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The Effect of Digital Community-Based Tourism Platform to Hosts' Livelihood

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Abstract. In this paper, we present the results of a contextual inquiry study in a ~~community~~Community-based-Based tourism-Tourism (CBT) village. We investigate the influence of an enabling digital service platform for tourism that rural Tanzanians utilise to attract and host guests. Our interviews and observations show that hosting tourists delivers positive short-term livelihood outcomes (income, visitors), but the long-term impact (social, infrastructure) to the communities requires deeper consideration. We recommend that sustainable digital service platforms for CBT should be developed and assessed including their features in addressing long-term impacts on livelihood. We propose the following topics for consideration in future development of digital CBT platforms: the role of surrounding communities, rewards to platform contributors, enabling of indirect economic activities, understanding conflict-of-interest between communities and platform, empowerment~~ing~~ all of the users, and monitoring the local performance of the platform for its users.

Keywords: Digital ~~platforms~~Platforms:–Emerging ~~economies~~Economies:–Sustainable Livelihood Approach:

1 Introduction

In recent years, the emergence of sharing economy platforms such as Uber [1] and Airbnb [2] have revolutionised the way technologies can be used to earn money [3], allowing individuals to digitally offer services to third parties. In theory, these online platforms can connect and benefit users from different parts of the world. However Uber and other such ride-sharing services have received a mixed reception in emerging economies [1, 4]. Even legal matters around the services on the platform are confusing to the end users, e.g. are providers independent contractors using the platform as their billboard or *de-facto* employees of the platform [5, 6], what are the national laws and tax regulations in regard to such services?

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Insufficient research has been done [with](#) regards to the effects of these platforms in emerging economies [1]. While the potential of improving livelihood for locals seems obvious with a wider access to global markets, socio-economic and political issues on the ground might hamper beneficial usage. For example, the lack of even small amounts of capital can stop micro-entrepreneurs to get started or establish access to markets to find buyers for the products [7].

[A](#) better understanding of mutual effects between the locales and the sharing economies [therefore](#) needs to be established [3], to determine the role of such global platforms [8]. Harvey et al. emphasises that HCI researchers have the responsibility to contribute to a fairer economy for all [9]. Soro et al. suggest the creation of [localized](#) digital services for under-resourced communities in the global south, as global services inherently promote Western views and values, which may not be compatible with the local contexts [10]. Glöss et al. [8] have adapted the labour relations to the local context, as Hallowulla et al. [11] have demonstrated how values of underprivileged users can be integrated in designs. Consequently ICT4D researchers and practitioners are required to work [together](#) to support the appropriation of such platforms with the most beneficial effect for emerging markets [12]. Hence in a quest to establish how ICT4D should respond to the *transforming technology and sustainable development landscape* we need to investigate *substantial impacts on local livelihoods*.

In this paper, we present an investigation into the effect of a global digital community-based tourism (CBT) platform on the local's livelihood and consequent strategies. CBT has gained momentum with an increasing desire of tourists to learn about local cultures while including marginalised communities into new income streams. The Sustainable [Livelihood Approach](#) (SLA) [13] provides the overall conceptual framing of our work, informing the discussion on sustainable digital service platforms in the global south [14].

2 Related Work

2.1 Community-Based Tourism

CBT allows for tourists to be accommodated by local communities and be integrated in every-day life. Often, these communities reside in villages [or](#) rural areas, in countries such as Kenya [15], the Philippines [16], and Namibia [17]. Rega and Inversini [18] have called upon the ICT4D community to start including CBT in its agenda, as the topic has been largely neglected in the literature.

The effects on host communities have been mixed. On one hand, CBT offers communities hope [19]; ways to turn natural resources, such as beautiful location, into profits [20]; to diversify livelihood strategies by providing local products and services for the tourists [21, 22]; to improve local infrastructures and increase human capacities in tourism business [23]. Authors argue, that the positive sides of CBT far outweigh the negative sides [17, 23]. However, CBT has faced a fair share of criticism, such as insignificant change [15], investors' profit valued higher than effects on the host community [24], increased dependency on donors [15] and disruptions of community dynamics [17, 20, 23].

2.2 Sustainable Livelihood Approach

Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) is a tool for analysing “the poor operating in the context of vulnerability” [25], looking beneath the direct income, and widening the concept to understand other aspects besides the temporary monetary aspects [26]. SLA has been applied to studies of technology adaptation in rural Kenya [27], entrepreneurship in Ghana [28], as well as community-based tourism [21, 22]. Walsham [14] has recommended the usage of the sustainable livelihood framework to link ICT4D research to theory, allowing for generalisability.

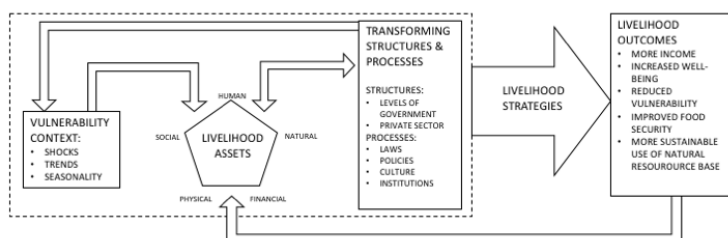


Fig. 1. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework by DFID [29]

We use the sustainable livelihood framework presented by the British Department for International Development (DFID) [29], depicted in Fig. 1. The sustainable livelihood framework consists of five elements; vulnerability context, livelihood assets, transforming structures and processes, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes.

The vulnerability context explains the situation where the poor operate. It consists of shocks, trends and seasonality that affect the livelihood in a positive or negative manner [29]. Transforming structures and processes are external stakeholders and policies that shape the livelihoods of the people [29].

The livelihood assets consist of five different types of capital: human, natural, financial, physical and social capital. These different types of capital refer to the strengths that the people have in earning livelihood [29].

The livelihood strategies refer to the different activities and choices people make in turning their assets in their context into livelihood outcomes [29]. An individual's livelihood strategy may include several different activities. In our study, hosting is only one of the several activities used by the hosts. Livelihood outcomes in itself consist of different desirable goals, such as increased well-being and reduced vulnerability [29]. Obtaining these outcomes is the reason for using the different livelihood strategies.

SLA has been criticised for its lack of immersion in the context [30]. In our research, we have studied the hosts in their own context, and used immersive methods such as contextual inquiry, to counter this issue.

3 Research Background

3.1 Research Aim, Scope and Questions

The overall aim of this study is to examine what the role of digitally supported CBT is in hosts' livelihoods? In this paper, we focus on the aspects of SLA that are in the control of the host: livelihood assets, livelihood strategies, and livelihood outcomes. Vulnerability context affect the livelihood assets that the hosts have, but hosts have little control over them [29]. Transforming structures and processes can be affected by the hosts, but the changes that the hosts can make to, for example, local politics or culture, would require much longer periods of observation and are thus outside of the scope of this paper.

To explain hosting as a part of hosts' livelihoods, we pose three conceptual level research questions that are addressed through practical foci in the contextual inquiry sessions (presented in [Subsection 3.3](#)):

1. How does hosting affect the overall livelihood strategies the hosts have?
2. How does hosting affect the hosts' pursuit of livelihood outcomes?
3. What investments to the livelihood assets does hosting enable the hosts to make?

In a complementary manner, we focus on the digital nature of the CBT platform, as digitality has previously been little discussed in CBT literature.

3.2 Research Context

The CBT platform used in this research lists villages and other communities in various countries with emerging economies. According to a 30-minute interview with a representative of the digital platform company, the villages have been selected and approved by the company in advance.

Each community has 3-4 host families and a contact person to act as a link between the platform and the families. The contact person might also be one of the hosts. It is also possible that the contact person lives outside of the community in the nearby areas. The host families have been selected by the contact person. The hosts need to have a house that is suitable for hosting tourists, *e.g.*, have basic facilities. When a tourist books a stay in one of the communities, the company gets in touch with the contact person who then allocates one of the host families to host the guests. In February 2018 the cost per night was 40 Euro, which was split between the host, the platform, contact person, and the community. The biggest share of the payment went to the hosting family.

After informing the company about our research plans, Authors 1 & 2 booked a stay in two communities in Tanzania via the platform as tourists. Both communities consisted of about 100 houses, and had primary schools, but no further education. Community 1 was located about 30 kilometres out of popular tourist areas, and there were some hotels even nearby the community. Fishing was an important trade. Community 2 was located next to a major road, but a 3-hour drive away from nearest major city.

There were no regular hotels or other tourism infrastructure in the community. The community was surrounded by farms.

We informed the contact persons and all the hosts in the villages that we are conducting research, but we asked to be treated as normal tourists visiting the communities via the platform. The contact persons acted as interpreters between English and Swahili while we interviewed the hosts some of who had only rudimentary English skills. Acknowledging our double role as tourist and researcher simultaneously, we recognise that it might have affected the data collection. However, we could not have travelled as researchers only and deprive hosts from their incomes or affect other tourists in their holidays.

3.3 Implementation of Study

We conducted a Contextual Inquiry [31] in the field as part of the rapid ethnography methodology framework presented by Millen [32]. A similar approach was used by Wyche et al., observing the mobile phone usage in rural Kenya [33]. We identified the following three topics to focus our observations to on the field:

- How does hosting affect the host’s life while they have visitors?
- How are they using the resources from hosting?
- How is the digital platform used in the context?

These topics match the research questions and aims presented in Section 3.1. The first focus addresses the livelihood strategy, second focus livelihood outcomes and the investments to livelihood assets, the third focus the digital nature of

In Community 1, we interviewed the contact person, two of the three hosts individually, and additionally had a group interview with all three hosts present. All hosts, as well as the contact person, were females. In Community 2, we interviewed all three hosts individually. In this village, the contact person was also a host. The contact person was a male, and the other two hosts were female.

The interviews were conducted alongside the daily activities the hosts and the researchers went through as a part of the normal programme for the tourists, and the content of these interviews matched the focus topics identified for the field work. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were used as a part of the contextual inquiry to support the data we made from observations. Every evening, a compiled record of the day’s activities and observations was recorded. Additionally, Author 2 kept a written diary. Contextual inquiry by two researchers on the field matches Millen’s request to use interactive observations [32].

After the fieldwork, all the transcripts from the interviews and the field notes were analysed by using Atlas.ti software (qualitative data analysis) by the two researchers who were on the field. We categorised our findings according to the focus topics. Additionally, categories that did not clearly match any of the foci of the study, such as “cultural exchange between researchers and hosts” and “role of community and gender” emerged in the analysis. In total, we had 20 documents analysed by using 16 categories, and marked down 176 text snippets. Collaborative data analysis by several researchers is the third and final step of rapid ethnography methodology [32].

4 Results: Impacts on Livelihood

In this section we present our observations from the field and our interpretations of the data. The section is divided to match the foci of the research presented in [Section 3.3](#)

4.1 The Effects of Hosting to Host's Life during Visits

Hosting and other Livelihood Activities

In the first village hosting was a highly communal activity. If the actual host was busy, another village member was always there to take care of the tourists. For example, the visit to the local cave was done with a member of another host family. The communal aspect of hosting was expressed by the contact person: *I just learnt how people... I mean... How the community and people operate together, most of the time. And how the families come together... I mean, they are not same families but they come together as same families. They share things together. And when there is a problem, they solve it together.* In the second village activities were split, one offering accommodation and another person carrying out the other activities. The hosts ran other business activities, such as selling fish or ice cream, craft jewellery, and farming.

Tourists as a Source of Additional Income

The visits to a school, savings group, tree plantation or to the cave were organized free of charge. However, at the sites visited, we were expected to contribute financially. For example, when visiting the school, we were presented with a possibility to donate money for the school activities. Also, during the visit to the tree plantation, we were asked to buy saplings that we could then plant on the sight. The activity itself did not generate any income for the host.

4.2 Usage of Resources Generated by Hosting

Hosting has enabled the host families to invest and save money for the future. In both villages visited, the host families used the money for their children's education and infrastructure improvements. One host in the first village told us proudly that she was now able to pay school fees for [all](#) her three children. Equally, the saving group member in the second village mentioned that hosts use the money to pay for the education of their children. *"The aim of the group is to educate women and men how to raise economy by entrepreneurship. And [also](#), to save money to get capital to make business and pay school fees for their children."*

In addition, all three hosts in the first village said that they had invested the income from hosting to build or renovate their house. One of the host families was able to get electricity to her house, which later enabled her to buy a refrigerator. Another host said that she will save the money to build her own house, since she currently has only the foundation for the house. *"She is now staying at her husband's house. Before <the*

platform> she had started her own house, so when she gets the money from <the platform>, her plan is to build her own house. So that she would not be so dependent on her husband.” The third host had already invested some of the income to expand the house by building more rooms.

The income received from hosting has also helped the school in the first village to renovate the school building and pay salaries to teachers. This came up during a group interview with all three hosts in the first village. *“Yeah, they think it (money for the community) is a good thing, because as I told yesterday, some teachers are not getting paid. So, when they (school) get the money, they can pay the teachers”*

Income received through the platform was also used as a capital for later business establishments. In the first village, one of the hosts said that she is saving the money to open a business in the future. *“Also, they (host family) told me that they have a plan to open their business, but they have not yet told what is the business. Later on, they plan to open their own business from which they can get their own money.”* In the second village, the money was used to support existing business activities, such as farming.

4.3 Use of the Digital Platform

We booked our stays in the villages through the platform website with credit card payment. Soon after the confirmation of the booking, we received a written guide for the visit, including a code of conduct, via email. The contact person emailed asking about allergies, and other restrictions to communicate them to the host family. We also received the WhatsApp number of the contact person, which was used in the communication.

The contact person appeared to communicate with the host families mainly via phone and WhatsApp. After the visit, the platform pays the hosts via Tigo Pesa, an SMS money application that allows users to send and receive money.

The platform asks tourists to take photos while in the village, and then to share them online. This had caused issues in the past in the communities, as the tourist had published a video with community members who wished not to appear on the Internet. This appeared to cause some tension between the community members and the host, whom the community interpreted to be responsible for the tourists' behaviour.

The tourists also publicly rate and give feedback online. The communities were aware of these ratings. They were mentioned several times, and we noticed that some of the issues that were pointed out in the reviews were meanwhile fixed. For example, a tourist had complained how costs were not announced prior to engaging in activities. In turn, we were explicitly informed about the costs.

The nature of the digital platform was unclear for the hosts. The hosts themselves are disconnected from the actual platform, interacting with it only through the contact person. They had not completely understood how the tourists find them, and book stays. The contact persons, who work in between the hosts and the platform in turn understood how the platform worked, *“Yes. They did not really understand how the booking works, they might think that the travellers were all from the university. They did not really*

understand the booking. *So, I told them that the travellers are from different countries and it works like a company. I had to tell them that there are just bookings.*”

5 Analysis and Discussion: Influence of Digital CBT Platform on Livelihood

5.1 Hosting as a Livelihood Strategy

This Subsection answers the Research Question 1 “How does hosting affect the overall livelihood strategies the hosts have?”

The platform offers the hosts the possibility to earn a larger income than before. The decreased attention to other parts of their livelihood activities during the visit did not appear to have negative long-term effects. The hosts that we met either owned businesses where they had hired help, or had types of jobs where participation every single day was not necessary. In other cases, other community members either entertained the guests or helped with the activities to be carried out.

In both villages, we spent time with other members of the community for times that our hosts were busy. Also, one of the community members who was staying with us, taught us to work with beads to prepare jewellery, that she sold for the other tourists in the area. Although we did not really contribute to her jewellery business, it appears to be possible to integrate hosting of the visitors to at least some of business activities. Our results suggest that from financial standpoint hosting is a positive activity for the hosts.

Tao and Wall have listed several ways that the members of communities involved in CBT can benefit from it [21]. These include direct contacts with the tourists as well as supporting roles. Similarly, we experienced several ways the hosts and the wider communities utilised our presence to benefit the economic activities in wider range than just hosting. We were brought to visit local attractions for a surcharge and we used local services such as kiosks. The hosts and other community members benefited from having a relatively solvent customer presence.

5.2 Digital CBT Platform and Livelihood Outcomes

In this Subchapter, the Research Question 2: “How does hosting affect the hosts’ pursuit of livelihood outcomes?” is answered.

Firstly, hosting *increases the amount of income*. The increased income allows hosts to invest into other livelihood assets, which enables more diverse livelihood strategies in the future. The increased income helps hosts to build a financial buffer, reducing risks that they may encounter and improving the hosts’ food security.

Hosting, facilitated by the platform, diversifies the hosts’ livelihood by providing a new way to earn money that is not directly dependent on the same resources as other livelihoods. The vulnerabilities of farming, for example, are not comparable with community-based tourism. The same applies to other forms of small businesses, such as

fishing and small-scale selling of general goods that we encountered. The decentralization of the risks *reduces the overall vulnerabilities* of the livelihoods, which is one of the desired livelihood outcomes. Through these reduced vulnerabilities, hosts' *food security also increases*.

Although the *improvements in the well-being* are more complex, as we need to assume that increased physical and human capital correlate with well-being, our research arrangement (as we were paying customers) makes it slightly difficult to assess the authenticity of the positive interactions from the hosts. Acknowledging this, it appears that hosting was an activity that at least some of the hosts enjoyed and which brought variety to life in the villages. This is suggested by the high number of mentions to cultural exchange in our data. This could mean, that hosting itself could improve the well-being of a host. Further research on this topic would *however* be needed.

After a dramatic family emergency, we thought that we should leave the community, and offered this to the host and the contact person. They assured us, that we should stay, and completed the hosting as planned. We were unable to directly confirm their rationale about continuing with the hosting whether it was an economic decision or a cultural decision of hospitality. It appeared that the host and the contact person did not know the options they had *regarding* changes, or cancellations. It is possible that the platform had policies which could have helped the situation, but if they existed, they remained unknown. This shifted the responsibility to the host who were already in a stressful situation because of the family emergency, which likely affected the host's well-being negatively.

We did not notice any *evidence of effects to more sustainable use of natural resources*.

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5.3 Investments to Livelihood Assets

In this *Subsection*, we answer to *Research Question 3*: "What investments to the livelihood assets does hosting enable the hosts to make?" Through those investments, the hosts can change their livelihoods on the long-term.

Hosting only complements other livelihood activities, as the visiting guests are infrequent. However, the amount of money (*financial capital*) earned from the hosting is relatively high, allowing to invest in mostly *physical capital*, which *improves* the quality of life and future businesses. These physical capitals include, for example, electricity and larger houses.

In addition to physical, human, and financial capital, hosting appeared to affect the *social capital* the hosts had in their communities. One of the hosts explicitly said, that he now is a "big potato" in the community, meaning that he had a good social standing. In his community, we were brought to a school and to a saving group, suggesting to donate, which could be perceived as his influence which can elevate the host's social standing in the community, and thus increase the social capital.

However, hosting might also have negative effects to the hosts' social capital. As explained in the previous subsection, there was a family emergency in the host's family during our stay, which led the host to balance attention between us and the family needs.

It appears that situations of this nature might lead to negligence, that can negatively affect the long-term relationships within the community or the family.

Additionally, the behaviour of the tourists might lead to further issues within the community. The community perceived that the tourists are the responsibility of the host. The potential misbehaviour by the tourists might result in tensions between the host and the community. The example of the unauthorised publishing of photos was a contentious issue mentioned.

Investments to *natural capital* were not observed.

5.4 Digital Services as Enablers

In [Section 3.1](#) it was mentioned that we wish to discuss the role of digital services in CBT. In this [Subsection](#), we summarise our learnings to serve as stepping stone for future discussion on the topic. In our research, the main role of the digital services in CBT is an enabler. Without digital tools, the system could not function efficiently.

The platform has two different types of stakeholders in the emerging economies: contact persons and hosts. From the digital point of view, their roles are very different. The contact person acts as a middleman between the hosts and the digital platform. The hosts do not necessarily directly interact with the platform.

The hosts and the contact person communicate via phone. If the host owns a smartphone, messaging applications appear to be popular. However, a smartphone is not a requirement for hosting, as the hosts can communicate with the contact person via phone calls and SMSs.

This policy lowers the technical requirements that are needed from the hosts to start using the platform, and thus makes it more accessible. However, by distancing the hosts from the actual platform, the nature of the digital service remains unknown for the hosts. The hosts were indirectly aware of the ratings that the tourists were able to share online, and it was clear that this concerned them to some extent. The ratings were discussed about several times in both villages. Rating services is a standard feature of the workings of digital platforms, and it is likely, that as the hosts were not familiar with these practices, they were not able to contextualise what this meant in practice. Similar phenomena has been noted by Ahmed et al. with Indian ride-sharing drivers [1].

The most contentious issue mentioned has however been tourists publishing unauthorised media on-line. While on the one hand the platform encourages tourists sharing their experiences in order to boost the business, on the other hand they are equally interested in a good long-term relationship with the communities. Hosts and other community members not directly interacting with the platform, absent from online activities, rights, and controls have no direct influence on the platform.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Guidance on Developing Digital Platforms for Community-Based Tourism

Soro et al. have expressed their concerns towards global digital platforms as tools in ICT4D [10]. They argue that the global platforms have been designed within a western context, which could be unsuitable for the global south. Although we noticed issues that stem from the global, digital nature of the platform, we argue that these characteristics also enable the existence of CBT platform. Digital platforms are multi-sided markets by nature, and the different types of users (in our case, tourists and the communities) need to operate utilising the same platform in order to create added value [34].

Our results suggest that *even though* sharing economy on digital platforms has its issues that need to be solved, it also has important potential in improving livelihood in emerging markets. It has already helped hosts to reach some livelihood outcomes. Glöss et al. have stated that HCI as a field should be more active in designing platforms that enable fairer labouring [8]. Therefore, we offer six lessons learned from our research that can be used in developing sharing economy platforms in emerging economies.

i) There is a need to emphasise the role of the community. CBT platforms' influence extends to the community besides the hosts and contact persons. *Acknowledgment of* this accompanied with a *code-of-conduct* might reduce some of the conflicts within the community as noticed by Kontogeorgopoulous et al. [20]. The share of the profits the community receives via the platform equalises benefits in the community. Although conflicts are still possible, acknowledging possible issues, and discouraging the potentially *offensive* behaviours from the tourists could also reduce the issues raised by CBT. Furthermore, as much as tourists upload feedback, community members should be enabled and encouraged to equally upload content on the websites, including feedback on tourists.

ii) There is an obvious need to reward platform workers. Ahmed et al. report that one of the biggest issues Indian drivers had with a ride-sharing platform was that they felt that all of their work was not compensated [1]. The CBT platform appears to compensate the hosts to such extent that it is profitable for hosts and communities to *plan* alongside their other livelihood-sustaining practices. The hosts explicitly expressed their wish to have more visitors, which indicates that they find hosting as a desirable part of their livelihood strategies.

iii) Design the systems in a way that allows for expansion of self-created local services. The hosts and the communities we observed had found ways *that* the communities could benefit from tourists in the *broader* community in the form of tours and donations. This contributes to the equalising benefits from tourists introducing possibilities for earnings for community members that do not directly use the digital platform yet and that expands beyond the "hosting".

iv) Negotiate and agree on rules and processes between the hosting community and the platform owners. The issue with undesired sharing of pictures, showed a lack of prior agreements and considerations of local rules and desires. Equally the regulation

of exceptional circumstances needs to be negotiated, such as in host's family emergencies, etc. Certain situations might not have been anticipated yet will need to be resolved on an ad hoc basis.

v) *There is a need to fully empower all the local users of the platform, including secondary users.* Ahmed et al. state that another issue the Indian drivers had was that they did not understand the platform they worked for [1]. Similarly, we found that the hosts did not understand the system they were working with, which led to unrealistic expectations of the number of tourists they could host. It is important that all the users of the platform, including secondary users (in this case, the hosts), understand the system, and preferably have means to impact it. In our case, the hosts could have used some of the features of the platform via SMS, which was a technology available for them.

vi) *There is a need to maintain the platform from the viewpoint of the users in emerging economies.* The platform we used had specifically been planned with the users in the emerging economies in mind. Still, during our relatively short stay, we noticed issues where the platform did not work optimally for the hosts. We recommend that future development of digital platforms or CBT include even closer engagement with local actors (e.g. via contextual inquiry supported development process) in order to identify issues that users encounter while working with the platform.

6.2 Reflections

Our main methodological concern is the contextual inquiry from a foreign researcher's perspective, in the role of tourists, providing biased data which should be enriched by local researchers. While the results indicate that there are issues to be considered in further deployments and operations of sharing platforms and therefore mechanisms for feedback from local communities need to be created alongside.

Another challenge was the role of the contact persons as translators. It was not possible for us to organise professional translating during our field work. Evidently, there was a language barrier between the researchers and the hosts. When we asked the hosts questions through the contact person as a translator, the contact persons often offered us their own answer and interpretation instead of translating the question to the participants. Furthermore, the contact persons had a prior relation to the hosts, which might have affected the responses hosts gave to us in the contact person's presence.

While the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach was a suitable framework for analysing the role of digital CBT platform in the hosts' endeavour to earn living in rural Tanzania, it emphasized the strengths and opportunities that communities or individuals have. However, the identification of different livelihoods that the framework appears to neglect should be considered.

The communities we visited did CBT as a small part of their overall livelihood activities. Lasso and Dahles have stated that resorting to CBT in a larger scale might lead to vulnerabilities, as the old livelihoods might be replaced by tourism [22], suggesting that CBT schemes and platforms should encourage and support co-existence with traditional means of livelihood. Tourism is a volatile business, and the amounts of tourism

may be affected by various external factors that the communities cannot influence such as weather or political situation.

However, limiting the number of visitors in the area might be difficult. Blackstock has pointed out that the CBT industry is often ultimately more interested *in its* profits than empowering of the local communities [24]. It is also questionable whether the local community would be interested in limiting the number of visitors. It was expressed to us that all the visitors at this point were wanted. The tourism brings relatively large sums of money to the village. Communities might be willing to endure the negative sides of the CBT *in* the hope of a better future *as* Simons and de Groot have stated [19].

Although our research suggests that the digitally supported CBT might have positive effects on livelihoods of the hosts in short term, the long-term effects are yet unknown. Dependency on a single digital platform that is administrated by a third-party actor poses a risk in the long-term. Also, the negative effects of tourism to community dynamics have been well documented in the literature [15, 17, 20, 23], and may well accumulate during longer periods of time. If correctly used with appropriate advising content for all parties included, digitally facilitated CBT could be a tool for better livelihood in the future.

7 Summarising Conclusions

We have inquired with the hosts of *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) whose work is facilitated by a digital tourism platform. The hosts' short-term financial gains are relatively large and important. However, we also noticed questionable effects relating to new livelihood strategies and the regular community alignment and handling of tourists when the amount of tourism increases.

Despite challenges, there is potential to harness global digital platforms as a tool for CBT to create better livelihoods in the emerging economies in the future. Digitalisation brings sharing economy to emerging economies. With the identified guidance on development of digital platforms for CBT, we hope to advance designs that allow users in the global south to take full advantage of the new possibilities in improving their livelihood.

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