

Rural tourism as a means of poverty alleviation A study of Kiulu Farmstay in Sabah

ABSTRACT

The study discovers the role of rural tourism as a means of poverty alleviation in Ulu Kiulu, Tuaran, Sabah through a qualitative study in Kiulu Farmstay. A preliminary site visit and key informant interview with the field coordinator of Kiulu Farmstay was conducted to explore the nature of tourism activities in the area and how the activities contribute to the socio-economic development of the local community in the village. The results suggest that tourism activities in Kiulu Farmstay have met the rural tourism concept in terms of the activities involved and the impact it has contributed to the local community through job opportunities, community empowerment, and household income. This study involved a single interview with the key informant in selected rural tourism destination in Sabah, thus the results might not be adequate to make general interpretations for a larger population. This study lends insights to some solutions on poverty alleviation in rural areas through rural tourism by suggesting to operators and policymakers that it is important to provide the local community with relevant capacity building and to ensure adequate support from other actors in the rural tourism supply chain, like NGOs, universities, volunteers, government, in line with the trickle-down concept of tourism. This study provides value as it is one of the very few studies which have investigated the economic and distributional impacts of rural tourism to the local community as the main beneficiaries, as well as stakeholders' involvement in the development of tourism in the rural area.