Towards E-Commerce Use for Pro-Poor Tourism Promotion: Local Providers' ICT Training Needs in Tanzania

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Abstract
Although e-commerce and related technologies are regarded as tourism business' natural partners, opportunities emanating from their use may not be fully realized unless users are equipped with required information and communication technologies (ICT) knowledge. A need for capacity building is thus critical to providing developing countries with opportunities to capitalize on the opportunities offered by ICT. This study was carried in Zanzibar and Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania to investigate ICT training level and current ICT training needs among the micro-small and medium tourism enterprises (MSMTEs). Using snowballing non-probability sampling technique, data was collected from willing 69 MSMTEs. While quantitative data was analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS), descriptive answers were contently summarized. Activities identified include tour operating, souvenirs, Tingatinga drawings, Maasi carvings, boutique selling, hotel operation, animal zoos, backpacking and information services provision. Areas that revealed importance and urgency for training include internet usage, purchasing and selling products via the Internet, basic web designing and maintenance and troubleshooting. Others are basic software applications such as Microsoft word, spreadsheet, report processing and presentation. Need for government support in laying out infrastructure, supportive policies that favor sponsored trainings and subsidized investments in ICT was exposed as important ingredients for tourism competitive advantages.

Keywords
E-commerce; local tourism providers; pro-poor tourism; capacity building; ICT training; ICT training needs; tourism promotion