

WELLNESS TOURISM AND ITS IMPACT ON LOCAL PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN UBUD, BALI, INDONESIA

Jaeyeon Choe¹, Mahyuni Seputra²

¹ Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

² Udiknas University, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: jayeon.choe@gmail.com

Abstract: The United Nations emphasises poverty alleviation and sustainable communities as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Southeast Asia, tourism has been seen to alleviate poverty through tourist income, job creation, and providing funds for the preservation and conservation of local heritage and revitalising traditional skills. Ubud, Indonesia, with a number of internationally significant temples and meditation/yoga centres attracts increasing numbers of wellness tourists. However, as Western investors and teachers run most of the yoga centres, a tourist bubble and economic leakage occurs, leading locals to increasingly question whether tourism actually benefits the local economy and ‘works’ for them. The objectives of this project are to (1) examine the recent phenomenon of wellness/spiritual tourism in Ubud, Indonesia (2) understand the local perspectives on the impact by conducting semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders (3) provide recommendations on how this form of tourism can contribute to economic development and community enhancement by suggesting more sustainable directions. This presentation reports preliminary findings from a pilot study, including observational and participant field-work as well as semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders in Ubud, Bali. The preliminary findings suggest it can, in particular circumstances, contribute to sustainable community development whilst providing economic benefits. The findings provide recommendations on how this form of tourism can contribute to community development through the invigoration of rural areas across Indonesia.

Keywords: spiritual tourism, economic development, community development
