around these sites, as well representatives of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations working with local communities (Group 3). The following research participants were selected to represent different stakeholders for each group:

- Group 1 (36 interviews): 11 tour operators, 6 tour guides, 5 representatives of marketing agencies, 3 representatives of tourism associations, 2 tourism entrepreneurs, 2 waiters, 1 lodge manager, 1 hotel manager, 1 campsite co-ordinator, 1 hospitality worker, 1 hospitality manager, 1 assistant lodge manager, and 1 executive chef;
- Group 2 (13 interviews): 5 officers working for national, local, or regional authorities, 4 heritage professionals, 3 heritage site managers, and 1 environmental specialist;
- Group 3 (23 interviews): 10 representatives of NGOs or local associations, 2 local shop owners/workers, 2 local entrepreneurs, 2 workers in marine transportation, 1 volunteer, 1 farmer, 1 cultural vendor, 1 content creator, 1 taxi driver, 1 artisan, and 1 local restaurant owner.

More information about the backgrounds of the research participants and the interview process is provided in Table A1 (Appendix A).

Primary data were then supplemented by a desk review of secondary resources, which included available online documentation of the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry and heritage sites in the selected case studies (i.e., national research reports, surveys, and recovery plans) and a wide range of other secondary literature on the subject.

The pandemic and related restrictions resulted in the adaptation of the data collection strategy to allow the researchers to work remotely from their home institution, with the support of two local research assistants (LRAs) carrying out data collection on the ground in Kenya and Tanzania. This mixed-method approach allowed the collection of sufficient data for the attainment of saturation [62]. Moreover, the fact that two LRAs conducted interviews on the ground allowed a greater participant response, which explains why more interviews were carried out in Kenya (38) and Tanzania (34) than in South Africa (18). N.B., some research participants were associated with more than one case study.

3.3. Interview Process

The research participants were identified using public information (email addresses and phone numbers) available on the web. More specifically, the research team consulted the websites of local, regional, and national government authorities (tourism, heritage, and environmental departments); heritage sites; tourism organisations; tour operators and

tour guides; tourist attractions; marketing agencies; NGOs; and civil society organisations. Potential research participants were contacted directly by the researchers through emails and phone calls. In addition, local residents and individuals working in the informal sector were identified by the LRAs through site visits and with the support of local organisations. A “snowball process” was used to select additional participants suitable for and willing to participate in this study [63].

In line with the highest standards of research integrity, and as detailed in the ethical clearance received from the University of Kent, all research participants received a participant information sheet before agreeing to take part in interviews with the researchers. The participant information sheet provided information about the research and its purpose and explained the risks and benefits of taking part in this study. Participants were also reassured about the privacy and confidentiality of research data and were given the option to complete an online survey with the same questions as the semi-structured interviews, instead of participating in an in-depth interview at a place and time comfortable for them. Additional follow-up questions were asked after completion of the survey if further clarification was needed.

As a result, 28 interviews were carried out through an online survey; 6 interviews were carried out by phone or videoconference platform; and 38 on the ground, with the support of LRAs in Kenya and Tanzania. Interviews conducted by phone, on a virtual platform, and face to face were recorded with the participants’ consent and then transcribed verbatim with the support of computer software (Otter.ai). The average duration of face-to-face or virtual/phone interviews was 30 min. All data were anonymised before being transferred onto any personal computer or laptop to guarantee the confidentiality of all data collected.

3.4. Interview Guidance

The interviews provided data to address the research questions. A set of prepared questions was used to guide the interview. While certain questions were the same for all research participants, others were adapted to the different research groups as follows:

1. General questions: What are the most important changes that need to happen in both the heritage and tourism sectors to ensure greater benefits for local stakeholders? What practical steps can be taken to overcome past and present challenges in the field of tourism? What alternatives for poverty reduction, local needs, and wellbeing could help move away from a reliance on tourism?
2. Group 1: What have been the challenges of COVID-19 for your work in tourism? What have been the benefits? What are the most important challenges now in relation to tourism development?
3. Group 2: How has COVID-19 impacted on heritage-based tourism and on cultural and natural heritage sites’ conservation and management?
4. Group 3: What do you think have been the most important challenges you have had to face living in this area? And the most important beneficial aspects? How has COVID-19 impacted on tourism at the heritage site, on the heritage site itself, and on your life in general?

3.5. Data Analysis

After the data collection, all interview transcriptions were analysed using NVivo, a computer program for qualitative data analysis. Research data were first analysed by coding the interview transcripts and survey results to address the research questions and by adding comments and notes while reading the transcripts. After this preliminary coding, a set of sub-themes were identified by rereading the transcripts and coding relevant sentences accordingly. Table 1 presents all the sub-themes identified by at least one research participant per country. All these sub-themes are presented and discussed in Sections 4 and 5 below. Sub-themes that were not relevant to all the three countries were excluded from this paper to increase the applicability and relevance of the research for other contexts.

Table 1. Core themes and related sub-themes generated during the qualitative data analysis.

Core Themes	Sub-Themes	N. of Respondents			Total
		Tanzania	Kenya	South Africa	
1. The impacts of COVID-19 on people working in the tourism sector benefitting from cultural and natural heritage, on heritage sites, and on local residents	1.a Decline in international tourism	25	23	12	56 *
	1.b Income reduction and unemployment	16	12	8	34 *
	1.c Impacts on tourism-related sectors	5	5	1	11
	1.d Development of resilient and flexible approaches	4	4	2	10
	1.e Harnessing the potential of digital technology	3	4	2	9
	1.f Growth of domestic tourism	1	6	1	8
	1.g Deterioration of heritage conservation and management	3	3	2	8
	1.h Environmental improvement	2	3	1	6
	1.i Longer stays by international tourists	1	1	1	3
2. Changes needed to overcome current challenges in the field of tourism to ensure greater benefits for heritage sites and local stakeholders	2.a Encourage domestic travelling and diversify tourism packages	13	11	5	29
	2.b Improve tourism marketing	8	11	4	20 *
	2.c Foster education and capacity building	7	7	5	19
	2.d Prioritise local communities and foster local participation	5	7	5	17
	2.e Increase heritage awareness	5	5	4	14
	2.f Build a more inclusive and co-operative tourism ecosystem	6	4	4	14
	2.g Improve visitors' experience	5	5	2	12
	2.h Promote ecotourism	7	5	2	12 *
	2.i Reduce travel costs for locals	8	4	3	11 *
	2.j Improve infrastructures	2	4	1	7
3. Proposed mechanisms for poverty reduction, meeting local needs, and improving wellbeing that move away from an over-reliance on tourism	3.a Support farming and agricultural activities	18	5	3	26
	3.b Promote market diversification	12	4	1	17
	3.c Support local entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and technology	6	6	1	13

* N.B. An asterisk identifies those cases where the total number of respondents is lower than the sum of number of respondents per country. This is because some participants are related to more than one country and/or case study.

4. COVID-19 Impacts on the Tourism Sector, Heritage Sites, and Local Residents

4.1. Decline in International Tourism and Loss of Local Livelihoods

According to the research participants, the first and most important effect of the pandemic on tourism has been the reduction in the international flow of tourists in the three countries of study. This reflects a worldwide trend, as international arrivals dropped by 74% globally in 2020 [64]. Restrictions on air travel resulted in the massive cancellation of accommodation and travel bookings, leading to loss of income and growing unemployment in the tourism industry [65] (p. 13), [66–68]. South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania ranked among the top 10 African countries for total employment (direct, indirect, and induced) in the tourism industry in 2017 [69] (p. 9). The collapse of international tourism travel, therefore, resulted in a drastic loss of economic revenue; staff reduction and redundancies; pay cuts; and temporary and permanent business closures in tourism and related sectors [70,71]. The implications have been dramatic not only in Kenya and South Africa, which faced the harshest lockdowns and restrictions, but also in Tanzania, which was classified as a “high risk” nation and has indirectly suffered from the consequences of other countries’ measures [67] (p. 7), [72] (p. 51).

Additionally, the broader economic impacts of the pandemic have also affected other tourism-related sectors, such as catering (and indeed the entire food chain), agriculture, fishing, retail, maintenance, and other community services [73] (p. 3), [74]. These impacts have especially affected both urban and rural areas where the economy is primarily driven by tourism—for example, Zanzibar or Moshi in the Kilimanjaro area—when compared to places that can also rely on other sources of income and economic sectors. In this context, the most vulnerable communities and individuals, including women, youth, and people working precarious or informal jobs without access to social security benefits or governmental support (such as cooks, guides, porters, and food vendors), have been the most severely affected [75–77].

4.2. Flexible Adaptation of Tourism Activities, Harnessing the Potential of Digital Technology

At the same time, the onset of the pandemic has forced tourism stakeholders to find innovative ways to sustain their businesses and activities to avoid the collapse of the tourism industry. Demonstrating resilience and flexibility, some tour operators, travel companies, and marketing agencies have adjusted their offers to cope with ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and changing tourism patterns and visitor behaviour. For example, some tour operators have improved the marketing of outdoor activities (e.g., hiking, bird watching, etc.) in rural and natural areas, which have been welcomed by local people, particularly at weekends, over activities in inner cities and urban environments. By fostering a closer connection between people and nature, these activities have supported community well-being in the uncertain times of this global crisis [43] (p. 7). However, a representative of South African Tourism (Participant 04s, 6–10 years of involvement with the site) highlights how some rural areas were suddenly seeing new economic activities and that existing infrastructures were not adequate for hosting increased numbers of tourists in these areas.

Moreover, the pandemic has encouraged many tourism actors to take advantage of digital technology to improve their offers and marketing activities, both within and beyond national boundaries. Internet and social media have provided an excellent platform for tour companies to promote their products and market different tourist attractions to people who have been unable to travel. They have also expanded their tourism products to offer virtual tours, for example [78]. This digital shift has also meant that people working in this field had to improve their skills and become more digitally savvy, contributing to increased digital capabilities.

4.3. Changing Tourism Patterns and a Growing Interest in Domestic Tourism

With the closure of national borders, the increased costs of travelling, and the necessary isolation measures to cope with the pandemic, there has been a growing interest in domestic and regional tourism and in open-air and nature-based tourism activities [37] (p. 11), [41] (p. 702), [73] (p. 55). Whilst some efforts had already been made to foster domestic tourism even before the pandemic [79,80], [81] (pp. 250–251), the COVID-19 outbreak was a catalyst for its promotion to contribute to ongoing efforts to revive and support the tourism economy. In this emerging trend, many hotels and restaurants have created affordable packages to meet the needs of domestic travellers, and local citizens have had the opportunity to appreciate heritage destinations—often considered a “reserve only for international tourists” (Participant 15b, Kenyan employee in a tourism agency, less than 1 year of involvement with the sites)—from a visitor’s point of view. Another Kenyan tour operator pointed out that:

“Since Kenya came out of lockdown and opened up in August 2020, domestic tourism has blossomed. Many people from Nairobi visited the Maasai Mara National Reserve for the migration, and holidayed in Lamu and other coastal destinations” (Participant 05b, 6–10 years of involvement with the sites).

This growing interest in domestic tourism was also favoured by changing working dynamics due to the pandemic, which have allowed many people to work regularly from

home, including from their second homes [82]. A representative of a South African tourism organisation explained how:

“Now that people are working from home, they choose to stay in the outskirts and work from there (. . .). We see a migration of people moving away from city centres toward their second houses on the coast”. (Participant 04s, 6–10 years of involvement with the site)

Furthermore, international tourists who were able to travel have more frequently opted for extended visits over short-term tours, particularly if they were able to work remotely [41] (p. 702). This changing pattern has had several impacts both on tourism infrastructures, which were not created for longer visits, and on the local economy. In fact, foreign tourists became less keen on taking part in mainstream tourist activities, which are those able to generate most revenue for local communities. As explained by a tour operator in Lamu:

“Generally, when tourists come, they want to do dhow [local traditional sailing vessel] cruises or sunset cruises and many of this kind of activities. If you have long-term residents, they will do them for the first week, but the rest of the time, they are just indoors so this process is not trickling down the economy nor helping boat operators and tour guides”. (Participant 09k, tour operator in Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the site)

However, longer stays have also contributed to reducing the environmental impacts of tourism, particularly in terms of electricity and water, which are precious resources in Southern Africa. A couple of tour operators who own a small guesthouse in South Africa explained that:

“If people stay for one night, the amount of washing and cleaning you have to do just for that one night is out of proportion. If tourists stay three nights, you can change everything after three nights, which is what everyone is doing to conserve water”. (Participants 5s and 6s, tour operator and tour guide in South Africa, 6–10 years of involvement with the sites)

4.4. COVID-19 Impacts on Heritage Sites

The pandemic has had several effects not only on the tourism sector, but also on the selected heritage sites and related intangible heritage practices. The survey conducted by UNESCO reported that 90% of countries with World Heritage properties decided to close them (totally or partially) as an effect of the health crisis [43] (p. 5). Similarly, many sub-Saharan heritage sites were closed as an effect of lockdowns and other restriction measures because they were considered nonessential businesses [83]. Additionally, many intangible heritage practices, such as rituals and ceremonies, were also suspended because of COVID-19 [43].

As a consequence of closures and reduction in the tourism flow, heritage site revenues dropped consistently not only from entry fees, but also from governmental support, which prioritised emergency measures to cope with the pandemic. A research informant from the South African National Department of Tourism noted how “when COVID dawned, all budgets had to be diverted and reprioritised to support national efforts to safeguard people’s lives and livelihoods against the pandemic” and how “there has been a shortfall in terms of resource allocations towards the adequate care and maintenance of heritage sites” (Participant 01s, officer at the National Department of Tourism, South Africa, 10–20 years of involvement with the site). For some heritage sites, particularly the natural ones, revenues collected from visitors are the main source of income, allowing them to cover their conservation, management, maintenance, and staff costs [35] (p. 272), [43] (p. 12). These heritage sites are often the main source of livelihood for communities living in or around them. Some research informants noted how this income reduction has caused a loss of livelihood for local residents and a contraction of monitoring and security measures and of conservation and maintenance at heritage sites.

At the same time, the decrease in tourism flow has allowed heritage sites to flourish from an environmental point of view, particularly in terms of floral and faunal health and reduction in pollution and CO₂ emissions. This happened not only at natural heritage sites, but also in cities, such as Lamu, where, according to a local resident, “the water in the Indian Ocean was cleaner, and we could see fish increasing and the dolphins swimming closer to the shores” (Participant 22b, owner of a retail shop, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). Moreover, the pandemic has also contributed to increasing people’s environmental awareness [84]. According to two South African tour operators and guides:

“The pandemic has made people more respectful and aware of the impacts we are having on planet Earth. It is almost like the world had to stop for us to wake up and realise we were destroying our planet. (. . .) Everyone is becoming eco-friendly now. Everyone is checking the source of their purchase, etc. We would never have done that without COVID-19”. (Participants 5s and 6s, tour operator and tour guide in South Africa, 6–10 years of involvement with the sites)

5. Discussion

5.1. Changes Needed to Overcome Past and Present Challenges in Heritage-Based Tourism

5.1.1. Diversify Tourism Products and Visitation at Heritage Sites

The pandemic has shown how visitation at heritage sites should be diversified to make the tourism industry more resilient and sustainable. A popular suggestion that research participants made for overcoming this issue was to stimulate domestic and regional tourism from neighbouring countries. They highlighted how it is necessary to improve strategies and products to target locals instead of foreign visitors to achieve this objective. For example, heritage site entrance fees and associated travel costs (e.g., accommodation, local transport, etc.) should be offered at different rates to accommodate different visitors’ needs and their willingness and/or capacity to pay [41] (p. 702). However, according to a lodge manager in Maasai Mara, this is still a challenge because “hotels, especially five-star hotels, would rather have an occupancy of 2% rather than slash the rate and attract less privileged people who are currently not able to afford them, and accommodate a larger number of people” (Participant 06k, lodge manager, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). It is crucial to find the right balance, while setting multi-tier systems of rates, to ensure equity between the international and the domestic tourism markets, making it more affordable for local people without disappointing “foreign people, who are not happy to know that local people are paying X and they are paying Y” (Participant 05s, tour operator in South Africa, 6–10 years of involvement with the sites).

5.1.2. Improve Tourism Marketing, Visitors’ Experience, and Infrastructures

Furthermore, local awareness of heritage sites should be increased through branding and marketing strategies to make tourism destinations more attractive for locals, who are less keen on travelling for pleasure (Participant 03z, site manager of Zanzibar Stone Town, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). In fact, as outlined by the same Maasai Mara lodge manager, “it is not normal for an African person to go for a safari as we have not made it look worthwhile for locals to do safaris” (Participant 06k, lodge manager, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). A possible solution is to develop and offer different packages and tailored experiences (face-to-face or virtual) to attract different tourism niches and young people, in particular. In doing so, tourism packages should also take advantage of and promote heritage resources in less popular tourism areas to avoid overcrowding and resource exploitation, particularly during high tourism seasons, and to provide socio-economic benefits in marginalised regions in line with SDG 8, target 8.9 [85].

Another important aspect is that local travel infrastructures should be improved to allow easier, faster travel at domestic and regional levels [65] (p. 15). According to a Kenyan tour operator, “it is more expensive to travel from Nairobi to Lamu than it is to travel from Nairobi to Zanzibar, and the local and national governments should implement adequate infrastructures to allow Kenyans to travel more easily” (Participant 09k, tour operator in

Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). In addition, participants highlighted how it is necessary to improve digital infrastructures to support renewed marketing strategies and (virtual) tourism experiences. For example, a managing director working in the Kilimanjaro National Park noted the urgent need to develop “virtual tours and online marketing platforms that could help promoting the sites and market our products to attract more people” (Participant 01t, tour operator, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). The promotion of virtual tourism strategies can also support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from (mainly international) tourism travels in the context of adapting to climate change [86]. However, concrete measures need to be implemented by national and local governments to reduce the digital divide and reach those communities and individuals that will otherwise remain excluded by “improving technology and broadband connectivity for local people, business and visitors, and infrastructure development in rural areas” (Participant 21b, tourism promotion co-ordinator working in a regional authority, 6–10 years of involvement with the site).

5.1.3. Prioritise Local Communities and Foster Local Participation

A large number of local stakeholders have often been unable to fully benefit from the heritage tourism sector, which has generally favoured Western international tourism companies and hotel chains [67] (p. 7), [87], [88] (p. 753). As a result, there is an uneven distribution of socio-economic benefits and the perpetuation of colonial approaches in the tourism sector, preventing certain communities from fully accessing tourism-generated advantages and reducing their control over local resources [87] (p. 210), [89] (p. 110), [90]. Support for heritage conservation can be strengthened if local communities, especially those who have been historically marginalised, are included in local governance and decision-making processes and in the production and consumption of tourism [15] (p. 4). As explained by a participant working in a South African tourism organisation:

“COVID-19 allowed us to unpack and restack the tourism industry again. We need to make sure tourism becomes inclusive as we open up again. (. . .) The last thing you want to see is a community on the fringes of Kruger National Park to become spectator. (. . .) The moment the community can see that their survival is linked to the tourism activity happening within them, they will protect it because they understand that jobs will be lost when, for example, a rhino dies (. . .) Communities need to be in the centre, not superficially, but meaningfully. The story of the heritage of a particular site must be told by the locals and not by someone parachuted elsewhere to come and tell that story” (Participant 04s, representative of a national marketing agency, 6–10 years of involvement with the sites).

A representative of a South African community organisation outlined how the focus should be on “working with communities as opposed to for communities and buying in community ownership of projects and development processes, as opposed to external tourism agencies and no-profit organisations owning that project” (Participant 02s, general manager, community organisation, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). The same research informant stressed how an essential part of such development is:

“Enterprise development, that means being able to support these communities to become part of the supply chain of the tourism sector and of the greater conservation sector, (. . .) and to have an opportunity to create businesses that are of the quality level that tourism, especially five-star lodges, are looking for. (. . .) If we are seeing more of the lodges being owned and run by local communities, the direct benefit would be huge. And you would start to change the perception of tourism in South Africa from a community perspective”. (*Ibid.*)

Moreover, to foster community inclusion in the heritage-based tourism sector, it is “hugely important to include communities in the discussion of how they would like to benefit from or be included in the tourism and conservation industries, to allow them to decide what they want, and how they see their position in heritage conservation” (Participant 05b, tour operator in Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the sites). Communities—whose

participation in tourism project design, planning, and management is often precluded [91]—need to be involved in all projects relating to tourism from the very beginning (Participant 09k, tour operator in Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the site), as well as in the management of heritage sites (Participant 14b, assistant lodge manager in Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). In this context, it is crucial “to learn how to communicate accurately with communities (. . .), understanding what the vision is, what their needs are, what they would like to see change, and what their challenges are” (Participant 02s, general manager, community organisation, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). Understanding local needs and priorities can also enhance community resilience during crises [92].

5.1.4. Build an Inclusive and Co-Operative Tourism and Heritage Management Ecosystem

The research findings show how broader and stronger co-operation between public and private stakeholders in the tourism and heritage sectors needs to be fostered to create more effective tourism interventions. Adequate and effective (tourism) management plans must be codesigned and implemented with local stakeholders to provide them with an active role in the decision-making process and to avoid common past errors (such as overexploitation of resources, mass tourism, and exclusionary practices), but also to ensure a more constant and sustainable flow of visitors throughout the year.

A Kenyan tour operator outlined how “closer partnerships need to be established between communities, heritage managers, and tourism developers, which have been really lacking” (Participant 09k, tour operator in Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). In addition, “legal frameworks and structures are needed to enable and economically benefit local communities where cultural and heritage businesses operate because frequent exploitation of communities with no benefit or profit share is problematic” (Participant 08b, managing director of a South African NGO, 10–20 years of involvement with the site). The establishment of partnerships can benefit both local people and the overall tourism industry through a multiplier effect, including the creation of locally owned employment opportunities for local communities, increased revenue retention, and a better distribution of socio-economic benefits [88].

Research informants stressed how education, training, mentorship, and capacity-building support should be provided to local stakeholders, particularly in rural areas, to encourage the establishment of such community-based tourism enterprises. In this way, they can obtain tertiary qualifications and/or upskill themselves, particularly in information and communication technology and in tourism marketing and development, but also in hospitality, tour guiding, and other roles that fall within heritage-based tourism. Empowerment through training and education, also harnessing the potential of digital technology, will make local stakeholders less dependent on international companies and development projects (*Ibid.*).

5.1.5. Increase Awareness of Local Heritage and Promote Ecotourism and Responsible Travel

Other significant pre-pandemic challenges were related to poor visitor management and environmental conservation at heritage sites; inadequate planning and development; and increasing climate change. Considering the positive effects of the pandemic on the natural environment in heritage sites and their surroundings and the increased local ecological awareness, several participants highlighted the potential for taking advantage of this positive trend by fostering more eco-friendly tourism mechanisms. In particular, ecotourism and responsible tourism strategies—still underprioritised by governmental policies—were envisaged to promote more sustainable tourism practices and a better alignment with the SDGs, particularly SDGs 14 and 15 (Life on land). This could produce a more diversified tourism sector and support the development of diffuse community-based tourism initiatives, such as homestays, rural homes, and agritourism. Research informants also emphasised how they could support improved planning, development, and management strategies able to redirect the tourism flow, traditionally concentrated on

a few popular destinations, towards less-visited heritage sites to ensure a better distribution of visitors and of tourism benefits for local communities.

Promoting ecotourism is particularly relevant for ensuring the conservation of natural heritage sites so that future generations can enjoy them. According to a local tender entrepreneur living around the Kilimanjaro National Park, “ecotourism will help the generation of income, while reducing the number of destructive activities related to mass tourism, such as game driving and sport hunting” (Participant 09t, more than 20 years of involvement with the site). It is important to “reduce the number of tourists rather than promoting their increase and to focus on quality rather than quantity” (Participant 24b, representative of the Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors, more than 20 years of involvement with the site). Responsible visitation must be encouraged not only at natural heritage sites, but also at cultural ones to support the sustainable preservation of local resources and to promote fairness between visitors’ and communities’ needs.

Research findings suggest how more ethical and sustainable tourism practices should be supported by institutional change and specific incentives, such as encouraging longer stays, promoting responsible consumption strategies, and supporting locally sourced products in the tourism chain, in line with SDG 12. Finally, local awareness about natural and cultural resources—a prerequisite for their long-term protection and conservation—should be supported by adequate education (Participant 05b, tour operator in Kenya, 6–10 years of involvement with the site), upskilling, sensitisation activities, communities’ involvement in the preservation of heritage sites (Participant 13b, hospitality manager in Kenya, 1–5 years of involvement with the site, and Participant 25b, representative of the Sustainable Tourism Partnership Programme in South Africa, 1–5 years of involvement with the site), and local people’s engagement in decision-making processes and benefit sharing related to conservation areas (Participant 21b, tourism promotion co-ordinator working a regional authority, 6–10 years of involvement with the site).

5.2. Proposed Mechanisms to Move away from an Over-Reliance on Tourism for Poverty Reduction

The impacts of the pandemic have demonstrated how relying on tourism as the sole source of income can be far from sustainable in the long term. Therefore, economic diversification should be promoted to make communities able to rely on multiple income sources in case of future tourism crises, as recommended, for instance, in the 2015 ‘UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development’ and ‘ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Heritage and the SDGs’ [93] (p. 21). Moreover, economic diversification is also envisaged to support revenue generation throughout different seasons, and particularly during low seasons when tourism profits decrease (Participant 06z, representative of Zanzibar Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority, more than 20 years of involvement with the site).

Research participants pointed out how the tourism sector could be better integrated with the farming and agricultural industries, particularly in rural and remote areas. According to a site manager in Kilimanjaro, people living around this heritage site who have lost their jobs or had a salary reduction as an effect of the pandemic have decided to take up farming, beekeeping, and other agricultural activities to obtain a source of income (Participant 02t, 6–10 years of involvement with the site). An improvement of these economic activities can reduce reliance on tourism and provide alternative means of livelihood to local communities, supporting their recovery from crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the achievement of SDGs 1, 2 (Zero hunger), and 8.

Furthermore, local communities should be empowered to start their own businesses pertaining to local cultural and natural resources (Participant 16b, hotel manager in Kenya, 1–5 years of involvement with the site). They should be supported through ad hoc training and educational measures (see the previous section), particularly in the field of entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and technology, to become more independent from unpredictable tourism markets dominated and controlled by multinational companies [88]

(p. 743). This approach is critical for empowering the most marginalised groups, such as women and youth [94] (p. 16).

6. Conclusions

The relevance of tourism to sustainable development has long been recognised, including in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Nevertheless, the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies is still a challenge. Recently, the COVID-19 crisis has brought to light new challenges for the tourism sector, widened existing gaps, and further exacerbated social, economic, and political challenges in Southern Africa. This article has shed light on the urgent need to reimagine heritage-based tourism in sub-Saharan Africa in order to ensure more sustainable approaches and make it more beneficial to local communities. In doing so, it reflected on the unique opportunity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to reframe tourism more sustainably and it proposed ways to move forward. The article reflected on the views, opinions, and perspectives of local stakeholders living and/or working at six popular heritage destinations in Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania to identify effective responses to local needs and the greater alignment of tourism with the SDGs. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the existing body of work on sustainable tourism, providing a much-needed post-COVID-19 perspective on challenges faced by the heritage tourism sector in sub-Saharan Africa.

Exploring these challenges, this article provided a critical meta-analysis across multiple case studies, identifying emerging tourism opportunities triggered by the pandemic and cutting across different local contexts to highlight more widely generalisable research findings relevant to other countries in Southern Africa and worldwide. In particular, it discussed possible ways to rethink heritage-based tourism more sustainably and to make it more beneficial for local stakeholders, including: diversification of tourism products at heritage sites; improving tourism marketing, visitors' experience, and infrastructures; fostering more inclusive, co-operative, and integrated tourism and heritage management systems; increasing awareness of local resources while promoting ecotourism and responsible travel; and supporting economic diversification and local entrepreneurship.

This article also highlighted how there is a risk of repeating past errors related to poor tourism management if changing tourism patterns are not adequately managed and infrastructures upgraded, providing a timely contribution to the improvement of current policies and practices. For example, it explains how the upgrading of existing infrastructure is essential to support more comfortable and faster domestic and regional travel, as well as to host international visitors for longer periods instead of short-term visits, thereby reducing environmental impacts. Moreover, even though the research findings showed that harnessing the potential of digital technology constituted an advantage in adapting tourism during the pandemic, it has also meant that people without internet access could not benefit from these new digital experiences. The article, therefore, called on national and local governments to find measures to reduce the digital divide. It also highlighted how more affordable tourism packages and activities still need to be designed and implemented to truly benefit local people and support awareness of local cultural and natural resources. Finally, it outlined the importance of broadening local participation in heritage-based tourism strategies through bottom-up approaches, moving towards the development of more equitable and inclusive tourism strategies to avoid the perpetuation of colonial approaches in the tourism and heritage sector.

However, a fine-grained understanding of the impacts of the pandemic on specific categories of stakeholders or on individual heritage sites remains elusive, and thus requires further investigation. A deep-dive analysis and comparison across similar categories of stakeholders (e.g., tour operators and local residents) or across the same types of case studies (e.g., heritage sites in urban contexts or national parks/reserves) were beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, further research could provide additional insights on the barriers that may exist, for instance, to the implementation of the strategies suggested by the research participants in each context. More studies are envisaged to explore possible

mechanisms and challenges in diversifying local economies starting from local heritage resources; promoting more innovative and efficient integration across different sectors; and exploring how to strengthen local participation in decision-making processes through more effective heritage management plans. Such further investigation would increase knowledge on the existing limits and opportunities of aligning local strategies with the United Nations' SDGs, as recommended by the 2015 'UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development' and 'ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Heritage and the SDGs' [90].

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Appendix A

Table A1. Background information about the research participants and the types of interview carried out.

Research Participants	Role	Group	Case Study(ies)	Length of Involvement with the Case Study(ies)	Type of Interview
Participant 01k	Site manager	2	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	>20 years	Phone
Participant 02k	NGO representative	3	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	>20 years	Phone
Participant 03k	Heritage professional	2	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	>20 years	Phone
Participant 04k	Tour guide	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	1–5 years	Phone
Participant 05k	Tour operator	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	6–10 years	Phone
Participant 06k	Lodge manager	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	6–10 years	Phone
Participant 07k	Representative of marketing agency		Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	<1 year	Phone
Participant 08k	Tourism co-ordinator in a local authority	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	6–10 years	Phone
Participant 09k	Tour operator	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	6–10 years	Phone
Participant 10k	World Heritage volunteer	3	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	6–10 years	Phone
Participant 11k	Local entrepreneur	3	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	10–20 years	Phone
Participant 01t	Tour operator	1	Kilimanjaro National Park	6–10 years	In person
Participant 02t	Site manager	2	Kilimanjaro National Park	6–10 years	Virtual interview
Participant 03t	Farmer	3	Kilimanjaro National Park	1–5 years	In person
Participant 04t	Campsite co-ordinator	1	Kilimanjaro National Park	6–10 years	In person
Participant 05t	Representative of marketing agency	1	Kilimanjaro National Park	20+ years	In person
Participant 06t	Tour operator	1	Kilimanjaro National Park	20+ years	In person
Participant 07t	Representative of local organisation	3	Kilimanjaro National Park	6–10 years	In person
Participant 08t	Representative of local organisation	3	Kilimanjaro National Park	1–5 years	In person
Participant 09t	Local entrepreneur	3	Kilimanjaro National Park	>20 years	In person

Table A1. Cont.

Research Participants	Role	Group	Case Study(ies)	Length of Involvement with the Case Study(ies)	Type of Interview
Participant 10t	Environmental specialist	2	Kilimanjaro National Park	6–10 years	In person
Participant 11t	Heritage professional	2	Kilimanjaro National Park	10–20 years	In person
Participant 12t	Tour operator	1	Kilimanjaro National Park	10–20 years	In person
Participant 01z	Cultural vendor	3	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	1–5 years	In person
Participant 02z	Hospitality worker	1	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	1–5 years	In person
Participant 03z	Site manager	2	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	6–10 years	In person
Participant 04z	Tour guide	1	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	1–5 years	In person
Participant 05z	Content creator	3	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	1–5 years	In person
Participant 06z	Representative of local authority	2	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	>20 years	In person
Participant 07z	Heritage professional	2	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	>20 years	In person
Participant 08z	Taxi driver	1	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	>20 years	In person
Participant 09z	Representative of local organisation	3	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	<1 year	In person
Participant 10z	Tour guide	1	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	10–20 years	In person
Participant 11z	Heritage professional	2	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	6–10 years	In person
Participant 13z	Tour guide	1	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	10–20 years	In person
Participant 14z	Worker in marine transportation	3	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	>20 years	In person
Participant 15z	Representative of local organisation	3	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	1–5 years	In person
Participant 16z	Worker in marine transportation	3	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	10–20 years	In person
Participant 01s	Officer, department of tourism, national authority	2	Cape Town (South Africa) Kruger National Park (South Africa)	10–20 years	Virtual interview
Participant 02s	Representative of community organisation	3	Kruger National Park (South Africa)	6–10 years	Virtual interview
Participant 03s	Representative of local marketing agency	1	Cape Town (South Africa)	6–10 years	Virtual interview
Participant 04s	Representative of national marketing agency	1	Cape Town (South Africa) Kruger National Park (South Africa)	6–10 years	Virtual interview
Participant 05s	Tour operator	1	Cape Town (South Africa) Kruger National Park (South Africa)	6–10 years	Virtual interview
Participant 06s	Tour guide	1	Cape Town (South Africa) Kruger National Park (South Africa)	6–10 years	Virtual interview
Participant 01b	Tour operator	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya) Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya) Kilimanjaro National Park (Tanzania) Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania) Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 02b	Tour operator	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya) Kilimanjaro National Park (Tanzania) Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania) Cape Town (South Africa)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 03b	NGO representative	3	Kruger National Park (South Africa) Cape Town (South Africa)	6–10 years	Survey
Participant 04b	Representative of tourism association	1	Cape Town (South Africa)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 05b	Tour operator	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya) Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	6–10 years	Survey
Participant 06b	Executive chef	3	Cape Town (South Africa) Lamu Old Town (Kenya) Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 07b	Tour operator	1	Kilimanjaro National Park (Tanzania) Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania) Cape Town (South Africa) Kruger National Park (South Africa)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 08b	NGO representative	3	Cape Town (South Africa)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 09b	Waitress	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 10b	Tour operator	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 11b	Shop owner	3	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 12b	Artisan	3	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	10–20 years	Survey
Participant 13b	Hospitality manager	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya) Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey

Table A1. Cont.

Research Participants	Role	Group	Case Study(ies)	Length of Involvement with the Case Study(ies)	Type of Interview
Participant 14b	Assistant lodge manager	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	6–10 years	Survey
Participant 15b	Representative of marketing agency	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	<1 years	Survey
Participant 16b	Hotel manager	1	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 17b	Waitress	1	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 18b	NGO representative	3	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 19b	Representative of local organisation		Lamu Old Town (Kenya)		
Participant 20b	NGO representative	3	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	<1 year	Survey
Participant 21b	Tourism promotion co-ordinator, regional authority	2	Kruger National Park (South Africa)	6–10 years	Survey
Participant 22b	Shop owner	3	Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenya)	6–10 years	Survey
Participant 23b	Restaurant owner	3	Lamu Old Town (Kenya)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 24b	Representative of tourism association	1	Zanzibar Stone Town (Tanzania)	>20 years	Survey
Participant 25b	Representative of tourism association	1	Cape Town (South Africa)	1–5 years	Survey
Participant 26b	Tour guide	1	Cape Town (South Africa)	>20 years	Survey
Participant 27b	Tourism officer in a local authority	2s	Kilimanjaro National Park (Tanzania)	6–10 years	Survey

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