

Impacts of Development Process on Mawanga Cave's Tourism Sustainability: Lessons for Future Improvement

Asborn J. Misiko

Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management,
Dedan Kimathi University of Technology,
P.O. Box 657, 10100, Nyeri Mweiga Road, Kenya.
E-mail: lexingtonmi2000@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Irrespective of the scope, any development is meant to significantly enhance the socio-cultural, economic and environmental pursuits of any given society. Appropriate developmental approach or process delivers suitable results unlike the reverse. This study used strategic sustainable development process, to demonstrate how the elitist-top-bottom tourism development approach impacted on the socio-cultural and economic sustainability at the Mawanga cave/Abasuba rock-painting site/rock art site. Data collected through interview-based surveys, questionnaires, personal observations and analysis of existing documents, indicated that the approach failed to reinforce socio-cultural and economic sustainability aspects of tourism. The sporadic development model inappropriately addressed tourism capacity inadequacies among the Mawanga rural halieutic community; which justifies the community's inability to diversify tourism revenue streams, tourist products, embrace innovative marketing and enhance socio-cultural sustainability. The insufficiently equipped leadership contributed considerably to the under-exploitation of the Mawanga cave environs' umpteen opportunities. The study concludes by suggesting a strategic approach that can be adopted by the government to enhance the touristic appeal of the Homabay County.

Keywords: Development process, Capacity Building, Participation, social sustainability, economic sustainability, cultural sustainability, Abasuba and Wasamo.

1 Introduction

Since Kenya's independence (1963), the tourism industry continues to contribute significantly to the nation's socio-economic (foreign exchange) and environmental development (GoK, 2003). In 2011 its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product was estimated at 13.7 % and 9 % formal employment (GoK, 2012). The average annual performance for the period 2002 to 2012 in earnings and arrivals stood at Ksh 67.8 billion (US\$ 0.8 billion) and 1.6 million respectively¹. Tourism is among the six-priority sectors (agriculture and livestock, wholesale and retail, trade, manufacturing, finance and Business Outsourcing) through which Kenya is to attain an annual GDP growth rate of 10 % thus joining the middle-income industrialized countries and being among the top ten global long-haul sustainable tourism destinations by 2030 (GoK, 2012). The Ministry of Tourism has undertaken varied actions including crafting and implementing Economic Recovery Strategy 2003-2008, short term Tourism Plan 2008-2012, Tourism Act 2011, National Tourism Strategy 2012, all meant to ensure that the tourism sector is developed, managed, marketed and regulated in a more sustainable manner.

Although through these strategic documents the government demonstrates commitment to make Kenya a sustainable tourism destination, the process of realising this goal remains unclear to players operating in sites beyond the confines of renowned national parks and reserves. The most affected are those located in rural areas with unique tourism potentials, and the Mawanga cave on Mfangano Island is a case in point, where the pursued sustainable tourism is betrayed by prevailing realities. Notwithstanding the definitional and conceptual debates on sustainability, sustainable tourism development is a continuous process with specific strategic actions (Ruhanen, 2008; Edgell, 2006; Johnson, 2002; Waldron & Williams, 2002; Edgell *et al.*, 2008). The tourism development outcomes (positive or negative) experienced at any given site/destination only demonstrates the extent to which stakeholders did (n't) integrate the sustainability strategic actions (Edgell *et al.*, 2008). This implies that the development process adopted by tourism stakeholders has a significant influence on the expected results.

This study sought to explore ways through which the unstructured framework (*ad-hoc*) tourism development process affected the sustainability of Mawanga Cave's tourism. The guiding questions included: in which ways did the development process reflect sustainability tenets? What impacts did the development process have on Mawanga Cave's tourism sustainability? This study's contribution to practices is three folds: management, diversification and framework. First, it identified the causes of the current challenges undermining the success of tourism development and management at Mawanga Cave and proposed strategies to address them. This will help improve the site's management. Secondly, the study pointed out the site's touristic potential that when integrated into the national tourism system can diversify Kenya's offer and enhance its regional and global competitive advantage. Lastly, the study reveals useful policy issues that can inform the crafting of a framework to guide the development and management of tourism in rural community.

¹ The revenue and arrival information was compiled from: Kenya Facts and figures 2011 (GoK, 2012) and **Tourism Strategic Plan 2008-2012** (GoK, 2008); Statistical Abstract 2013 (GoK, 2013) and Sessional Paper No. 10 of 2012 Vision 2030 (GoK, 2012).

2 Theoretical framework /Literature review

For the purposes of this research, the sustainability concept is studied in light with the conceptual framework in fig. 1, explained thereafter.

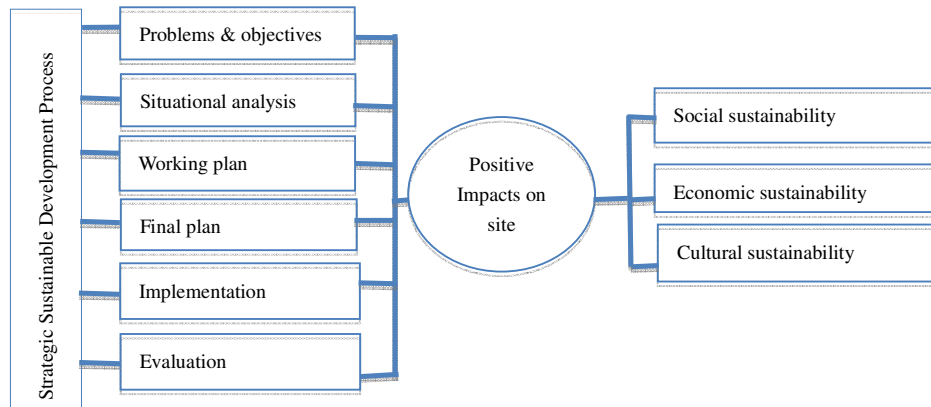


Figure 1: Strategic Sustainable Development Process & Outcomes

2.1 Sustainable Tourism Development Process.

Sustainability concept has been in the academic and development circle for more than three decades. The concept emphasises on the need for mankind to use available resources sparingly. This includes commitments to minimize any undesirable practices that might threaten mankind's harmonious coexistence with physical, social and cultural environment (WCED in Mowforth and Munt, 2008; Harris *et al.*, 2002:3). It calls for equitable stakeholder's participation and satisfaction of each actor's basic needs (Mowforth and Munt, 2009), and also tourists' actions need not to jeopardise the future quality of a destination or site and future participants' satisfaction. To realize sustainable development, and minimize unfortunate occurrences there is need for actors to integrate the principles of strategic planning in the process of tourism development.

Sustainable tourism development is a process based on strategic guiding frameworks (Ruhanen, 2008). It involves strategic planning, policy-making and development of tourism management strategy (Edgell *et al.*, 2008). The integration of these components makes it such that tourism project makes optimal use of existing and potential resources, promotes respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, promotes viable long-term economic operations, encourage informed stakeholder participation while maintaining tourist satisfaction (Edgell *et al.*, 2008; Edgell, 2006; Waldron & Williams, 2002). It is based on such characteristics that scholars and technocrats conclude that sustainable tourism must meet the needs of current stakeholders without compromising the ability of the future participants to meet their aspirations (Lamic, 2008; Honey, 2008; Knafou, 2007).

Sustainable tourism development demands that strategic planning is given priority. Strategic planning is a continuous process (Mason, 2009) that generate desired development plans that deliver optimal benefits (social, economic and environmental) upon implementation. Successful strategic planning offers tourists enjoyable and satisfying experiences, improves destination residents' livelihoods, shapes and controls physical development patterns, conserve resources (socio-cultural, environmental, economic), integrate

tourism and other resources, redistribute equitably tourism benefits, legitimise tourism development and match demand and supply (Mason, 2009: 94). Being a result and action oriented and proactive process, planning enables stakeholders to understand better tourism environment be it natural or built (Edgell *et al.*, 2008; Mason, 2009; Inskip, 1991; Gunn and Var, 2002).

2.1.1 Problems and objectives

Before undertaking tourism development especially at any given destination or site where none has existed, it is important to ask the following questions: what are the existing problems, in which ways can tourism help address such problems, what are the available tourist attractions and ability of their current appeal to attract tourists or does the appeal need some improvements, and if so, what sort of enhancements are needed? (Edgell *et al.*, 2008). Answers to these questions cannot simply be imagined but thoroughly sought through systematic processes; same answers can inform the formulation of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) objectives meant to address socio-cultural, economic and environmental destination's/site's problems and challenges. For instance, the aim of developing could be to 'distribute economic benefits to host community, increase employment opportunities, develop products that attract domestic and international tourists, aid the development of peripheral rural areas, to preserve cultural and natural resources...'.

More often than not this step is not given much thought during the initial steps of tourism project development, thus rendering the entire project unsustainable in the long run (Mowforth and Munt, 2008; Harris, Griffin and Williams, 2002).

Setting objectives is one of the steps towards crafting a tourism development plan. A plan refers to a detailed path that enables tourism developers to maximize socio-cultural, economic and environmental performance (Mason, 2009). Development objectives influence the quality of a development plan, whereby SMART objectives always give rise to SMART development plan i.e. a clear road map and outcomes. Given this relationship, it is important that tourism developers devote sufficient time on the formulation of objectives. Being a political process, objective formulation is affected by conflicts resulting from the fact that each actor wants his/her socio-cultural, economic and environmental values to prevail upon those of others'. As Mason and Edgell observe the objective formulation is not a one-step exercise but a process marked by heated debates and clashes among the actors (Mason, 2009; Edgell *et al.*, 2008). In extreme cases, physical confrontation is inevitable. Each stakeholder represents his/her needs alongside those of his/her followers. Failure to have such aspirations enshrined in the objectives means that him/herself together with his/her followers have lost. Lasswell in Mason (2009:96), argues that planning process is a critical development stage because it determines who gets what, where, when, how, why and for how long? Therefore, missing to have one's vision captured in the objectives, is comparable to losing one's lifetime chance. In this regard, formulating tourism development objectives is an exercise not for the faint hearted but for the courageous.

Despite their differences, participants will at some point accept to bargain, negotiate, compromise and strike a consensus (Mason, 2009; Edgell *et al.*, 2008) on which initial objectives to focus on.

It is important that such objectives must reflect the rationale of investing in tourism and the opportunities to be pursued. However, they should be refined as the planning process advances.

2.1.2 Situational analysis

Development objectives are enhanced by facts obtained from the situational analysis study. Conducting situational analysis involves mapping out tourism resources (attractions and infrastructure) and linking them to potential tourists (Edgell *et al.*, 2008). The research study also identifies the gaps (social, economic and environmental) that should be addressed to ensure that tourism investment performs optimally. In order to obtain balanced and reliable information from which sound decision can be drawn, it is important to emphasise that situational analysis should be carried out based on the principle of 'stakeholders participation'. However, the number and diversity of stakeholders depend on the type of tourism project, its geographical, social, economic and political contexts. During the initial stage of situation analysis, participants should consist of key actors preferably experts; among them there should be people sufficiently knowledgeable in the dynamics affecting tourism demand (tourists' consumption patterns) and supply. Situational analysis study is the cornerstone of tourism development. It helps potential project owners to avoid the development philosophy that Edgell (2006: 99) calls 'build it and they will come'. Destinations that develop following such philosophy hardly survive in competitive tourism business market but those whose development is anchored on reliable information do sustain their businesses in the long run.

Sustainable development is a process of ensuring that tourism business is a long-term venture. This is achieved through the development of quality products, sustaining them through appropriate marketing and constant product improvement such that the experience they offer continuously attracts and retains guests (Edgell, 2006: 99). The long-term economic goal can be achieved through effective and efficient resource management; but one can't manage the unknown. This explains why research on demand and supply component of tourism is a critical step during situational analysis. The data generated provides an overview of viable tourism prospects. On one hand, internal analysis needs to focus on and not limited to existing facilities, host communities' attitude towards tourism, and available or needed workforce or training needs (Edgell *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand external analysis can focus on tourism legal frameworks, current and anticipated competition, industry trends in terms of county, regional, national or international visitation, origin of demand, consumer preferences, safety and security. Situational analysis study also identifies lacking but necessary resources which when provided enhance tourism performance.

The situational analysis process needs to be rigorously conducted in order to yield reliable information from which sound decision can be made. A lot of information either in the Internet or in print materials exists on how varied tourism resources can be exploited. When assessing the natural environment's resourcefulness, it is vital to identify the flora and fauna likely to attract tourists and even examine how such attraction can be enhanced to keep on exciting visitors (Edgell *et al.*, 2008). In the event of built environment, it is important to establish the aspects of people's cultural heritage that are attractive. It is also during the situational analysis stage that the size of a site is compared against the scale of potential tourism developments vis-à-vis the current needs of the local people.

Carefully analysed and interpreted information is good source of recommendations that can henceforth guide tourism development. This again should be done in the spirit of stakeholder participation, where development priorities need to be discussed and agreed upon. This exercise is not easy but it is necessary; its bottlenecks for example conflicting interests can be overcome through compromise i.e. participants allow

the rights of the voiceless-future generations-to precede theirs. After all, sustainable tourism's rationale is to ensure that there are enough environmental, economic and socio-cultural opportunities for everyone's need, but not for everybody's greed, and to make sure that there is always enough for everyone forever.

2.1.3 Working plan

Situational analysis information constitutes the base upon which preliminary conclusion and development plan are drawn from.

The latter attempts in an inexhaustible manner to indicate potential physical tourism projects and infrastructure targeted, their development sites, development process, potential actors, estimated financial resources and legal requirements to be met. Additionally, the plan also captures the expected gains and alternative development options.

2.1.4 Development of final plan

Preliminary plan is examined against the reality on the ground including the prevailing tourism performance. This helps understand the level of success for each proposed project. In fact, each project's success or failure chances are critically assessed. The development team at this stage is much bigger compared to the previous stage-situational analysis; in fact, specialized expertise (cultural living treasures, physical planners, economists, social and environmental scientists, legal experts, travel business analysts...) is highly recommended at this stage where institutional and technical aspects of the anticipated projects are keenly analysed (Mason, 2009). The outcome informs the final plan which should be clear on the usage of the available land, needed infrastructural facilities and their respective capacities, agreed upon architectural and landscaping plans, targeted market and strategies to identify, attract and retain it (visitor management plan), required financial resources and their sources, needed expertise and the supporting institutional arrangements, projected benefits both tangible and intangible and agreed upon mechanism to distribute benefits, indispensable stakeholders and their respective roles (Edgell *et al.*, 2008; Gunn & Var, 2002). It's important that the final plan is clear on the implementation model (top-bottom, bottom-up or hybrid).

2.1.5 Implementation

Implementation concerns the actualisation of the plan or the translation of plan items into realities. Sustainable implementation is hybrid in nature i.e. stakeholders are involved irrespective of their position and influence on tourism projects. Anticipated tourism structures are constructed in appropriately identified locations, adhering to the intended designs corresponding to the acceptable regulatory and legislative controls (Mason, 2009). Implementation process also involves sensitisation of the relevant parties or actors about the effects of the projects being implemented. Not everybody can be involved in the initial planning process because of the cost (time and financial) implications and conflict of interest associated with the exercise. However, it is important to educate the wider public about the projects' effects and mitigation measures for adverse outcomes, if any. This reduces the chances of the general public being gotten unaware of the development. Sensitization helps allay insecurity feelings among actors, built trust among them, hence reinforcing project ownership by parties of the societal divide.

Capacity building should constitute an integral part of implementation process. Capacity building is a process that develops potential or existing stakeholders so that they can actively engage in tourism development. It involves imparting the right knowledge, skills and experience to existing or future actors (Sammy, 2008). The right knowledge, skills and experience enable stakeholders to interact appropriately. Actors cultivate good attitudes and behaviours towards each other and this minimizes mistrust, enhances cohesiveness and transparency during decision-making.

Through collective action, stakeholders are in a position to actively contribute to tourism development. However, this cannot occur where some actors possess adequate or partial knowledge, skills and experience while others are ignorant. The competence endowed party will always consider those without inferior, hence an automatic exclusion of the latter from the main decision making system. This is sufficient justification for the competent team to reinforce elitism decision-making model, which eventually denies the powerless the opportunity to actively participate in tourism development (Moscardo, 2008).

The elites refer to the privileged group of local people in terms of capacity to access financial opportunities (financial elitism) and possession of knowledge, skills and experiences acquired by virtue of working in the tourism sector or elsewhere. Though they are normally the minority of the bulk of actors, their (elites) force is sufficient to cause power imbalance in rural development (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 249). The few powerful control tourism by virtue of either owning facilities or having knowledge and capacity to control tourism distribution chain (distribution elitism). This animates the powerful to exert untamed influence on local tourism's decision making-systems (influence and decision making elitism) (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 249). Consequently, tourism benefits remain tangible among the few privileged individuals as opposed to being distributed equitably between and among actors. But this can be reversed through capacity building.

Capacity building is therefore inevitable if stakeholders are supposed to engage meaningfully in tourism development. Without the right knowledge and skills, it's difficult for any actor to correctly identify tourism issues, make sound tourist's demand predictions and even identify and sustainably exploit tourism opportunities.

Lack of awareness deprives any tourism stakeholder the chance to understand his/her rights and hinders the same from developing positive participation attitude. In case, a tourism venture is left to such participants in future, no doubts that the business is bound to collapse. Insufficiently knowledgeable actors' management leads to inadequate leadership; ineffective planning and poor coordination, which can eventually cause business failure (Moscardo, 2008; Edgell, 2006). Lack of sufficient awareness can also result into ill preparedness of the actors to confront tourism challenges that might arise in future. Participants' awareness and empowerment should therefore be given adequate consideration during implementation phase. Enlightened individuals know how to identify local solutions to conflicts related to resource use and interpersonal tension. What is critical about implementation is the process frameworks that can eventual facilitate capacity building. Sound capacity building has the potential to deliver on economic, social and cultural sustainability as well as sustained local community participation in rural tourism development.

2.1.6 Evaluation

As implementation process advances, it is crucial to craft a robust evaluation system that provides appropriate and timely information that aid implementers to manage resources (allocation) and make appropriate decisions (KIPPRA, 2005). Evaluation is a stock taking process that assists one to separate working ideas from those that are not. This informs new thinking which can lead to re-strategizing of the implementation process. Evaluation explains to what extent the actual developmental results relate to the anticipated ones. Are the activities being done right, are the expected results being achieved, are the resources being used efficiently, are stakeholders benefiting? It goes further to enable implementers not only to identify causes of success or failures, but also initiate better actions, in doing so, innovation (adding value to knowledge) is realised along the way, and the lessons learned help improve implementation. Evaluation process should have explicit agreed upon progress indicators and appropriate tools to measure them. It is important to communicate whichever results from the evaluation process to relevant stakeholders to allow for appropriate decisions to be made (Mason, 2009), hence encourage transparency.

2.2 Process' effects on sustainability

Generally, tourist destinations/sites that integrate strategic development tenets in their development process have greater potential of being sustainable (socio-culturally, economically and environmentally) than those whose development is haphazardly done (Edgell *et al.* 2008).

2.2.1 Economic sustainability

It exists when stakeholders draw financial benefits from tourism; such advantage needs to be sufficient to meet some of the direct participants' (host communities) basic needs and costs linked to serving tourists and site's management (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 105). This argument takes cognizance that it's impossible to satisfy all human fundamental needs. And sometimes what is basic to one actor may not be a necessity to another. In case of host community, tourism projects should at least generate benefits sufficient to help address economic challenges faced at the destination or site. Irrespective of local context, economic sustainability exists when revenues streams are robust, such that destination/site constantly receives tourists (repeat visits) and tourism businesses are thriving. This only happens when community stakeholders have appropriate competence in product development, management, customer management and marketing.

2.2.2 Social sustainability

Concerns harmonious coexistence between host communities and guests (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 104). This means that the introduction of tourism at any site/destination should neither fragment the community nor exacerbate existing divisions if any; instead it should reduce social gaps where they exist. Such gaps can be created in the event some community members are marginalised or excluded from tourism or elites discourage contacts between tourists and host communities (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 105).

Whereas such divisions are evident, sustainable tourism's grand goal is to minimize them and their adverse impacts on stakeholders (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 104).

In addition, tourism development shouldn't deny host communities access to cultural or any resource used

for tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 105).

This means that host people should still continue to traditionally benefit from the same resource used for tourism. In this argument lies one of the greatest sustainability challenges of balancing between ‘outsider’ (visitors) and ‘insider (host) usage of site/ destination resources. Solution to this is local context based. Tourism and non-tourism resource users need to tolerate each other. This can occur when host people, who are non-tourism resource users, accept or demonstrate the willingness to share their cultural site with strangers (tourists) in the short or long term. This cannot happen if the former doesn’t understand and appreciate tourism; host can be made to understand tourism and be part of it through adequate and appropriate sensitization, which has the potential to narrow cultural difference between the visited and visitors (Lamic, 2008: 115).

Any social contact needs to result into equitable exchange. This only occurs when the actors’ interaction occurs in the appropriate manner. Furthermore, tourism development in an area or any given site should not attempt to disrupt the host’s socio-cultural lifestyle by displacing traditional uses but it should foster suitable multiple use (Lamic, 2008). Social sustainability also concerns societal well-being, which can be delivered through social institutions namely schools and hygienic facilities (Lamic, 2008).

2.2.3 Cultural sustainability

Generally observable when new inputs especially tourist activities do not occasion cultural changes host people consider alien to their territory. If anything, tourist behaviours should trigger minimal acceptable changes in residents’ mores of interaction, lifestyles, customs and traditions (Mowforth and Munt, 2009: 104). Visitors should not demean the host or make them to look inferior to them based on the latter’s culture. However, there should be mutual cultural respect between the visitor and the visited. This does not imply that cultural sustainability means either’s culture remaining static forever. Culture is dynamic; however changes must be gradual and appropriate; amid such development, each party should retain absolute power to appropriately adapt its culture to change to an extent that unique elements are not lost. To minimise cases of cultural dominance, there is need to moderate the visitor’s and the visited’s behaviours. Failure to moderate the behaviours can result into conflict between guests and the host, leading to negative attitudes towards either party.

This can occur especially when the tourist’s culture expressed through behaviours and practices are incompatible with destination residents’ moral code of conduct (Page, 2009). This can occur especially, when tourism benefits become so attractive such that indigenous people adapt their behaviours to tourism’s culture (demonstration effect). In other words, tourism’s culture dominates the host’s. Also the manner through which host-guest interact can negatively affect either party. Short lived and unexpected interaction between host and guest can result in unfavourable feeling towards either party. A tourist who unexpectedly meets a resident is not fully prepared to exchange much with the latter. But where the parties meet under a structured framework, mutually beneficial exchange is likely to occur, particularly if the framework has mechanisms e.g. guest-host interaction opportunities and accommodation facilities that encourage long-stay. Contrary to strategic sustainable process, the haphazard development process is known to cause undesired mass tourism characterized by environmental degradation, inequitable distribution of benefits and costs,

socio-cultural ills among others (Deprest, 1997; Lamic, 2008). This promotes inequitable access to resources (financial, competence, knowledge, skills and experience), hence paving way for the emergence of powerful and powerless classes. This gap can be bridged via the integration of strategic sustainable development process.

The validity of sustainable tourism is not only in the process but also in the outcomes of the process. Ideally, the process should deliver on the anticipated results, which can only be ascertained through evaluation process.

This study as pointed out elsewhere, sought to assess the impacts of development process on Mawanga cave's tourism sustainability. Special interest is on the consistency of the process and its outcomes.

3 Methodology

The study employed interview-based surveys, questionnaires, personal observations and the in-depth analysis of relevant documents. The use of multiple research methods served to enhance the reliability of data collected because there exist insufficient information on the Abasuba rock art painting site's tourism performance.

Document analysis was conducted as per Chava and David² recommendations; where useful documents were purposefully selected i.e. only those with information on tourism development of the studied site. The main objective was to establish consistence in the development process and objectives pursued by stakeholders at each stage. The researcher consulted substantially materials authored by TARA, an organisation that is not only at the forefront of rock art conservation in Africa, but also played a significant role during the introduction of tourism at the site³.

According to Gavart-Perret *et al* (2008), face-to-face interview with appropriate respondents yields credible research data. Interviews were conducted between October 2010 and April 2012, the period through which the researcher visited, on several occasions, the study area to collect data. The researcher purposefully identified respondents, who were interviewed at their convenient venue. The respondents included the local tour guides, curator of the Abasuba Community Peace Museum and Tourist Officer (Ministry of Tourism-Kisumu Office). The interview guide's questions dwelt on tourism practices and government initiatives towards enhancing cultural tourism at the rock art site. The researcher interviewed members from the Mawanga Site Management Committee⁴. This sought to establish visitor frequentations and their nationality, and the existing or potential challenges at the Mawanga cave/Abasuba rock art painting site.

The questionnaire was used to survey host communities and tourists. The objective was to establish what the respondents new, believe, expect, and feel about the Mawanga cave. Questionnaires were administered to households within the radius of 1 kilometre from the rock art site targeting residents' aged 18 years, picked randomly. It was presumed that respondents residing within this radius had information about their environment-the rock art site-and events associated to it. Participants were of sound mind and of good

²Chave and David (2005:315).

³ Key documents consulted include: *The Future of Africa's Past: Proceeding of the 2004 TARA rock conference Nairobi*-edited by Jannette Deacon and published in 2005; *The Rock and Other Attractions of the Suba District*; *Managing Community Projects: TARA and The Abasuba Community Projects*.

⁴ Members were excluded from participating in questionnaire surveys.

memory. The author assumed that residents aged below 18 years would provide insufficient information regarding the cultural significance of rock art site. Residents' questionnaire captured information regarding the importance of the sacred rock art site/tourist site, tourist motivation, tourism benefits to host communities and residents' participation in tourism development.

Fifty-nine males and thirty females out of the targeted 100 residents duly completed questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. The researcher administered questionnaires to all persons who visited the rock art site (excluding residents). A total of 58 visitors (36 males) filled questionnaires. The questions focused on visitors' motivation, source of information, interaction with the host community and guest-host attitudes.

The data was analysed using three methods: content analysis, thematic analysis and Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 17.0. Contents analysis is suitable for open-ended questions, where response content differ from one interviewee to another (Bardin, 2003). The analysis was conducted by the researcher, who was conversant with research the objectives and the themes covered in the interview guide. The researcher analysed the vocabularies and descriptors in the responses to each open-ended question, grouped related vocabularies and descriptors into suitable themes, then a unique numerical code was assigned to each theme. This enabled the researcher to identify sustainability issues affecting tourism. Similarly, a unique numerical code was assigned to each answer of the closed-ended questions. The codes were fed into the SPSS system to facilitate descriptive analysis.

Major limitations to this study included language barrier where the researcher had to recruit a translator on casual basis, which implied more costs.

The researcher occasionally rescheduled research interviews due to unfavorable weather condition that made it difficult to sail across Lake Victoria. Accessibility challenges due to the fact that there were no delimited route to the rock art site. The researcher had, on numerous occasions, to stop and ask local residents about the direction to the site. This adversely affected the researcher's data collection schedule, not all residents were cooperative.

4 Study Area

Abasuba Rock Art Painting site is located on Mfangano Island (66Km²), the largest in Lake Victoria (GoK, 2010). The site is situated in Mawanga village on the north-west of Mfangano division and Homa Bay County. Mawanga is a symbolic name, which corresponds to the village's steep and rocky slopes nature. The site consists of a cave, decorated with rock art paintings and capable of accommodating about 50 people. The painting consists of concentric and spiral red or white circles⁵.

The Abasuba rock art painting site/Mawanga cave/rock art site is located barely five metres from the shores of Lake Victoria and about 10 minutes a walking distance from the Gulf of Ugosia, an embarking and disembarking point for fishermen. Accessibility to the village of Mawanga is still problematic; one has to endure a two hours travel on motor boats from Mbita to Sena, the administrative entry point to Mfangano Island. Sena has appreciable infrastructure including and not limited to Administration police post, mini electric power station, government administrative offices and piped clean drinking water. Recently, ferry transport services have been introduced between Mbita point and Mfangano Island. This tremendously

⁵ Ng'weno, Obonyo and Coulson, (2005).

boosted the island's economic, social and cultural opportunities triggered by the new effective transport service. Other means of transport like speed boats and chartered aircraft are mainly used by affluent people to access Sena town, located on the shore of Lake Victoria. It takes about one-hour thirty minutes from Sena to Mawanga village. This is partly due to the pathetic road condition and to the fact that about two kilometres of the distance is only covered on foot. This indeed makes travel to Mawanga village expensive. Alternatively, one can use a motorboat to access the village, however, it is still expensive because the normal boats are not scheduled, but they depend on the availability of enough clients, hence it's expensive when one considers the waiting time.

The site's environs is dominated by the Wasamo- clan of the Suba community- Bantu speaking people. Majority of the residents live close to the shores of the Lake. This strategic settlement enables residents to easily access water for domestic use and live closer to well watered lands for agriculture. The Wasamo practice mainly subsistence farming characterised by small pieces of land on which they cultivate legumes, maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas and mango trees. Besides, living adjacent to the shores saves time for fishermen when embarking and disembarking. Furthermore the women can easily access water that they use for bathing, washing utensils and clothes. Some residents keep zebu animal, poultry, goats and sheep which are mainly used for paying dowry. Concerning religion, about 19 % are Catholics, 79 % are Protestants and 2 % are Legio Marian, worship God the creator but also the ancestral spirit. Good number of the residents (45 %) have no formal education while 21 % have acquired primary education. Those with secondary education account for 20 % and tertiary non-university certificate holders account for 11 %. Only about 3 % of Mawanga population have university education.

One key cultural practice of the Wasamo is the art of rainmaking (Ayot, 1979: 95-96). Historical accounts indicate that the first rainmakers on Mfangano Island came from the Wasamo, Yagra (Husband) and Mugesu (wife) (Ayot, 1979: 95-96). Rainmaking is an important cultural activity accompanied by traditional ceremony involving a goat, a cock and local beer offered as a sacrifice at designated revered sites. Nzenze Islands, Mawanga cave are one of such sacred sites, which have been transformed into a tourist attraction.

5 Results and Analysis

3.1. Social sustainability

Eighty-nine out of the targeted 100 respondents from the Wasamo community filled questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. Questions relating to social sustainability sought to establish whether the manner residents' and tourists use Mawanga cave and its environs are compatible with sustainability tenets. On one hand host community respondents were asked to cite the roles of Mawanga cave and its environs.

The cited roles in descending order indicated that the Cave's environs has herbal medicinal plants (cited by 65 % of the total respondents n=89); cave is a prayer sanctuary (cited by 58 % of the total respondents n=89) and is also a ritual site (cited 47 % of the total respondents n=89). On the other hand, tourists (n=58 of which 78 % were foreigners and 22 % were domestic) visited the site mainly to 'site see' (cited by 79 % of the total respondents); 71 % of the total interviewees went to take memorable photographs of the cave and its environs; 60 % of the total respondents travelled to 'experience exotic culture'; 43 % of the total

respondents visited the cave hoping to be entertained by local story tellers and 32 % of the total respondents looked forward to participate in village walks. The fencing of the site restricts entry to Mawanga cave, hence could be considered to be a sustainability tool. However, it could be seen as a discriminatory weapon which the Mawanga Site Committee uses to deny ordinary local people access to the site.

Additionally, the study sought to establish the manner through which the visitor and the visited community interacted and whether such interactions were mutually beneficial, hence sustained. The study results indicated that 94 % of the resident respondents assisted guests by 'showing them the direction to the cave'; 70 % of the 89 interviewees had interacted with tourists through story telling and only 36 % of the 89 had interacted with tourists through tour-guiding services.

On the participation front, the study unveiled that the local people including the Mawanga Site Committee are on the periphery of real power. This is occasioned by lack of adequate skills, knowledge and experience. However, given the skills the residents would like to drive the development agenda.

3.2. Cultural Sustainability.

Although tourists' attitudes towards the host people were slightly above average (59 % of total respondents n=58 cited that host people were friendly) the latter's towards the former was unpredictable (with 40 % considering tourists to be friendly, 20 % judging them to be unfriendly and 40 % divided between friendly and unfriendly). Furthermore there was a feeling among the local respondents that some tourists were disrespectful; where 25 % cited that the latter stared too much at them; 21 % argued that they (latter) made noise at the sacred site and 10 % indicated that, at times, tourists refused to pay local tour guides for their services. This underscores the fact that part of the host population was disappointed by some visitors' behaviors. More often, lack of specific route leading to the Mawanga cave compelled tourists to trespass on residents' lands or pass through homes, which greatly disturbed local people especially when the 'strangers' transited without greeting home owners or apologizing to them. Such behaviors were incompatible with the Suba traditional values.

3.3. Economic sustainability

Results indicated that 57 % of the local interviewees have been benefiting from tourism. Part of the gate collection is invested in social facilities particularly early childhood and primary education. However, consistent flow of revenue is hampered by lack of tourism product diversification coupled with inappropriate marketing. This means that no new products have been developed to enhance the initial ones. Insufficient competence is also to blame, where 90 % of the tourists interviewed had at least a university degree compared to 3 % of the available local people interviewed. Among the total tourists interviewed, repeat visit accounted for only 31 % while the rest of the visitors (69 %) were first time visitors to Kenya.

Main communication tools in descending order included Internet (cited by 55 % of the total tourist respondents); 'word of mouth through friends' (cited by 53 % of total tourist respondents) and 'travel agency' (cited by 16 % of the total tourist respondents). Surprisingly, the Mawanga Site Committee has no control over the above marketing communication tools neither its members are involved in the marketing.

Document analysis, revealed that tourism development process lacked consistency and was characterized by staged-managed participation that left host community's site management committees disadvantaged. Available literature reveals that in July 2000⁶, a resident-learned from the UNESCO report on "endangered languages" that *Olusuba* language risked being extinct.

This triggered the thought of constructing a museum that would help preserve the dying unique language and act as custodian of the collected, documented and exhibited community's material culture for intra-and intergenerational generation. From July 2000 through 2001, the Mennonite Central Committee of Kenya (MCCCK)-a Canadian organisation promoting the use of African Peace Traditions in solving conflicts supported the museum project with a contribution of US\$600⁷; part of which facilitated an *ad hoc* local 'research team' to traverse Mfangano island and neighbourhood, Kuoko, Kaksingiri and Rusinga island documenting available evidence of the Abasuba history to be preserved in the museum. This research ran concurrently with the construction of a mini museum that was eventually registered as a self-help group with eight membership elders. A part from saving and restoring the dying Suba identity, it would also serve as a centre for conflict resolution for the Suba community⁸. The in-depth document study yielded insufficient information on the appointment of eight elders, and the decision to register the museum as a self-help group. Attempts, through interview with residents, to understand how this happened led to the conclusion that the entire operation was the business of the 'chosen a few'. The museum was built together with six cabins or bandas⁹, whose role and relation to the conservation and preservation of the Suba cultural heritage was unclear to the local residents, save to the pro-projects. Though the two projects were touristically potential, this never featured anywhere. Perhaps incorporating tourism in the initial stages of cultural heritage management would have put off the potential financier, whose interest was not tourism. This leads to the conclusion that the project proponents discreetly pursued tourism, forgetting that they were laying a weaker foundation for the business in the long-term.

In 2002, the mini community Museum, constructed in Ramba Village began to experience difficulties including inadequate finance, lack of sufficient knowledge and skills to protect, conserve and sustainably manage the cultural heritage collections. Document analysis shows that at some point people who had given the artefacts and other collections retrieved them due lack of proper display and storage facilities¹⁰. The objects were desecrated and this is not the pursuit of sustainable tourism. On the other hand the cabins were collapsing¹¹. The problem was that the project's sustainability strategies were not put in place at the inception stage. In 2004, the problem had reached the climax, and there was no better solution than sourcing for more funds. This left little time to consider other competence related home-grown solutions.

In August 2005, the ailing small museum and bandas secured financial support in the tune of US\$ 29 500 from the US State Department (Courtesy of the US Embassy in Kenya) through TARA to promote rock art tourism and the development of basic tourism infrastructure around Mfangano rock art sites¹². Founded in

⁶ Gloria and Gladys (2010:15)

⁷ Gloria and Gladys (2010:15)

⁸ Gloria and Gladys (2010:16)

⁹ Gloria and Gladys (2010:16)

¹⁰ Gloria and Gladys (2010:28)

¹¹ Gloria and Gladys (2010:16)

¹² Gloria and Gladys (2010:14)

1996 by David Coulson and Alec Campbell, Trust seeks to enhance the survival of African's oldest rock arts¹³. Save them from scorching sun, wind, rain, vandalism, expanding rural population, uncontrolled tourism, new land use project among other threats. During the same year (2005) the rock art sites Kwitone, Mawanga and others were officially opened to the public by a high-powered delegation led by, TARA executive chairman, David Coulson, the Kenyan Heritage Minister Hon. Najib Balala, US Ambassador to Kenya, William Belamy and the chairman of the Kenya tourism Board, Jack Grieves Cook.

This financial support occasioned the *ad hoc* constitution of rock art sites' management committees including the Mawanga Site Committee ill equipped with the requisite competency.

After the US State Department's support, TARA later on helped the mini museum management to secure a grant in the tune of US\$210, 00¹⁴ from the European Union through Tourist Trust Fund (TTF) which was invested in the construction of a larger community museum, erecting signage, piers and docks, that would undoubtedly enhance visitors' experience.

The construction of the larger Abasuba community Peace Museum began on 31st January 2008, and it was opened on 17th October 2008¹⁵, well attended by prominent people like Hon. Cecil Mbarire, Assistant Minister for Tourism, Otieno Kajwang', Mbita MP and Minister for Immigration, Elizabeth Barbier, French Ambassador to Kenya, Rebecca Nabutola, Permanent Secretary the Ministry of Tourism, Dr. Ongonga Achieng, CEO Kenya Tourism Board and representatives from TTF and EU. By its larger size and more service facilities, it was assumed to be capable of broadening the income streams for the poverty stricken fishing community, whose main economic activity was threatened by the water hyacinth, and the introduction exotic fish species-the Nile perch that preys on indigenous fish, which has substantially reduced the catch's size. Henceforth, the museum was to be a gateway, gathering place, destination for budget travellers (art and history), improve community livelihood and increase cultural heritage awareness as well as marketing and promoting rock tourism¹⁶. It was assumed that just like in major hotels, the Museums restaurant and seminar facilities, decorated with rock arts from the island and other parts of Africa, would attract visitors.

Part of tourism's income would serve as incentives¹⁷ that would encourage rock art sites' communities to protect them. How this was to be achieved was not clear. Anyway, it still justified the need for more funds and to develop a larger museum. Host communities were meant to believe that quick income drawn from entry fees, tour guiding and interpretation services-would ease some of the prevailing economic challenges. This assumption overshadowed the need to explore ways through which to balance the delicate relationship between tourism development, host community expectations and heritage management. No records to suggest that a survey was conducted to establish what the visitors needed or would need. In other words, development was based on implicit needs. Developers not only presumed that tourism would improve local livelihoods and trigger infrastructural development but also that the larger museum would increase local awareness of cultural heritage, its conservation, marketing and promotion and increase visitation to the rock art sites. The way a larger museum would compliment the rock art tourism was not well elaborated let alone

¹³ Coulson (2005: 8); Campbell (2005: 26).

¹⁴ Gloria and Gladys (2010:14, 48, 49,50)

¹⁵ Gloria and Gladys (2010:23 & 46)

¹⁶ Gloria and Gladys (2010:6; 19)

¹⁷ Gloria and Gladys (2010:5)

how capacity building among the local people would be done. In essence, were it not for the rock art sites, TARA, which worked tirelessly to secure funds, would not have partnered with the 'locals' in the development of the Abasuba Community Peace Museum. After all, none of its mission at that time was on poverty eradication. It's disturbing to observe that, lack of appropriate competence contributed substantially to the collapse of the earlier projects, yet during the second funding, no considerable funds went towards the training of rock art sites' management committees.

In a nutshell, the process of tourism development at Mawanga cave left so many gaps unaddressed, consequently meaningful social, cultural and economic benefits are yet to be realized. The transition from heritage conservation to tourism investment was not appropriately undertaken.

6 Discussion

6.1. Social sustainability

Sustainable tourism development is anchored on the United Nations World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. Article 1, for instance, emphasizes on the need for tourism development to foster the attitude of tolerance and respect of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs diversity among participants (Edgell *et al.* 2008: 354). Tourism actors including indigenous people, tourists and other stakeholders must recognize each other's social values regardless of class, academic qualifications or cultural backgrounds. Tourists' activities and all developmental initiatives need to be compatible with host site's indigenous practices. In the case of Mawanga cave, indigenous people are not apposed to tourism-in fact 73 % of respondents surveyed argued that tourists continue to visit the cave-however-they need to conduct themselves appropriately.

Whereas some indigenous Mawanga people seem to consider tourists to be disrespectful, the latter are not aware because no code of conduct is displayed to inform them about the cultural values and expectations of the local people. Instead, the codes available inform the tourists not to interfere with objects at Mawanga cave. It is as if the cave's existence, except for the Mawanga Site Committee, is independent from the ordinary indigenous people! In a way, the current tourism practices at Mawanga cave are capable of provoking social-conflicts between host people and tourists. The perception would have been different if the project developers had put sufficient efforts to plan for tourism and adequately prepare the Wasamo community¹⁸.

The so-called 'Community Engagers Workshop', organized from 26th to 30th January 2008¹⁹ lacked the framework to prepare the host adequately for tourism endeavours. Awareness creation as it were was insufficient to impart sustainable tourism's competence onto the host people. The adopted approach of drawing people from the six Suba Divisions, sensitizing them about 'Promoting Rock Art Tourism in Kenya' for about a week, then commissioning them to sensitize others can bore little results given that the six had received tokens while the actual implementers (people at rock art sites) had not! Interestingly, results from document analysis revealed that the team of six people sensitized about 3500 persons. Unfortunately, no specific references were made to indicate how it happened and how many were from Mfangano! Such

¹⁸ Edgell (2006).

¹⁹ Gloria and Gladys (2010:19,20, 21).

process, if at all it ever happened, is simply passive participation, which is known to avail little²⁰. Although the term ‘Engagers’ was used, it was used in the wrong context. Where had the community received tourism knowledge to engage meaningfully with the ‘sensitized folks’? Actually what happened is what Sherry Arnstein considers consultation and therapy, which are never intended to empower participants²¹. Tourism knowledge let a lone cultural tourism is so vast to be delivered in two weeks. There ought to have been a structured appropriate training that would have equipped the Wasamo and the Mawanga Site Management Committee with knowledge to handle tourists’ lifestyles, tastes and expectations which currently are quite disturbing to the former. The training needed to be enhanced by practical field visits to successful community based tourism projects. Unfortunately, the ad hoc approach never created room for this technique of capacity building.

In case, indigenous and tourists’ visit to Mawanga cave and its environs coincides, the tourists take precedence over indigenous people, which undoubtedly disappoint the latter. Consequently, feel good attitude that the cave and its environs belong to the indigenous people fades away! Furthermore, the abrupt convergence on the site by the two users is likely to cause congestion which eventually can lead to either party’s dissatisfaction. Therefore, the feel good satisfaction plays a key role in reinforcing social pride (Violier, 2008: 175) without which social sustainability can be a mirage! One way social pride would have been cultivated and enhanced would be through the formulation of appropriate site’s utilization policy, stipulating rules guiding harmonious existence between tourists and indigenous people (Edgell, 2006).

6.2. Cultural sustainability

The site’s management team (Mawanga Site Committee) enjoys exclusive rights to access the cave and its immediate environs whereas the ordinary members especially herbalists and those who use the cave and its environs for collecting samples from medicinal plants, prayers and rituals have limited access rights. Somehow, ordinary people feel dethroned of their cultural rights. Regrettably, the accidental tourism development approach did not allow developers to anticipate conflict of usage.

Cultural sustainability can only be addressed when appropriate mechanisms are put in place to address conflict of usage²². This is inevitable due to lack of visitor knowledge and know-how both on the technical and implementation front.

It is also important to observe that the circumstantial tourism development approach compelled project initiators to focus more on imagined benefits without interrogating the viability of the development process to deliver on the benefits.

It’s unlucky, for the project initiators not to have thought about the impacts of improper routenewrks on the socio-cultural life of the indigenous people. When a section of indigenous people are uncomfortable because tourists’ trespassing on their lands interrupts their daily activities, it’s prudent to devise strategies to address the issue. Ignoring the problem renders tourism to be a vehicle for individual and selective fulfillment, the

²⁰ Moscardo (2008); Edgell, (2006).

²¹ Mowforth and Munt (2009).

²² Waldron and Williams (2006).

total opposite of the spirit captured in Article 2 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism²³. Whereas it's supposed to promote self-education and learning which creates mutual tolerance, tourism at Mawanga cave attempts to create 'hatred'. How would a suba married man seated under the shed of a tree or a woman busy performing her daily chores feel when interrupted by noisy 'strangers' who not only stare at him/her when illegally trespassing on his/her compound but also they don't greet the former? In which sense does such behavior benefit the host people socio-culturally? In extreme circumstance, some residents may decide to enclose their compounds to keep off tourists! Brief, issues surrounding route leading to the cave and its environs were not adequately addressed. As a result, some host community's privacy is infringed upon. In other words, host's traditions, which demand that strangers seek permission before trespassing on the hosts land, are not respected. Although document analysis suggested that there are sites' conservation and management plans, such documents are never with members of the Mawanga site Committee. Could the documents be somewhere gathering dust? This negates the very rationale of such documents.

6.3. Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability focuses mainly on sustained revenue/income flow. It's about active tourism multipliers, which focus on circular flow of tourism's income and expenditure (Tribe, 2008: 270; Edgell, 2006). Gate collection and guiding fee are the main direct tourism income streams at Mawanga cave. Few people, residents especially members of the Mawanga Site Committee work as authorized tour guides. A considerable proportion of the gate collection is used to sustain a community school, Mawanga primary through paying teachers and purchasing supplies. The community primary school is an important investment, coming in handy to help the Wasamo community fight illiteracy. Remaining portion goes towards the maintenance of the tourist sites, i.e. refurbishing the fence. Generally, the revenue generated from tourism is not steady. In the event that tourists don't visit the Mawanga cave teachers' payment and the maintenance of the site are significantly affected.

It's important to note that sometimes tourists come with their own tour guides because the local guides' communication skills in both English and Swahili language are not sufficient. In reality, none of the Mawanga Site Committee member has had professional training in tourism management. This implies that Mawanga Site Committee experiences some financial leakages, thus reducing income collection. This could have been minimized if the project initiators could have incorporated appropriate capacity building during the development process. Development approach should have emphasized on equipping some members of Mawanga Site Committee with basic communication skills to boost their tour-guiding skills. Although one person from the Mfangano Island was awarded a scholarship to train in heritage management, the knowledge, experiences and skills the beneficiary gained are not assisting much in enhancing tourism at Mawanga. This begs the question, were the sponsors clear on the qualities of a person they wanted to support and on the role the beneficiary would play after the scholarship? How was the community involved during the awarding of the scholarship?

Were there mechanisms in place to compel the beneficiary to give back to the community after the study? The fact remains that the sponsors did not involve the communities while selecting the candidate for the

²³ Edgell *et al.* (2008).

scholarship. Therefore, the beneficiary was not in any way bound to Mfanagno communities; if anything the communities were indebted to the individual for having initiated tourism project, whose economic impacts on the immediate residents has ever been diminishing. Again, it is difficult to figure out the economic impacts of the 2007 transfer of the Abasuba Community Peace Museum's plot to the Suba County Council on the rock art sites.

Other indirect sources of income include taxi fee that tourists pay to motorbike operators or boat operators, in order to be transported from Sena to Mawanga cave. However, this income contributes little to the local economy of Mawanga. Most motorbike and boat operators are not residents of Mawanga village.

It was also noted that at times some domestic tourists purchased fish directly from fishermen. In this case, domestic tourists created ready market for the local products, which they paid for at good price. Sadly, there are no strategies to attract and retain domestic market. Furthermore, the fish would attract more money through value addition e.g. selling fried or roasted fish. This could be done in simple but decently constructed beach restaurants. This would increase the cultural value of the rock art site i.e. it acquires the gastronomic touch.

Generally, the revenue generated from tourism activities is limited owing to the fact that the site is informally managed and the fact that tourism product range is restricted to core product (seeing the rock arts in the cave). Nigel *et al.* (2008) define a core product as the main benefit offered at any tourist site. With appropriate competence, local actors would have developed augmented product i.e. extra services like organized walks (expeditions) on Mfangano hill, fishing among others. Augmented products enhance tourist's experience, which can lead the consumer to recommend the site to friends. This customer-to-customer marketing could minimize the site's marketing cost.

Also, the Mawanga Site Committee does not have basic skills and experience in financial book keeping. It's therefore difficult to tell the trends, tourist visitation and financial performance. The management team does not have a bank account! Without proper book keeping it is difficult to forecast tourism performance. The hand-to mouth revenue utilization doesn't encourage product diversification initiatives.

As noted earlier, Mawanga attracts more international than domestic tourists. However, the Mawanga Site Management Committee has not segmented and profiled the market. In this case, the local tour guides have a standardized service delivery process despite the culturally heterogeneous market served. How can Americans, the English, the Germans, Canadians, Swiss, French and Kenyans be attended to in the same manner? Ideally, each group has different travel experiences and therefore expects customized services (Swarbrooke *et al.* 2011). This explains partly why there are few repeat visits compared to first time.

Only appropriate variety, superior quality products coupled with professionalism can attract repeat visits (Misiko, 2012: 221-222; Edgell, 2006). Additionally, lack of tourism expertise and sufficient income has greatly affected Mawanga Site Committee's active participation in marketing the site. Instead of the Mawanga Site Committee being on the frontline increasing awareness among the tourist populace, the latter leads. This can be attributed to several factors key among them being the failure of the former to understand market niches and sources from which they get travel information. Understanding a client assist any product supplier to match the offer to the customer's needs, this eventually leads to satisfaction (Middleton *et al.* 2009). Knowledge on tourist's sources of 'travel information' can inform the product supplier on the

appropriate marketing communication tools. Acceptable offers communicated to client through appropriate marketing tools capturing relevant contents have the capacity to build and increase customer's confidence in a destination. They reassure the client that the destination has a solution to his/her problem, hence worthy to be chosen among many (Middleton *et al.* 2009). At the moment marketing is done through the ACPM, which is struggling to meet its huge mandate. Identifiable promotional materials include functional items like Banner, booklets, stickers, buntings, postcard, posters, flyers, T-shirts, ladies tops, tyre covers, sun hat, cap, mug, pen and tot bags²⁴. This was an innovative approach to marketing. However, the questions remain, how much money was received from the sale of these items? How was it spent?

What percentage went to the rock art sites? No doubt this marketing is expensive, why couldn't the responsible persons use simpler, sustainable but effective methods? Today, it is difficult to get a T-shirt at the Mawanga site! Who controlled the marketing; was it really in the best interest of promoting rock art tourism and community engagement? With appropriate planning, such questions would have been addressed. A documentary done in *olusuba*, and other languages would have also been better.

The unclear tourism development approach used at Mawanga cave did not focus on equipping future managers (Mawanga Site Committee) with appropriate knowledge on how to address marketing challenges. Poor marketing cannot be blamed on insufficient finance! Some technology enabled tools like Facebook and twitter do not require capital investment but any Internet enabled device.

Although some Mawanga Site Committee members have smartphones, they are seriously challenged when it comes to developing marketing content to share online. This goes back to the problem of capacity building! The tourism managerial foundation at Mawanga cave was poorly laid. The site is closer to the lake, which offers numerous sporting activities, which need not to be too sophisticated. Unfortunately, the exploitation of such special opportunities is derailed by the fact that the Mawanga Site Committee has no sufficient competence to lead product diversification initiatives. Sustainability thrives where there is responsible diversification²⁵.

It's high time that tourism project developers prioritize capacity building while initiating any developments in rural set-ups. More often, the key challenge in some remote areas is not necessarily the lack of finance but lack of appropriate ideas, competence or both but in different measures. For economic sustainability purposes, it's important that sponsors of any development project do a comprehensive situational analysis to clearly map out the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats to any given development. At Mawanga cave many things were carried out hurriedly, which eventually led to economic unsustainability. How development moved from language & heritage protection, to creation of awareness, promotion of rock art leaves a lot to be desired. Even today, it is difficult to ascertain how much of the Suba language is protected in the ACPM and rock art sites, if at all there is any.

One would lay blames on the timelines within which the ACPM was developed. But even thereafter-capacity building on rock art site would have continued provided there was appropriated strategic development process!

²⁴ Gloria and Gladys (2010: 25)

²⁵ Edgell (2006).

7 Conclusion

It will be unfortunate if the writer fails to recognize the immense role TARA played in promoting rock art tourism at Mfangano. Were it not for TARA the ACPM project would not have been realized. Despite the fact that it had no expertise in tourism development and management, TARA gave its best. At least, in Africa, ACPM has become the reference point. TARA helped Mfangano Island to network courtesy of which the museum is collaborating with the National Museums of Kenya. It is important to commend the person who came up with the idea of community museum and for scarfing rightful birth right (land), such ingenuity is what Kenya needs to diversity its tourism product.

On the other hand, it is noted that the tourism development at Mawanga cave and the entire Mfangano Island was based on the unplanned top-bottom approach, driven by the local elite. No way key local actors with insufficient competence would be expected to implement, manage and sustain community tourism project. The development process was marred with project failures at every step. Whenever this occurred, it's not the communities who suffered but also significant resources in terms of time, efforts, forgone alternative development opportunities and cultural heritage were squandered. Project failures hinged on automatic assumption of the linkage tourism-poverty eradication. It's important to note that people got temporary jobs upon the completion of the larger project 'Abasuba Community Peace Museum. But thereafter the opportunities faded away.

It's ironical to observe that resources (grants) especially from the US state Department and EU were keen on promoting rock art tourism yet none of the sites got the lion share! This leaves the assumption that the ACPM is synonymous with the rock art sites. But then again one wonders how much rock art and cultural heritage is there in the facility? The development model never allowed for the creation of strong forward and backward linkages. Lack of tourism knowledge inhibited innovation (Franchetti and Page, 2009) among the local tourism stakeholders, leading to inappropriate and under-exploitation of the Island's tourism opportunities, which again hindered the expansion of income and employment multiplying effects. The process through which the project was conceived and then actualised did not empower implementers to develop more tourist activities. Instead, it encouraged hand to mouth economic model. Development process failed to build appropriate local expertise, institutional arrangements and coordination frameworks. This would have been better, if, the top-bottom approach used to tourism development would have been enhanced by the bottom-up. This would have given rise to the third generation approach (hybrid approach). This would have encouraged negotiations in regard to the role of tourism in promoting socio-cultural values and addressing economic challenges. It would have been more beneficial if Mawanga Site Committee members were taken on study tour to learn more about cultural tourism. This would have helped them to appreciate tourism. Study has demonstrated that these issues were superficially considered, hence jeopardising the future of tourism and the commitment of the locals to the business. This leads to one conclusion that tourism development on Mfangano Island especially at the Mawanga cave was accidental /opportunistic. Without sustainable strategic planning i.e. clear and relevant projects and actions appropriately prioritized with interrelated goals, no development, even the most viable, can be sustainable (Mason, 2009)! Development

pursuits failed to spell out how the larger museum would promote the conservation of the rock arts and the Abasuba language. Failure to explicitly draw this link depicts the lack of a vivid focus, which in the long-term impacted negatively on the economic and socio-cultural sustainability of Mawaga Cave.

Going forward, this study recommends that the County Governments of Homa Bay and Kisumu, especially the Ministries of Trade, Commerce and Tourism, collaborate to map out and profiles Mfangano Island's and Homabay county's attractions. Adopts tourism enhancement and development models corresponding to divers local contexts of each attraction. Irrespective of the models used, attractions need to be linked to each other through a networking principle. This links different attractions, thus improving the touristic appeal of a destination (Mckercher and du Cros, 2010: 113). Strategically designed circuits will ensure that each site has higher chance of being visited. Sustained visitation results into continued income, which, when well utilized for the good of the actors, enhances economic and socio-cultural sustainability.

Author Note:

Dr. Juma Misiko (Ph.D.), Lectures the Geography of Tourism, Tourism Policy and Planning, Cultural and Heritage Tourism, Domestic tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Nature and Cultural Interpretation at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology.

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