

## COVID 19 AND TOURISM: LESSONS FROM HONG KONG

### Learn from Hong Kong

Wednesday, September 22, 2021



Commuters on board a train in Hong Kong in this picture taken on April 4, 2020.

File | AFP



By Joseph Njoroge  
Lecturer  
Murang'a University of Technology

Ac

Traveling to major destinations has given me a glimpse of how different destinations are restarting tourism. Many major destinations have come up with tailor made strategies depending on their needs and niche. Before departure to Hong Kong it was clear to me that I was to be quarantined for 14 days as per the World Health Organization health protocol on travel. Hong Kong has so far managed to open tourism and businesses gradually considering the COVID – 19 that resonate with mainland China, a major challenge to global public health concern.

A number of strategies from both personal experience and review of publicly available data can provide a glimpse of what is going on in other destinations and at this time an opportunity to learn from one another. Hong Kong is a business hub as we provide for safari and lately the growth of sports tourism in Kenya after successfully hosting several sporting events including World Rally Championship, Under 20 IAAF games and Africa Deaflympics ball games at Moi Sports Kasarani.

In order for Hong Kong to ensure full opening of the tourism sector, notably a number of strategies have been employed. Currently Hong Kong has a 35%, 40% and 25% strategy that ranges from short-term to long-term strategies. In short-term (35%) or rather currently, Hong Kong observes very strict health protocol including a pre-test, 14 day quarantine and after quarantine test. The strategy enables Hong Kong to keep the spread of

covid-19 checked. This works well with the need to protect the residents from incoming COVID -19 variants which are spread through global travel. As they do so they have continued to vaccinate its citizens as they implement other protocols.

Moreover, Hong Kong has also boosted local consumption by promoting staycation as commented by Mr. Chen the executive director of Hong Kong Tourism Board. Staycation is synonymous with the break of COVID – 19 which encourages locals to travel within their communities to consume available tourism services without the need to travel long haul. By boosting local consumption the sector stays afloat hence strengthening local economies. Such strategies have made Hong Kong stay afloat over the short-term period.

HKTB has also set aside a budget of over HKD\$1.138 Million to be used in 2021/22 financial year for destination marketing and promotion of cruise tourism and organization of mega events for the destination focused in the midterm. It is therefore important that KTB focuses in the promotion of global events which will keep Kenya ahead of the pack and in return a better competitive edge for the destination. Thanks to the upcoming Dubai expo which is slotted for early October 2021 where KTB can showcase its products as we diversify to more creative products as we wait for the big button to restart the sector fully.

Finally it is worthwhile to consider industry players to continue advising the policy makers as we sail through the COVID – 19 uncertainties. However we have hope that the sector will be back to its feet and will continue to support the already disfranchised sector that support the country to a tune of about 13% GDP and 10% of direct jobs.