

**MEMA Projects:
ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM POTENTIAL
IN IRINGA DISTRICT**

**NAMIBIA
STUDY TOUR**

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REPORT

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ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM POTENTIAL IN IRINGA DISTRICT

Report on Namibia Study Tour

1.0 Introduction:

Way back in September 2001, a study on “Analysis of Community Based Tourism Potential in Iringa District” was conducted under the auspice of Iringa District Natural Resource Office with a great support from Matumizi Endelevu ya Misitua ya Asili (MEMA).

One of the study’s recommendations was to conduct a group study tour to Namibia to learn some of the important issues and techniques which will be useful to apply in Iringa. The study tour was well planned and successful. The itinerary for the study tour is attached as annex I.

2.0 Objective of the Study

To enable the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Iringa District Local Government, key players in tourism industry in Iringa and communities to obtain a detailed understanding of tourism potentials in Iringa District. The observations and analysis of Namibia tourism Industry will assist in deciding on economically viable community based initiatives and implementation of an action plan for development of tourism sector in Iringa District.

3.0 General overview of Namibia Tourism

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in Namibia and is predicted to become one of the highest contributors to Namibia’s GDP within a few years.

Namibia’s unique scenery, people and wild animals are important tourist attractions. Community based tourism products include campsites, rest camps, traditional villages, tour guide associations and craft outlets. The value added activities and services such as jobs for lodge staff, managers, guides, waiters, cooks, washing etc. contribute to rural household economies.

Namibia Community-Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA) help communities to establish tourism in rural areas as a viable income generating option through assisting in surveys, planning and market development.

4.0 Areas Visited

According to the objective of the study, the areas visited were arranged such that the group could grasp wide experience of performance from Community Based Tourism initiatives.

Areas of interest for community based tourism initiatives

Craft and Cultural Centres:

Windhoek Craft Centre

Is a marketing co-operative, mainly for the stall holders who rent space at the Craft Centre, but they do also market some products from some of the Rossing projects. Assist with product development and displays. Have seen a 20% annual increase in attendance each year since opening 4 years ago.

Daureb Craft Centre-Uis:

Is supported by the Rossing Foundation.

Have mainly developed products related in some way to their desert environment, e.g. mirrors with sand designs, decorated eggs, key rings etc. Do sell through the Windhoek Craft Centre as well as through their shop in Uis. Currently six women producing products in Uis.

Anmire Cultural Centre:

Cultural Centre depicting various aspects of Damara culture.

Monica who is the manager does a very good job explaining various displays to visitors. Although project established as a community project it appears as Monica runs project as her own and takes all the funds. There is currently dispute with local community about the cultural centre.

Admission fee was N\$15.00 per person which is equivalent to Tshs. 1,500/=.

Camp Sites:

Spitzkoppe:

Commenced in 1992 when they first started taking admission fees from visitors. Has been quite a success story as a community run project, e.g. when they commenced they would take an income of approx. N.\$400 in a good month, now during the tourist season their income could reach between N\$25,000 – N\$30,000 per month. Have just signed a contract with private investor to establish a 3 star lodge as Spitzkoppe with some excellent returns to community including employment and a 20% share of gross income.

Aba Huab Camp:

Nice camp that has been running nearly 10 years. Currently developing some quite expensive facilities with bar, restaurant and special area for overland lorries. Although termed a community camp appears very much to be private business of local community entrepreneur.

Khowarib Camp:

Has been running for nearly 9 years. Have had their administration and management problems. Except for a partly built bar and a couple of shelters appears to have been very little development in the last 5 years at the camp.

From comments of current manager they would welcome some partnership deal with a private investor.

Ongongo Camp:

Also been running for nearly 9 years. They have had some very bad problems with camp ownership and management, with many disputes in the local community. A very beautiful site, but very few developments, like Howarib very little evidence of any camp improvements in last 5 years.

Lauberville Camp:

A Topnaar project along the Kuiseb River

They inherited an excellent infrastructure from the former South African Administration. But with a bad road into the camp and problems of marketing they haven't been able to develop much business. Would like to go into a partnership with private investor, but they i.e. the Topnaar want to run the project, this is causing problems as investors are not showing much interest.

Tourist Information Centre:

The Information Centre in Swakopmund is an excellent example of a very attractive centre with good information and service. The Centre is run by the local Tourist Forum. They generate funds by selling maps and books. As well they gain commissions from hotels and tour companies by making bookings on their behalf. An excellent source of income for them is selling advertising wall space to tourist companies.

Regional Tourist Forum:

The Namibia tourist forum in the Erongo Region of Namibia is a very successful environment where the local stakeholders in tourism can meet and develop and support tourism initiatives in their Region. The forum employs their own staff and by generating funds through the Information Centre and commissions through bookings also has funds for tourist projects e.g. marketing through web site and inviting travel journalists to the area.

Torra conservancy:

Established five and half years ago the Torra Conservancy is (with area of 3522 km²) often held up as success story of a partnership between the private sector (Wilderness Safaris) and the Bersig community.

The Damaraland Camp provides work for local people who not only work at the Camp but launder bedding and clothing. The Torra Conservancy through their agreement receive 10% of gross income from the Camp (we were given an estimate of N\$80,000 in the year 2000). Conservancy also gains through selling hunting licences, (this year they sold one hunting elephant licence of N\$60,000). They also sell live game for tourist farms etc. As well they get a hunting licence for the community, e.g. this year they were given a quota of 310 springbok.

Meetings in Windhoek:

NACSO: Namibian association of *CBNRM Support Organizations.

An umbrella organization that provides a platform for advocacy and co-ordination and promotes partnership.

IRDNC: Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation is a field based organization working to support conservancy development in Kunene and Caprivi regions.

LAC: The Legal Assistance Centre supplies legal advice and advocacy on CBNRM related issues.

NACOBTA: the Namibia Community-Based Tourism Association serves as an umbrella organization and support for community-based tourism initiatives.

*community-based natural resource management.

5.0 Good model for community based tourism: a case study of Spitzkoppe Community Tourism Rest Camp Project:

Location and activities:

The Spitzkoppe Community initiated this project in 1992.

The place is a collection of impressive isolated granite outcrops in Erongo region of Namibia near the town of Usakos, inhabited by a Damara-speaking rural community.

The project involves a Community Based Tourism Rest Camp with a proposed joint venture lodge as a follow up activity. The rest camp consist of 28 campsites around the Spitzkoppe mountain. The project have 2 bungallows, a bar and restaurant facilities, a craft and cultural centre which is currently under construction. Cultural performances, donkey cart rides, services for local hiking and climbing guides and a souvenir stall are provided.

Project objectives and strategies:

The main objective of the project is to alleviate poverty by creating employment and income for the poverty-stricken Spitzkoppe Community. They later realized that preservation of their natural asset is crucial for the survival of the project, so became the second objective.

The project strategies are:

- ✍ To employ community members at the Rest Camp;
- ✍ To create opportunities to sell crafts and gemstones to tourists; and
- ✍ To enhance preservation and conservation through control, the project will erect entrance gates, apply to the Ministry of Environment (MET) for an exclusive tourism concession and establish a conservancy.

Project finance and funding:

The project has mainly used its own funds, but has received building material, tourism and craft development training and loans from local NGOs.

Sustainability of the project:

I. Contribution to the conservation of natural areas:

In order to control access and to make visitors aware of the conservation principles of the rest camp, entrance and reception office were erected. Tourist brochures were produced, stating the conservation policies of the rest camp.

II. Economic benefits of the project to the local communities

All benefits go directly to the community who are in effect responsible for managing the conservation of the area and it further serves to strengthen the partnership between conservation, development and tourism.

III Community involvement and benefits

The Community Development Committee (CDC) oversees all development activities and projects in the community. Each development project or activity has a representative on the CDC. The Rest Camp Committee is responsible for the management of the Rest Camp and has also a representative on the CDC who provides feedback to the community during the Annual General Meeting.

The Community decided that the money will not be directly distributed to community members, but will be used for community projects. All income is paid to the Community Trust managed by the CDC.

The project has been able to:

- ✍ Employ 20 community members (with pension benefits)
- ✍ Support financially to the local primary school, the elderly and for emergency situations such as funerals.
- ✍ Train the project staff in tourism.

Problems and how they solved them

During the initial phase of the project there was no community structure in place and the project staff were not clear to whom to report. NACOBTA facilitated several workshops to develop the communication channels, which are now working well.

The lack of tourism related skills has been a major constraint, but community members received tourism training from NACOBTA and subsequently get employment by the project.

Achievement of the project

Since 1992, the Spitzkoppe Community have been working hard and with assistance from the Government and NGOs, the project has witnessed remarkable achievements.

6.0 Summary of Recommendations from Daily Briefing Meetings

In order to keep track of whatever we learnt and observed during the study tour, the group designed a style whereby each one in the group was assigned a specific role to deal with and report to the daily briefing meeting. The aim was to reflect what we observed and compare to what we have in Iringa and how are we going to implement it.

From these meeting the group realized that the Iringa District stand better advantages for tourism prosperity. Some crucial issues need solutions to be able to move forward. It was agreed that during the Tourism Forum the following issues need to be discussed:

- ✍ Identify a person/NGO or institution which will assist in setting up a Craft Centre in Iringa District.
- ✍ Identify a training institution or an NGO with the capacity to train on improvement of local tourism products.
- ✍ Conduct awareness campaign to the youth and community to prepare quality articles/crafts which will sell better.
- ✍ Expand the tourism products (eg. Crafts) through teaching our craftsmen new products which reflect the culture and environment of Iringa.
- ✍ Mapping of Iringa tourist attractions along with their relevant information.
- ✍ Plan and implement step by step tourism services and facilities.

SWAKOPMUND – DESERT EXPERIENCE

Using experience from the desert we learnt that in Iringa we can develop such exciting experience to visitors as,

- ✍ Horse and donkey riding
- ✍ Trail walking
- ✍ Boat riding
- ✍ Duck shooting

Namib i

This is a non-profit organization dealing with assistance with all reservations, information on Namibia and assistance with tour planning.

It was accepted and agreed that a modern Information Centre is extremely needed in Iringa. Assistance to establish an information centre preferably by MEMA is highly appreciated.

Mowani Mountain Camp

Beautifully situated on a high spot commanding distant views over ancient landscape, this excellent camp with high creativity art makes it exceptional and set a model for future investments in Iringa.

Villagers in Iringa are requested to support investors in their visitor attractions.

7.0 Reflections from the Director of Tourism Mr. S.A. Pamba

The study tour group had an opportunity to discuss with the Director of Tourism Mr. Saleh A. Pamba. The Director expressed his concern on development of tourism in Iringa. He commended on the efforts taken by Iringa District Natural Resource Office with greater support of MEMA to implement the policy on empowering the local communities and the private sector in tourism development.

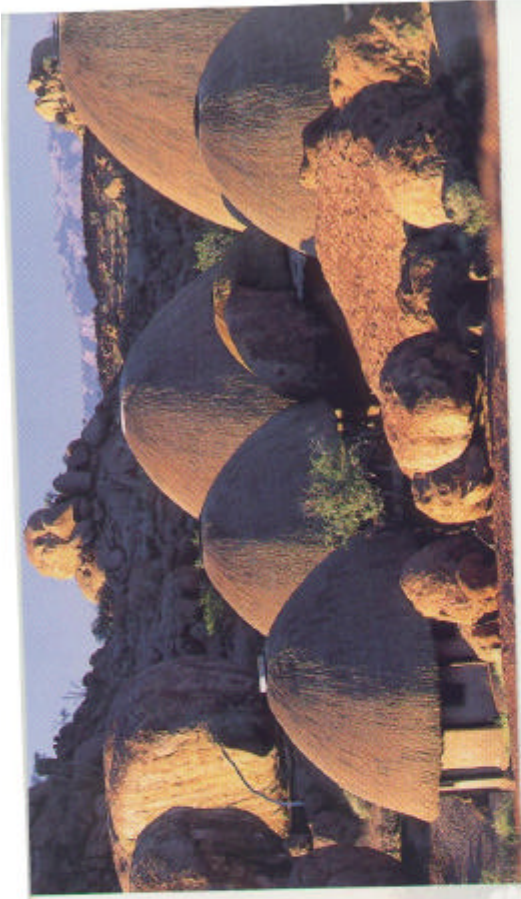
Having seen the experience from Namibia in Community Based Tourism initiatives, he advised that if funds allows, the team should make a study tour in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Tanga to learn from Cultural Tourism Modules which Tanzania is boasting of. From the two experiences, Iringa can have better understanding and experience to initiate and run with a greater achievement the tourism projects.




Maria disclosing Damara traditions at Anmire Cultural Centre



Spitzkoppe Community Based Restcamp



Spitzkoppe Community Based Tourism Restcamp



- one of the most spectacular mountain sites in Namibia. Rising 600 metres above the flat plains of the Erongo Region (Damaraland), Spitzkoppe and Klein Spitzkoppe provide day and overnight visitors with an amazing atmosphere for hiking, climbing, camping and relaxation. The 4 locations, exhibiting bushman paintings (including the famous "Bushman's Paradise"), will capture the imagination when Bushmen frequented the area.

The Spitzkoppe community wishes you many peaceful hours of blissful tranquility in the magnificent Spitzkoppe mountain range - mother nature's wonder of Namibia!

We thank you for your kind support.