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RURAL TOURISM AS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE: AN ANALYSIS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LUANDA, KENYA

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ABSTRACT:

For tourism to be described as rural tourism, it should mirror the characteristics that signify a rural area including small settlements, low population densities, agrarian-based economies, and traditional societies. This paper identifies the available tourist attraction facilities within the Luanda rural region in Western Kenya and addresses how the locals can participate directly in tourism entrepreneurship and management. The area under study is not well imaged, commodified, and packaged to tap the rural tourism potential of the area. The research aims to illuminate solutions for re-imagining rural area features and activities in order to make them tourist attractive and to relate rural tourism with the social, cultural, and economic elements of rural areas. In the final analysis, the identification of character as being significant for place is of critical importance for rural areas and the notion of rurality.

KEYWORDS:

Rural tourism. Place marketing. Image management. Resident support for tourism. Luanda. Kenya.

1. INTRODUCTION

Top tourism destinations, particularly in developing countries, include national parks, wilderness areas, mountains, lakes, and cultural sites, most of which are generally rural. Thus tourism is already an important feature of the rural economy in these specific sites. It is self-evident that tourism will never come to dominate all rural areas, particularly in the developing world – there

are vast swathes of rural areas for which tourism is not relevant for the foreseeable future. Between these two extremes are poor rural areas with some tourism potential, and an urgent need to develop whatever economic potential they have.

As many as 75% of the world's poor live in the rural areas and more than one-third of rural areas are in arid and semiarid regions (Chaudhry and Gupta, 2010). It is in the context that rural tourism is identified as a tool for rural revitalization. An important question is whether more can be done to develop tourism within such rural areas, as a way of dispersing the benefits of tourism and increasing its poverty impact (Holland, et al., 2003). The aim of promoting tourism is to increase the net benefits to rural people, and increase their participation in managing the tourism product. If more tourism can be developed in rural areas, particularly in ways that involve high local participation in decisions and enterprises, then poverty impacts are likely to be enhanced. The nature of rural tourism products, often involving small-scale operations and culturally-based or farm-based products can be conducive to wide participation. Tourism can also bring a range of other benefits to rural areas, such as infrastructural development and spin-off enterprise opportunities. However, developing rural tourism has its challenges.

Any successful tourism development, whether rural or not, depends on commercial, economic, and logistical issues, such as the quality of the product, accessibility and infrastructure of the destination, availability of skills, and interest of investors. In most of these aspects, rural areas may well be at a disadvantage compared to urbanized and more developed areas. These challenges may be compounded by political and institutional obstacles, particularly in developing countries, i.e. the administrative complexity of dealing with low-populated areas, the lack of policy coordination between rural development and tourism development, and low priority provided to rural areas by central governments. Thus, ways to deal with these challenges are needed.

Rural tourism takes many different forms and is pursued for different reasons. There are developmental reasons to promote tourism as a growth pole such as for regeneration following agro-industrial collapse, or diversification of a remote marginal agricultural area into adventure tourism or cultural tourism. Moreover, rural tourism preserves some depth to a world increasingly being flattened out by the forces of globalization (Tanahashi, 2010). Other reasons relate more to development of the tourism product such as diversifying a country's image, or alleviating bottlenecks in popular sites. With downturns in rural economies over the last three decades, it is perhaps understandable that governments have given a great deal of attention to the economic benefits of tourism, particularly for rural areas attempting to keep pace and adapt to the vigorous globalized economy.

As Telfer (2002) suggested, growing numbers of city-dwellers are getting away from it all in the countryside. One of the advantages of rural tourism is that it is based on local; initiatives, local management, has local spin-offs, is rooted in local scenery and it taps into local culture. In theory, the emphasis on the local can help to generate regional development. According to Sharpley and Sharpley (1997), rural tourism is increasingly being used for socio-economic regeneration and diversification. While the definition of rural varies in different countries, Sharpley and Sharpley (1997: 20) further describe rural as all areas ‘both land and water, that lie beyond towns and cities which, in national and regional contexts, may be described as major urban centres’. Lane (1994) details the difficulty in attempting to create a definition of rural tourism as not all tourism in rural areas is strictly rural. Rural tourism extends beyond farm-based tourism to include:

Special-interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and in some areas, ethnic tourism. (Lane, 1994:9)

Against this background, we believe that understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges associated with rural tourism in different socio-cultural, economic, and institutional contexts is important for developmental planning. The present paper focuses on Luanda Division of Vihiga District to find out ways of developing of rural area features and activities to make them tourist attractive, and to relate rural tourism with social cultural and economic elements of rural areas. In view of the Kenyan tourism policy, the study focused on the following topics:

- Rural dwellers’ willingness and capacity to support and respond to changes induced by tourism
- Contextual considerations in planning rural tourism
- Initiatives that encourage the development of any form of tourism in the region

The literature review that follows this section is broadly aimed to situate the study within the extant theoretical framework of rural tourism. It will also highlight the importance of reimagining the rural environment and resources: re-imagination is often central to seeing rurality as a valuable asset rather than as unwanted backwardness.

2. IMAGINING AND RE-IMAGINING THE 'RURAL'

Meaning of the word 'rural' has undergone multiple transformations in the last one century or so: Traditionally, by default, rural was synonymous with agrarian. However, more recently, the term began to be used in literature more in socio, cultural, and economic terms. However, such academically derived definitions may bear little resemblance to residents' understanding of the concept, observes Jacob and Luloff (1995). Daniel Bromley's theory of volitional pragmatism is a pointer against this disparity in imaginations (Bromley, 2006).

It is contentious whether rural imagination (the way rural residents imagine about their place and life) is what marketing forces are interested in. While poetic imagination of the rural environment vivified the sensibilities of rural residents and made them to see aspects of the authentic rural that might have escaped the untrained eyes, commercial forces do not have any incentive to do so. These forces are more interested in reifying in the rural-landscape what tourists originating from the urban areas want to see (Rigg and Ritchie, 2002).

Research on authentic and inauthentic tourist experience and the manner in which images of attraction, culture and destinations are used in advertising and promotion has been well presented in the tourism literature. Both the nature of the destination image and manner in which it is created are of utmost importance because the appeal of tourist attraction arises largely from the image conjured up, partly from direct or related experience and partly from external sources and influence. Mental image are the basis for the evaluation and selection of an individual's choice of destination. Undoubtedly, there are many sources of the images that people hold for place and product. Although rural areas have long served to attract visitor through their inherent appeal, it is only in recent years that regions have explicitly sought to develop, image and promote themselves more attractive to tourist investor and employees. Rural imaging processes are characterized by some or all of the following:

- Development of critical mass of visitor attractions and facilities;
- The hosting of events and festivals;
- Development of rural tourism strategies and policies of organization with new or renewed regional tourism organizations and how they relate to development of regional marketing and promotional campaigns; and
- The development of leisure and cultural service and project to support the regional marketing and tourism effort.

The principle aims of imaging strategies are to attract tourism expenditure, generate employment in tourism and related industries, foster positive images for potential investor and local inhabitants and provide an environment which will attract and retain the interest of professionals who constitutes the core work force in the new services industries. The identification of character as being significant for place promotion is of critical importance for rural areas and notion of rurality.

Places are increasingly being packaged around a source of real or imagined cultural traditions and representations often focusing on a particular interpretation of the enterprise history of a place. Tourism may therefore reinforce those aspects of rurality and, hence, identify those which have become commodified through the process of place marketing. In a study conducted in the New Zealand context, the host communities displayed feelings of apprehension towards increased tourism development, fearing it would threaten the solidarity of their communities, yet welcomed the vibrancy of new development and economic opportunity (McGregor and Thompson-Fawcett, 2011). However, a broad survey of previous research would suggest that, in general, the match between tourist and resident imaginations of what constitute the rural is better in the case of developed country rural destinations (Champion and Hugo, 2004).

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF RURAL TOURISM

Rural areas are heterogeneous. The definition of a rural area is problematic in the literature – most people know a rural area when they see one, but few agree on a definition in a few sentences. Debates aside, common features of rural space are (Ashley and Maxwell 2001):

- spaces where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only small patches of the landscape, most of which is dominated by fields and pastures, woods and forest, water, mountain and desert;
- places where most people spend most of their working time on farms;
- abundance and relative cheapness of land;
- high transaction costs, associated with long distance and poor infrastructure; and
- geographical conditions that increase political transaction costs and magnify the possibility of elite capture or urban bias.

For the purposes of this contribution, key features that make rural areas relevant to tourism development are their poverty and lack of economic opportunity, combined with the agricultural and/or scenic and/or cultural nature of the area, which provides a tourism asset. The aim of 'rural tourism' is to increase the net benefits to people from the rural areas, and increase their participation in the development of the tourism product.

From this perspective, there are three main reasons why it is important to develop tourism in rural areas:

3.1. Increase participation of the people in the development of tourism

While the percentage of poor people in urban areas is increasing, there are still more in rural areas, both in total numbers as well as a proportion of the population. One key opportunity of involving more of the people in tourism is to develop tourism enterprises where they live. This is not to say that they will necessarily own an enterprise, or even provide the labour, just because it is located in a rural area, but location is a first step. Furthermore, two strengths of tourism for increasing participation are that a) because the customer comes to the product (not vice versa), there are more opportunities for expanding the range of transactions; and b) tourism usually involves a wide range of enterprises, i.e. the small and informal as well as the well-established or multi-national. One advantage specific to rural tourism is that the nature of the product often involves enterprises that feature local ownership such as bed and breakfasts, home visits and farm stays (Ashley, Goodwin and Roe 2001).

3.2.. Bring wider benefits to rural areas

Rural areas generally suffer high levels of poverty, and are also characterized by lower levels of non-farm economic activity, infrastructural development, and access to essential services. They may also suffer from depopulation of the able-bodied and lack of political clout. According to Gannon (1994) and Kieselbach and Long (1990) the development of tourism can help address several of these problems through:

- economic growth, economic diversification and stabilization;
- employment creation, as primary source of income but most importantly secondary source of income;
- reduced out-migration and possibly re-population;
- maintenance and improvement of public services;

- infrastructural improvements;
- revitalizing crafts, customs and cultural identities;
- increasing opportunities for social contact and exchange;
- protection and improvement of both the natural and built environment;
- increasing recognition of rural priorities and potential by policy-makers and economic planners.

3.3. Lack of other viable options

Manufacturing industry gravitates to areas with good transport links, infrastructure, and commercial skills. Rural areas usually have few sources of comparative advantage for attracting economic activity other than agriculture or industries based on harvesting natural resources (mining, forestry) (Wiggins *et al.* 2001). Tourism is one of the few sectors that can be suitable to remote or non-urban areas, provided that there is sufficient access for tourists. Because there are few other options, its value to the rural area populace can be particularly high. There are also practical reasons why doing so may appear to be a relatively 'easy' option. The nature of rural tourism products and clientele may mean that relatively basic facilities suffice, which are easier to develop than high quality resorts. There may well be assets in rural areas (man-made structures, culture, nature) that can be readily adapted for tourism development. Tourism development can also have negative impacts on residents. In rural areas, displacement of people from their land and competition for other natural resources such as water, forest, and wildlife are likely to be the key trade-offs.

Tourism strategies should therefore focus on minimizing negative impacts as well as exploiting potential benefits. However, any assessment of the key features of successful tourism development and the key characteristics of rural areas leads to the hypothesis that developing tourism in rural areas faces major obstacles. While it is possible to highlight a number of obstacles that are common to rural areas, this is not the case when considering the tourism attraction itself. Some rural areas have such strong products, such as mountain gorillas, well-endowed wildlife areas, stunning wilderness that the quality of the product can compensate for other problems, and act as an incentive for the industry and tourists to overcome them. Others areas, however, may be characterized by vast expanses of agricultural land (perhaps marshy or highly arid), be topographically featureless, and lacking distinctive cultural and/or historical features.

These areas are unlikely to develop a successful product even if the other obstacles are addressed, unless a well-resourced private or public investor spots an opportunity. But for many rural areas, developing rural tourism will require a combination of developing an attractive product,

and overcoming the other challenges, such as accessibility and availability of skills. Good marketing and fast transport links can turn a pleasant area into a popular short-break or excursion destination. Most of the obstacles listed above are commercial, economic and logistical. They can be addressed through investment of time and resources, although it cannot be done everywhere. However the institutional and political problems are important to note, as they can assume great importance in rural areas. Although tourism today is generally a private-sector industry, a degree of government support, in terms of investment, appropriate regulation and marketing, can be key. In some countries rural tourism is already well recognized by policy makers as an important economic strategy.

The issue of gender balance also arises. Women living in remote rural areas where development has generally failed to positively impact their lives need to have their concerns addressed. Rural women need to be prioritized and incorporated in terms of appropriate technology development in rural contexts since women in rural areas are often responsible for the completion and/ or supervision of productive and reproductive tasks. They are central to household and community survival. These women have been and continue to be discriminated against. This promotes subordination and men's superiority. Appropriate technologies for rural women would not assist their family members alone but the community at large. They may spend less time on domestic chores and increase time performing agricultural and other productive tasks that would help in increasing production that may be used for subsistence and the surplus can be sold to generate more income that would sustain their households and communities. Their low exposure to technologies due to patriarchal attitudes does not impact women alone, but the community at large as they involve themselves in different activities. To ensure that women access and optimally use technologies, gender imbalances need to be addressed.

4. RESIDENT SUPPORT FOR RURAL TOURISM

An extensive array of research has been conducted on resident attitudes toward tourism. Recent research has been conducted targeting communities worldwide, including those in Europe. While earlier work focused on the large-scale, or macro, side of resident attitudes, more resident research has targeted the micro side of resident attitude research. These recent studies have targeted specific communities and have explored the various elements and characteristics within those communities that predict resident attitudes about the presence of the tourism industry (McGehee

and Andereck, 2004). Differences in attitudes have also been examined according to degree of tourism development, level of an individual's involvement in the tourism industry, maturity of destination, type of tourism development, specific to one major event, and as compared to tourists' perceptions. As a step in trying to explain resident attitudes toward tourism, several studies have investigated the relationship between an individual's characteristic, such as demographics, personal benefits from tourism, community attachment, and attitudes toward tourism development. The majority of studies have shown residents who are dependent on the tourism industry or perceive a greater level of economic gain tend to have a more positive perception of tourism economic impact than other residents (Decio and Baloglu 2002; Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Jurowski, Uysal and Williams 1997; Lankford and Howard 1994; Liu, Sheldon, and Var 1987; McGehee and Andereck 2004; Sirakaya, Teye and Sönmez 2002).

Another variable that has been investigated in some studies is community attachment, often measured as length of residence and/ or growing up in a community. Some investigators have found evidence that attachment is negatively related to tourism attitudes but this relationship is not yet conclusive, given that others have found the opposite. Harvey et al., (1995) addressed the role of gender as a factor in residents' perceptions of tourism development. Other research has found that men and women do not benefit equally as a result of tourism development in their communities. While tourism may provide employment for young persons and women, men of the community may perceive that tourism provides them few viable, respectable and thus acceptable opportunities for economic livelihood.

Why is further exploration of gender issues or research on women and tourism important? A variety of reasons exist including a continuing gender-based salary gap, rapid changes in family life and rural lifestyles that may push women into poverty, domestic problems, or into double-duty with work and family responsibilities. Other problems associated with tourism development, such as crime, drugs, and prostitution, may affect women and men differently. Understanding how tourism development is perceived by all rural residents is important for planners and leaders alike as they struggle to balance quality of life issues with building a strong economy.

5. THE LUANDA CASE STUDY

Located along the Kisumu-Busia highway, Luanda division (see figure 1) is within Vihiga district in Western Province of Kenya and covers a total area of 98.6 sq km. It is bordered by

Kisumu district to the South, Siaya district to the North West and Emuhaya division to the East. It is one of the administrative divisions in Emuhaya district initially under Vihiga District until 2007 when Emuhaya district was created. It is also a transit point for road travellers connecting to various towns in Western Kenya. Major bus routes via Luanda include the Luanda-Maseno-Kisumu, Luanda-Siaya, Yala-Busia, Maseno-Kisumu, Ebwiranyi-Kombewa, Luanda-Emusire, Esiandumba-Akala-Bondo, Kima-Vihiga, Luanda-Kakamega, Mwachio-Emusire and Luanda-Yala through Es'saba, HaBuchichi and Ebuyangu.

The total population size is approximately thirteen thousand with a density of approximately 1035 persons per square kilometer. The population comprises a large number of youths between ages 10 and 24 years as opposed to the older generation. The total annual rainfall received is 1004mm. The soil drainage is good therefore the instance of water logging is not prevalent. There should be ways and strategies put in place to assist residents of Luanda tap all benefits accrued to these natural resources through rural area tourism. With a rich mix of flora and fauna and an exotic rural culture, coupled with its status as a transportation hub in the region, Luanda has great potential for rural tourism.

Figure 1- Map of Western Kenya (Luanda shown by the arrow)



This study was exploratory in nature and it reviewed district development plans to assess the strategies put in place for the development agenda in the division. The primary data source of participatory approach to determine the concerns earlier outlined was necessary. In order to get nearer to lasting development results or sustainability, many agree that a participatory approach has to be taken (Mikkelsen, 1995). The units of analysis chosen include Luanda and Kima shopping centers and Emabungo village (Bunyore hill). These acted as the representative sample of Luanda division, chosen to reflect a cross section of rural tourism experiences with contrasting socio-economic and spatial contexts. While more representative regions may have been identified for the study, practical considerations, especially those related to travel logistics and public support, compelled us to choose these spots. Focus group discussions were conducted with 50 local residents in each area. The groups quickly and efficiently provided in-depth, qualitative information. Participants worked in focus/ peer groups, for example a group of unemployed youth, one for female household heads, another for married men. These 'exclusive' groupings enabled the participants to share experiences and develop ideas independently of those with different competing positionalities. It should be noted that PRA supports the direct participation of communities, with rural people themselves becoming the main investigators and analysts. Rural people set the priorities; determine needs; select and train community workers; collect, document, and analyse data; and plan and implement solutions based on their findings. Actions stemming from this research tend to serve the local community. Outsiders are there to facilitate the process but do not direct it (Bessette, 2004; Chambers 2004). Some of the questions addressed in the workshop included: *What are the rural tourism opportunities that the locals within Luanda can tap? What are some of the reasons that the communities in Luanda are not engaging in rural tourism?*

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Demographic Profile

Most respondents (80%) were between 20 and 50 years old, and no respondents over 70 years. In terms of gender (60% were women and 40% men). The gender distribution of the respondents reflects the socio-cultural structure in which there is a tendency for male domination in the socio-economic and political life of the community but clearly this is not the case here. This is the more reason why gender studies should be done frequently to determine the imbalances in terms of development initiatives in any given area. While 80% of the respondents had a very low income,

15% had a moderate level of income and 5% had a relatively high-income level. Moreover, 60% of the respondents stated that their family incomes were just enough to survive while 30% of the respondent considered their family incomes to be enough for a fair standard of living. A large majority (95%) had been living in the area since they were children. This may indicate that respondents were generally long time members of the local community. The strong sense of belonging to Luanda division among respondents and the answers given to place of birth seem to support the above statement. A very small percentage of the respondents (0.5%) were illiterate. Some, 55% had a primary education, and only 8% had a university education. Clearly, most respondents were not well educated in a formal sense, which could limit community participation in tourism developments.

6.2. Attractions and Business Facilities

From the interviews and participatory exercises it was clearly noted that they were 3 basic attractions identified namely; Bunyore (Emabungo hills) Eswalwa hill and Luanda market. Bunyore (Emabungo) hills comprise of great boulder rocks that makes it look scenic and attractive. The hill is also a source of many streams and small rivers and people live and even farm here. Luanda market is strategically located along the busy Kisumu-Busia highway. The people who normally visit the area are from Kisumu and Siaya districts. Groceries range from local traditional food items to manufactured foodstuffs. Rural tourism demand is accessed through checking on the number of tourist facilities that are available in the area (Ogola, 2005).

There were only 37 guestrooms available for tourists and, with mere bedding, no add-on services, and questionable hygiene, none of these would meet the expectations of international tourists. However, the accommodation facilities were located close to potential rural attractions and it was evident that there existed a huge untapped demand. The concerted action of multiple stakeholders, including the division's tourism planners, local entrepreneurial class, financiers, and community organizations can easily translate the area into a haven for visitors seeking authentic African rural tourism experiences.

Table 1: Profile of business establishments

Business	Number
Hotels	6
Catering Establishments	25
Wholesale Shops	18
Garage	1
Petty Business	281
Hard Labour Business	40
Travel Agencies	0

According to the district development plan (2002-2008) there are six hotels in Vihiga district out of which only four hotels are marked as the tourist class hotels and none of these are found in Luanda division indicating low demand of tourism. The area has businesses as indicated in Table 1. The Luanda division did not benefit from the planned allocation of tourism infrastructure provided for the Vihiga district. Public planners seemed to have something other than tourism in their minds while resources were allocated. The Luanda area lacks travel and tour services as there is no agency to coordinate the tourist activities in the area which is another indicator that tourism is on the lower side of economic development. The mission and vision of the sector of rural development, the major focus is put on the promotion of food security, agro-industrial development, trade, water supply, rural employment and sustainable utilization of the natural resources. This clearly indicates that most rural development activities are only linked to agriculture development. In Kenya, tourism has not been incorporated in the development agenda for rural areas. It is only seen as a way of conserving forests and planners have forgotten to incorporate it as multiplier effect of agricultural trade and industry that are found in these areas. The only way of reimagining the Luanda division rural area to be very competitive tourism destination is by incorporating agriculture and afforestation to change the image of the attraction. Agro-forestry farming needs to be incorporated to bring out the aspect of rurality.

6.3. Rural Tourism Opportunities

The communities highlighted the need to have tourism attractions such as a cultural village which can showcase various aspects of culture in respect to food, housing, dances, clothing, storytelling, initiation rites, art and craft, agriculture and informal education. could be exhibited. This village could be strategically located along the equator and can be very enticing and many tourists both local and international tourists. Also there should be establishments of more

restaurants offering purely traditional meals and drinks will be established. Since the area is well surrounded by boulder rocks and panoramic view, the community could take advantage of this and offer nature walks and hikes as well as camping opportunities to enjoy bird watching and seeing monkeys. Vantage points is also another opportunity that makes the tourists who visit such places see much without traveling for long distances. These can be established on top of the Mabungo hills each with a capacity of 250 visitors at any given time. Erection of tents on these points can also call for conference facilities serving a variety of drinks which would help the locals embrace and put the hills into an economic use since they are not of agricultural significance due to their rocky state. Agri-Tourism can help tourists learn how different crops are grown, harvested and stored. Around this region, there are a lot of monkeys roaming and have become more of a menace to the locals by destroying agricultural crops thus a monkey park was seen as a viable option.

6.4. Challenges faced

The local residents felt that the following were the challenges they faced in trying to come up with tourism ventures in the area and needs to be critically addressed:

- a. Lack of capital
- b. Lack of clear government legislation
- c. Low level skill development
- d. Lack of linkages between micro, small and medium enterprises
- e. Lack of business opportunity awareness and financial institutional support
- f. Lack of commitment by the public sector
- g. Corruption and mismanagement of key development institutions

7. CONCLUSION

The major roots of the global socio-ecological problems can be traced back to moral crises emerging from unsustainable consumption and a new vision of sustainable development, focused on holistic spiritual, moral, psychological, physical and intellectual human development instead of dominating consumerism is the need of the hour (Gorobets, 2011). Tolon-Becerra, Lastra-Bravo, and Galdeano-Gomez (2010) propose a three pillar approach for sustainable rural development: harnessing endogenous potential, developing social capital (endogenous units, local/global actors and neo-endogenous units) and promoting local participative democracy. This approach draws from

the endogenous potential for development dormant in rural areas and is quite appropriate for rural tourism too. Rural tourism as a green-coated reincarnation of the urban consumption paradigm cannot be a solution for the present day sustainability crisis. Unfortunately, even governments and community organizations are slow to understand this and the Kenyan case study is not an exception.

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Tourism and Kenya Tourist Board are working round the clock to develop the Western Kenya tourism circuit in order to make it an international and domestic tourist destination. A greater part of Western Kenya is made up of rural areas, which means that most of the touristic activities and features that this region can offer are based in the rural areas within Western Kenya. Statistics have shown that approximately 60% of residents in Luanda division are living below the poverty line. The ironical part of it is that this area is well endowed with natural resources which have been majorly used for economic activities such as agriculture and trade. Natural wealth has not helped in reducing the poverty levels in this area and hence, another economic activity should be developed especially tourism in order to improve the wellbeing of the area.

In fact, the government has done very little to boost rural tourism in this division or in Kenya as a whole justified by lack of tourism offices in various provinces. Most rural areas have been seen as production base agricultural raw materials and extractive units of mined materials. Declining economic activity, restructuring of the agricultural sector, dwindling rural industrialization and out-migration of higher educated youth, has led to the adoption, in many western nations, of tourism as an alternative development strategy for the economic and social regeneration of rural areas (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004; Deroi 1991; Hannigan, 1994a; Pompl and Lavery, 1993; Wickens, 1999; Williams and Shaw, 1991). Therefore most of the rural areas have always pushed their development agenda putting their hopes and interest on the above-mentioned sectors of the economy.

This is justified by the 60% level of absolute poverty in the Luanda division, simply because the community has used natural resource in agriculture and therefore cannot alleviate them from poverty. Tourism industry depends on other sectors of the economy for its development. The attraction and activities in the division gives or makes the area have a great potential of tourism. The potential in this area is not well imaged, commodified and packaged to tap the rural tourism potential of the area. The only way of encouraging rural area development is to encourage rural tourism. For instance Bunyore hill famously known as Emabungo (which means jungle) can be reimaged by doing afforestation on the non-residential side.

In so doing, the image of jungle as the name suggests can then be used to market it as mass attraction. This is in line with the project proposals of development plans 2002-2008. To facilitate

the development of tourism in Luanda a provision of good roads networks to facilitate tourists' traffic and other physical infrastructure to stimulate development of tourist facilities should be considered. As the government is the prime provider of the above mentioned services, then process of imaging Luanda area for rural tourism will depend on the input of government in physical infrastructures. A large proportion of problems experienced by entrepreneurial ventures center around management-related issues, such as inappropriate organizational structure, reluctance to delegate, absence of operational controls and predominance of informal decision-making. For organizations to progress beyond survival requires not only possession of management skills and leadership to include more defined human resource skills, planning and goal setting, financial management and the ability to manage people effectively. Tourism provides many opportunities for small entrepreneurs to contribute to the provision of tourism experiences for financial gain. These opportunities occur in both the formal and informal sectors although, in reality, the distinction between the two may be blurred (Timothy and Wall, 1997).

If the government's input is well propagated then tourists will come in large numbers to develop the rural tourism skills in Luanda. This will consequently lead to economic development in rural areas as accrued by tourist's expenditures. Sustainable rural tourism that can be employed on this area is agro forestry tourism. For it to be successful in this area the following must be put into consideration:

- While responsible behavior is expected of tourists, other stakeholders cannot be mere bystanders and critics. Something similar to the Total Responsibility Management (TRM) system being introduced in the corporate context has to be brought into the rural tourism scenario to ensure inspiration/vision, integration and improvement/innovation (Gorenak and Bobek, 2010);
- Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) station based in the division should be utilized more efficiently and effectively;
- Any investor who has keen interest to invest in rural tourism should consult with the community and involve them in decision making;
- The local government has to exercise its mandate to guide development and establish rural tourism by formulating policy and by-laws that will act as blue print to give the parameters of monitoring and evaluating rural area tourism in Luanda region.

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