

# A GUIDE ON COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM.

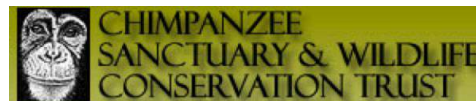


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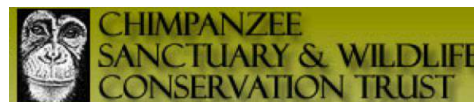
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**COBATI** Community Based  
Tourism Initiative



# A GUIDE ON COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM.



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We acknowledge with thanks the support received from the field staff of Chimpanzee Trust, as well as the different community members in Hoima District.

Special mention is made of the COBATI partner homesteads that are showcased in this guide namely; the Sheema District community tourism cluster of the Kahima and the Kasande homesteads, Mbarara District cluster of the Ishanyu and Kajugira homesteads and the Bombo Nubian cluster in Luwero District.

Finally, we acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the team that edited and reviewed this work.

## FOREWORD

Dear reader and user of this guide,

On behalf of Management and Board of Chimpanzee Sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust, I take this opportunity to welcome you to this guide and commend you for choosing to use this resourceful book. The Darwin Initiative recognized the need to finance implementation of our project, *“Harnessing Livelihood Benefits from a payment for environmental services scheme”* after we successfully implemented another project in partnership with International Institute for Environment and Development. This project was aimed at providing additional incentives to local communities owning and or dependent on forestry resources in the Chimpanzee Corridors within Hoima and Kibaale Districts in Western Uganda. The project specifically wanted to build capacity of local communities engaged a payment for ecosystem services since 2010 to be able to use their already available forest products and resources to create small businesses and generate additional income for their households. Among others, the Chimpanzee Trust worked with Community Based Tourism Initiative to build capacity of these communities to identify, develop and promote products, experiences and culture/way of life as means to generate income for their households.

Based on this experience, this community based tourism guide has been developed to aid any other community, developer or supporting institution that is interested in setting up a viable community tourism product. Special thanks to Darwin Initiative whose funding has made this possible, COBATI who have been the consultants for this task, the communities in Hoima who provided their lessons and experiences for this guide and my staff who work tirelessly to conserve chimpanzees in the Albertine Rift conservation corridors in liaison with all our stakeholders. It is my hope that this guide will be an essential, one stop source of information/guidance for you and that you will find it appropriate for reference in your context.

Partners in the Welfare of Wildlife

Lilly Ajarova  
Executive Director  
Chimpanzee Sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust

## *ACRONYMS*

CBT	Community-based tourism
COBATI	Community Based Tourism Initiative
CTPH	Conservation through Public Health
NGO	Non Government Organisation
UCOTA	Uganda Community Tourism Association
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTB	Uganda Tourism Board
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority

### *About COBATI*

Community Based Tourism Initiative (COBATI) is a tourism non-profit-making organization, providing education and training opportunities to communities and individuals interested in establishing and providing quality tourism services and products en-route and around tourist attractions and unique features in Uganda.

We have been promoting community tourism awareness and engaging the local people in community based tourism since 1999. Currently we are involved in establishment and coordination of a network of rural tourism clusters (homesteads and grass roots tourist attractions) en-route prime tourist circuits and communities across Uganda

Our services include community empowerment through training, marketing, consultancy and advocacy. COBATI's main focus is empowering local participation in community tourism as an economic activity to supplement homestead incomes and enrich Uganda's tourism product.

### *About Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust*

Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust was established as a combined national and international initiative and a globally recognized collaborative effort, geared towards developing and implementing a long-term strategy for conservation of chimpanzees and their habitats.

As well as managing Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Chimpanzee Trust implements conservation programmes targeting in-situ chimpanzee conservation through education, research, community development and other participatory institutional arrangements in the Albertine Rift area. Chimpanzee Trust has been the host country partner for the Darwin Initiative Project 18.-02

## INTRODUCTION

This guide book on community based tourism is aimed at ensuring that communities and hospitality related facilities located in the tourism potential areas acquire basic knowledge and skills in tourism to enable them deliver quality services and products to travellers across Uganda.

Most rural communities are suffering from a decline in the capacity of agriculture to provide sustainable livelihoods for the rural inhabitants. There are however opportunities for non-agricultural occupations for the residents of these rural areas in order to prevent degeneration of the countryside through raising supplementary family income from tourism. Community based tourism can be a supplementary source of income offering a range of variable non-financial benefits that decrease vulnerability such as access to information and infrastructure in rural areas. There are numerous opportunities for the establishment of small-scale initiatives based on culture, historical sites, rural resources and the natural environment. Community tourism has immense benefits both for the rural communities participating and also for the tourists or visitors. For long, tourism has been focused on wildlife safaris and other tourist destinations and the people in those areas just sit back and watch as visitors come and go. They rarely, if ever benefit or even participate. Community tourism is an opportunity for the local people to participate and benefit from their natural and cultural resources.

Uganda is well endowed with a diversity of attractions and cultures. This book would like to encourage individuals and communities who wish to participate in community tourism as a supplementary economic activity, to acquire helpful tips and information for their undertaking.

The **main objective** of the guide book is to give simple information on how to develop community tourism as an income generating activity in a community/village using culture, environment and traditional way of life to tap into the tourism market place.

This guide book contains some success stories of individuals and communities who are participating and benefiting from community tourism and are now being sourced both nationally and internationally to share their knowledge.



They have hosted local and international visitors and are selling their products to regional and international markets.

### WHAT IS TOURISM?

Tourism is the practice of travelling for pleasure, a service that takes care of visitors providing them with holidays, tours and accommodation.

### Who is a tourist?

A tourist is a person who leaves his place of usual abode (a home, residence or house) for more than 24 hours travelling for pleasure or business. Anyone can be a tourist as long the visit to a new place lasts for over 24 hours,

Tourists can be categorized according to the purpose of travel for instance, some travel for pleasure like holidays, visiting friends and family, to participate in sports. Others travel for professional reasons such as attending meeting/workshops, business or trading. Some may travel to study in another area, to seek medical attention, for religious purposes such as undertaking pilgrimage, or as a stopover before they reach the actual place where they are going. Tourism can be practiced by local people in their homes, using the environment and culture.

There are many types of tourism ranging from general sight -seeing to tourism related to nature such as eco-tourism which is responsible tourism that is mindful of the environment, heritage/cultural tourism related to places and activities that genuinely represent the history of past and present times as well as the customs of differ people; and community tourism which is the focus of this guide.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

Community-based tourism (CBT) refers to a variety of tourist-host interactive activities that generate economic and social benefits for the host communities. CBT enables the rural communities to participate in tourism development to supplement their household incomes. Rural communities share their homes with tourists through rural hospitality, share their way of living, their culture and indigenous knowledge through activities like handcraft workshops, village walks and storytelling. Community tourism empowers people to be more aware of the value of their community assets - their culture, heritage, local food and lifestyle. It mobilizes them to turn these into income generating family activities while offering a more diverse and worthwhile experience to visitors.

Community tourism is good for women who would rather work close to home than commute long distances. Nevertheless, women and rural people in general need to be empowered to link their culture, environment, skills and indigenous knowledge to tourism to be able to utilize it as a source of livelihood.

Making some little conscious changes and a small amount of “know how”, a community will be able to get what they are entitled to, not only by offering a service or a local product but to offer a visitor a unique opportunity which is not staged but “experienced”. Tourism can be linked to poverty alleviation, used to promote the diversity of attractions and activities mainly found in rural areas and to generate income. In addition to the economic benefits for these communities, the tourist will open the door for a new vision and a gateway to understand, admire and share the abundant traditions of the people of Uganda.

Before undertaking a community based tourism activity, it is important to make an analysis of the local situation, identify the target group then guide them through the product development process which includes the following basic guidelines.

## STAKEHOLDER/ PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION

### How it is undertaken

The initial activity involves the formation of a local committee/ group to identify people or individuals within the community capable of participating in the formation of a community tourism cluster. These should be individuals or groups already participating in an economic activity, or having an indigenous skill such as pottery, carving, weaving which can be used to produce a product or offer a specific service which can easily relate to tourism. Anyone who shows interest to learn, or who has an asset that can be used in tourism, i.e. a home with extra space for a homestay, an agricultural economic activity which can be of interest for visitors to watch can also be included in the group.

The next step involves determining the needs of the cluster members and the extent to which they want to improve their household income situation through community tourism development as a supplementary household income activity. The group/cluster should then be assisted to develop a list of natural and cultural features of the area. These features will form the basis to develop into potential attractions after an evaluation workshop to assess the existing resources and possible services for possible community-based tourism enterprises that use the existing natural and cultural attractions of the area.

After identification of the potential attraction within the community, an assessment of the possible services and products which can be developed is undertaken. The next process is to analyze the opportunities and constraints relating to market, socio-cultural and environmental aspects of the potential tourism activities proposed.

Once the identification exercise is completed, a community should come out with a realistic number of startup simple tourism related activities which they can manage. The participating cluster/group should be supported to develop strategies in areas of enterprise development focusing on market, social issues and environment to be able to develop quality products and services as they pilot community based tourism within their community.

It is important to develop strategies in each of the three areas of enterprise development; market, social, and environmental including sales targets, such as the costs, income expected, promotional strategies that will be used to reach

target markets; the social strategy to include the input, participation, sharing of benefits and ideas with the community and the main players and how to deal with any new social issues that may emerge; and environmental strategies to mitigate any negative impact on the environment.

## IDENTIFYING AND PROFILING ATTRACTIONS

Attraction development is one of the most exciting areas of tourism. Attractions are features that interest people to come and visit an area.

The attractions of a country/community provide the basis for developing tourism. Tourist attractions are identified and evaluated with respect to the opportunities they offer for development of related tourist activities and involvement. Existing and potential attractions of an area are first identified, evaluated and selected in a survey and analysis undertaken as part of the tourism planning process.

The first step in the identification of tourist attractions is the survey process which involves research, interviews to determine the types, locations of attractions available and then compile a list.

Next is the field survey to determine the potential of the attraction/features and a profile developed that includes name, type, location, accessibility, special characteristics, type of existing development, any advantages or problems. For some types of cultural attractions such as music and dance/drama, they may need to arrange performances for the survey team.

Once you have an idea of your potential market, you need to know what product you have to offer to meet the demand. This is important as it will help you identify what your current supply of tourism attractions is and what potential others might be. It will also help you know how ready your community is to take on a new or increased tourism activity, which requires certain supporting facilities and public services.

### Products to offer

You can begin by collecting an extensive listing of the diverse tourism attractions that exist in the community/area and the ones with potential of being developed for different categories of visitors.

It's important for a community to find their niche or what is special about their area or community. One needs to have activities that can attract people to the area. Community tourism does not deter one from continuing with their day to day economic activities. It blends in with other economic activities practiced by local people. For instance, a farmer growing coffee can host visitors who are interested in seeing how the coffee they purchase from supermarkets is grown and prepared.



*Left- Mrs. Kahima, a homestead owner in Masheruka drying coffee. Her homestead is engaged in agri-tourism. Right- Micheal Barber from the US visiting the Kahima homestead.*

A feature on its own can be of interest, but it can be much more interesting if related activities are developed or organized around it. It is important that attractions reflect an area's distinctive and unique natural and cultural quality, and be developed to strengthen that environment.

The attractions may include natural and manmade features that interest people to come and visit the community. Attractions can be categorized as follows:

- 1) Nature based
- 2) Man made
- 3) Culture and heritage
- 4) Special events

Natural attractions that are based on features of the natural environment such as the climate, scenic beauty, lakes and rivers, interesting flora and fauna including game parks for wildlife conservation, special environmental features such as high mountains, caves, hot springs.

Cultural attractions that are based on man's activities include historic and cultural sites such as monuments, historic buildings, churches, mosques and cultural patterns, traditions and lifestyles that are unusual and unique to one place.

Manmade attractions include theme parks, recreational facilities like leisure and botanical gardens, museums.

The cultural patterns include arts and crafts, interesting economic activities like tea and coffee shambas, traditional fishing, traditional open air marketplaces, cultural festivals and friendliness of local people.

Special types of attractions that are artificially created include shopping, meetings and conference activities, special events, entertainment, sports.

Once this is done, it is essential to assess the community or households supporting infrastructure including water, hygiene and sanitation, security and accessibility.

**Note:**

Visitor's needs and expectations are not exactly the same as the needs of community members and different cultures for example, the dress code for tourists may be different from those of the community. Communities therefore need to be supported to understand cross cultural issues. Training is very important in empowering community tourism participants to be well equipped to efficiently participate in the tourism market place while developing sustainable community tourism.

## DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTS AND COSTING

When developing community tourism related products, it is important to utilize local resources, indigenous knowledge and traditional skills that have been passed on from generation to generation. For example, using locally sourced materials like sisal to make handcrafts such as mats and baskets; homesteads showcasing traditional beer brewing using traditional knowledge and skills.



*Left- Visitors viewing handcrafts in Swaziland. Right- Women in Sheema district in Western Uganda brewing beer using traditional knowledge.*

Products can be developed according to natural and scenic beauty, seasons and by clustering attractions. To participate in tourism, you need to be ready to meet the expectations of a tourist and even exceed their expectations. First impressions are always important.

Communities can participate in tourism wherever they are. They don't have to move. The market will come to them.



*Left- Women from Hoima District demonstrate their handcrafts to visitors. Right- International visitors from Spain enjoying the local cuisine in Bombo.*

### **Natural and scenic beauty**

Scenery viewing is a big tourist activity. Scenic beauty is a major draw for visitors to natural environments such as forests, escarpments, rift valleys, and mountain areas. A well maintained environment, scenic landscapes are conducive for scenery seeking visitors. It is therefore important that appropriate environmental management practices are put in place to maintain the visual attractiveness of natural areas. This includes conserving the environment, proper disposal of waste (littering should be avoided), and good farming practices that do not degrade the environment.

### **Clustering Attractions**

#### **1) A village walk**

A village walk gives one the opportunity to move around a village/community, learn what the community has, what the community does and where possible purchase items along the way. Clustering attractions gives a tourist opportunity to view them along the walk. Normally a walk has guides who are usually knowledgeable people. The village walk can tell the story about the community, their way of life and their history. When designing a village walk, it is important to consider the area, the different homesteads and attractions in the community as well as the stories about the different areas. It is usually developed into a loop form to allow visitors walk around



the village where different stop points have been developed allowing the visitor to view the different attractions and activities. A village walk usually takes not more than 3 hours. Possible attractions that can be included as stop points include a homestead offering rural hospitality, farming experience, and visits to artisans among others. The best example of a village walk in Uganda is the Buhoma village walk in Bwindi next to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park.

### Note

It is important for community members to be sensitized about welcoming visitors in their areas e.g., allowing them to take pictures, sharing information with them and making them feel safe and welcome.

## 2) Homestays / Homestead Tourism

Homestead tourism /local hospitality is a new area of participation for rural communities without direct competitors. This activity encourages homeowners to participate in tourism by using their homesteads to offer hospitality services to visitors, sharing their culture through day to day homestead and village activities with visitors who also pay a fee for it. It also presents homeowners with added household income and the community to become innovative to participate through for example, small family enterprises such as selling drinks, food, crafts, supplying cultural services like traditional dances, storytelling, village walks etc. This unique idea encourages proper hygiene and sanitation at homesteads, and an opportunity for a real experience which is not staged.

Hosting visitors within different homesteads is one of the ways of showcasing rural hospitality. The hosting homestead needs to be able to demonstrate good hospitality skills, those offering accommodation have to be clean, hospitable and in particular take note of their own personal hygiene. Visitors need to be warmly welcomed to the homestead that is hosting them. It is important to assure the visitors about the security of the area. Communities can host people as a group or at an individual homestead.

### 3) Local cuisine/ Food

Local cuisine of an area is another attraction and rural areas in Uganda have good organic food which tourists are interested in. The community members can showcase how the food is grown, harvested, stored, prepared and served. Different areas have particular food stuffs they grow, harvest and prepare in a particular way. The entire process of growing food and harvesting it is an art. The food menus should be inspired by the local culinary traditions.

### 4) Cultural Heritage

Culture is an integral part of community tourism. The different music and dance groups that focus on traditional dance do so to keep their culture alive. Culture can be turned into an attraction and is showcased in different ways. These include festivals, traditional activities like black smiths, hunting, traditional fishing, and attire among others.

### 5) Artisans

This may include craft making, weaving and basketry, black smiths which also includes the Process of making traditional tools out of iron, such as spears, knives and hoes, pottery and clay works, wood carvers and story tellers.

Handcrafts are an important attraction for tourists. Hand craft and tourism go hand in hand and it is one of the easiest entry points for local people to participate in tourism. Experience shows that developing hand craft that appeal to tourists provides one avenue by which artisans may participate in the tourism marketplace and preserve their handcraft skills for income generation. A basic concept in the management of handcrafts is that they must be authentic in terms of making use of local traditional skills and materials. Handcraft making demonstrations by local artisans are interesting and educational experiences for tourist and can make them buy crafts that they may not have otherwise bought. Demonstrations can be at a homestead or craft shop. It is important for local people to make an effort to produce quality crafts, easy to carry and with information attached; usually in tourism the story behind the craft is important to influence a sale.

## Seasons

Certain activities take place seasonally in the community. Tourists need to be educated/ informed about the different seasons which are important in communities, for example, farmers might be busy to host during the planting season. During the harvest season, there is plenty of food; weddings are usually conducted during this season which makes it an ideal time for visitors.

Communities need to be aware of the seasons best suited for tourists activities for example, local people need to understand the winter and summer seasons which influence travel for international travellers.

## Note

It is important to package products well. It is also important to price products in a realistic manner so that the products are not too expensive for the tourists.

Different visitors come from different regions and countries and have different expectations. Understanding their expectations would enable the guides and community members to cater to their different needs accordingly.

## Packaging

Tour companies often tell the tourist some basic information about the community they are going to visit so that they may be aware of the customs of the area. Tourists are given this information to help them adjust to the norms of the places they visit. Guidelines are also provided to communities regarding what the tourists expect when they come to a particular community. The products of the community should not be found to be sub- standard.

Information can be packaged in a manner that should facilitate its distribution. For instance, a story can be packaged in way that allows it to be told in a relatively shorter time to allow visitors maintain their schedule and manage time. The story teller can then charge people for listening to the story. Using vivid description, the story would be interesting for a listener.

Products need to be of quality to be worth inclusion in the different tour itineraries. Essentially, a well-organized community project that enriches

visitors experience is likely to be included on a tour operator's itinerary than one which is not well organized. The community should clearly indicate what will be showcased to the visitor and what the visitor can expect. This also includes the time of the activities on site: the time should be well laid out since tour operator's programs run on time.

Handcraft makers should produce items that are easy to carry in size. Tourist need products with stories to remind them of where they have been not to use them as local people do. For example, a potter can make small miniature pots. Women in Bombo are making miniature traditional baskets known as "kutta", maintaining the Nubian traditional colors and design.

Proper Signage should be put up to clearly indicate an area or village where a particular activity is taking place or what is offered in that area or community.

### What to consider when costing Products

One of the key factors for success in any tourism enterprise is how you price your product. To ensure that tourists purchase your product, and travel agents promote it, the price must be consistent, accurate and competitive.

It is also important to have an understanding of the market to be able to calculate the monetary benefits of community based tourism activities and products. The market consists of tourists already visiting the destination, as these are potential buyers of tourism products and services.

You may vary the average price at which you sell your products depending on:

1. Seasonality - Seasonality determines the flow of visitors throughout the year. This has an impact on the ways in which tourism balances other livelihood options in the community. Certain level of visitor numbers is required for businesses to be profitable. Mixing of community tourism activities with mainstream tourism markets may therefore be advantageous for local communities who may then vary their prices depending on high or low season.

2. Operating costs- You need to consider your operating costs when pricing the products to enable you to cover the expenses you have incurred. Whether you are selling your product to domestic or international tourists, it is important to specifically determine and understand the components that make up the total price or rate and the impact this will have on your product.
3. Competition- Pricing should be done according to the existing prices on the market so that you can compete with others offering similar products. This requires a clear understanding of the specific costs of all product components and their impact on total product price.
4. Demand- People will pay more if there is a high demand in a region; similarly they will pay less if there is an abundance of choice.

## IDENTIFICATION OF MARKETS, MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing and advertisement of attractions and what the community has to offer is important. When marketing a product or an attraction, it is important to know who to target. Rather than focus on only the international market, a community can target both the domestic and international market and produce products accordingly.

Marketing and packaging of the product for value addition is important and communities need to be innovative in the ways they market their products to different visitors both local and international. Sometimes a community or homestay can work with a partner to post information about that particular homestay or community on their website.

### Attractions can be profiled using the following

- Use of internet websites such as COBATI, Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA), Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) website.
- Use of social media such as Facebook, twitter
- Use of brochures
- Signage
- Flyers
- Inclusion in the itineraries of the tour operators.

- Print and electronic media such as community radios
- Word of mouth
- Use of SMS

Mobile money is a good source of money transfer in community tourism where tourists can send money directly to a community or participating through mobile money prior to arrival of a visitor. Visitors can also make a booking through mobile phones and can send messages to the community or homesteads via sms.

### CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

Community members need to use their personal initiative to participate in community tourism. Community members need to treat the enterprises they engage in as a business and invest in it. There are standards that every participating community, homestead and community guide should meet in terms of personal hygiene and sanitation, visitor handling and general environmental cleanliness.

#### Homestead Owners

Homestay owners need to be people of good reputation in the community and should ensure the environment around them is clean and attractive. It does not matter the type of house that one has, but there are basic standards that any homestead should have including security, cleanliness and hygiene, accessibility and some economic activities that the household is involved in. Once a visitor or tourist perceives that they are not getting their money's worth, they are likely to complain and discourage others from visiting the area altogether. One needs to be conscientious and friendly. A clean area, good hospitality and well maintained surroundings are often pleasing to a visitor. Homestead owners may require training in cross cultural exchange, food hygiene and visitor handling and how to cost and package a homestay experience.

#### Community guides

Community guiding is an important aspect of community tourism. There are basic skills that a guide should have. A guide should be knowledgeable and have basic information on the different attractions. Places that may need guides

include waterfalls, forests, mountains or hills, caves, historical sites. Guides need to be aware of the different activities taking place within the community. They need to research and know about the different features, what is at the different sites, if there is a local story or legend about the site or feature.

### **Key issues to consider.**

#### **Knowledge and Information**

Before tourists visit an area, they have done some research on the different attractions there. Tourists want to know about the way of life of the people, the culture, their history and the local cuisine. Knowledgeable community guides are therefore important. An effective guide should be able to tell the visitor or tourist what to expect when they visit a particular attraction, site or community. The guide should also be able to communicate how much time the visitor will spend at a particular attraction and also engaging in certain activities. It is also important to give the visitor an opportunity to ask questions. Knowledge of the area and attractions is important.

#### **Appearance**

One's appearance impacts on how visitors regard him/her and their response. Community members need to pay attention to details such as appropriate dressing, behavior and personal hygiene.

#### **Professionalism**

This is a key component of being a good community guide. It is important to respect the visitor or tourist and be courteous. It is important to always show visitors respect and treat them cordially. Certain activities need special guides for example, bird watching and forest walks.

#### **Time Management**

Failure to manage time creates a negative impression for the visitor and shows disrespect.

## Personal Hygiene

This includes personal grooming such as keeping finger nails short and clean, having a clean face is needed to create a good impression. A professional guide should be smart. Hygiene and sanitation are important. If you are providing people with food, you need to improve on your hygiene and sanitation. In tourism, first impressions always matter.

## Communication

Appropriate language and words should be used. A guide should be able to speak clearly in an audible manner, introduce himself and give a brief about the attraction or the area to be visited, the timeframe, the terrain and what to expect. It is also necessary to give visitors an opportunity to ask questions as the community guide explains the history or the story behind the attractions. Nonverbal communication can impact on the way a guide is perceived. This can be communicated through the appearance of a guide, the gestures used and the overall attitude shown by the guide. It is important to have direct eye contact while addressing the visitors so as to make an impression and build trust. Although direct eye contact is considered offensive in some cultures, most visitors regard it as an indication of honesty and therefore trust the guide who makes direct eye contact while talking to them.

It is pertinent that guides do not raise visitors' expectations especially when these expectations will not be met or give false information. Rather than exaggerate, guides need to communicate facts to the visitors.

A guide needs to know how to handle crowd control and how to deal with big groups of visitors and different age groups.

A guide should be aware that sometimes visitors come to a place to see attractions that they may not have in their area. These may include specific tree species, waterfalls and others. A guide needs to have knowledge on the different attractions and explain this to the visitor, for instance, how the trees grow, what are the uses of the different tree species. Indigenous knowledge on the different attractions can also be documented for ease of sharing it with others.



It is important that a community guide takes a course in first aid so that they may be able to help a visitor in case of an emergency or an accident. He/she needs to have a first aid kit.

Organizations like COBATI and UCOTA offer training in community tourism. COBATI has recently opened up a COBATI Training Center for livelihoods skills training whose modules include basic community tourism development, customer care, and small tourism related enterprise development. The center is located in Mbarara Municipality.



*Participants in front of the COBATI community training center in Mbarara Municipality*

## PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

It is important for a community intending to develop community tourism to source partners. There are various types of partners who are willing to engage with communities in community tourism. These may include individuals, neighboring communities, NGOs and various government institutions. The partners can be sourced through corporate companies, international NGOs, and Local Government through programs like youth empowerment. An example of corporate funding community tourism is the case of MTN Uganda Foundation supporting COBATI to develop a community tourism cluster in Bombo through the MTN Foundation Corporate social responsibility program. Since then the community has hosted both local and international visitors and produced high quality value added handcrafts.

Examples of institutions that can partner in community tourism include Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Conservation through Public Health (CTPH), UCOTA, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Other government institutions and NGOs both local and international can also be consulted.

It is also paramount that individuals or community members use their own innovation and creativity to participate in community tourism. They can take advantage of the trainings and other resource persons in the community to guide them. Examples of success stories of those who have participated in community tourism are highlighted below:

Edna Byabali is the founder of BOMU women's group in Masindi and has taken advantage of the different trainings in community tourism and is now operating a community rest camp, handcraft shop and a herbal garden near the main gate of Murchison Falls National Game Park. Some of the income generation activities at her rest camp include hand loom weaving and basketry, visitor hosting, food demonstrations, storytelling. She is now sourced out locally and internationally on community tourism.



*Ms. Byabali facilitating at a training of site personnel and monitors organised by COBATI and Chimpanzee Trust in March 2015 in Hoima district.*

Dick and Diana Kajugira own the Kajugira Homestead in Mbarara, which is part of the COBATI homestay program.



*A homestay can be in any house as long as the environment is homely and basic standards are met.*

Visitors experience at the Kajugira homestead:

*“To Dick’s surprise I was most enthusiastic about mangoes and pineapples! It was the first time I saw how they grow...believe me, it’s really not obvious for people like me (or my friends who have never been to Africa- they were surprised too!! Suzanna from Poland- visited in September 2012.*

The Ishanyu farm stay in Mbarara, owned by the Katanywa family.



The highlight of this homestead visit is the unique traditional hut which houses the milk platform known as “*orugyegye*” where the milk pots and accessories are kept. This is the central place of every traditional pastoralist homestead. Guests can taste milk or Ankole Yoghurt, “*amakamo*” stored in high quality shiny black wooden milk pots (*ebyanzi*), and Calabashes (*ebishaaba*).

*“This is a living museum”- Micheal Barber- American Tourist, April 2013.*

Bombo community tourism initiatives have hosted international visitors.



### CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS TO BE MINDFUL OF

Community based tourism has both direct and indirect benefits for participating communities in rural areas. However, it is important to be mindful of the fact that tourism is a sensitive activity which can be affected by issues such as local and international security, diseases and epidemics. Communities should therefore develop tourism alongside their other economic activities. Participating in community based tourism should be done as a supplementary activity besides other economic activities ongoing in the community.

Tourism also has social costs associated with it. These include sex tourism, drug addiction, prostitution and adoption of negative foreign cultures. There is a danger of creation of a begging culture. In some instances, there is misuse of the proceeds leading to drunkenness within a community.

By looking at the costs, communities are able to ensure that any community tourism development that occurs does so with minimum and unexpected negative impacts and with rewards for the community in a sustainable and equitable manner.

Usually communities assume that tourist will flock their area. Tourism is seasonal, tourism is sensitive. Communities need to be aware that community tourism is a new venture, visitor numbers are small, however, it grows steadily and word of mouth is the best marketing tool in community tourism. The beauty with community tourism is that you continue with your livelihood activities while linking them to tourism. Visitors come at your own pace.

It is important to produce high quality tourism experiences, both at homestead and community levels. Service quality is essential to community tourism initiative sustainability. It is paramount to invest in regular training sessions in order to guarantee a service that maintains a high level in the long term.

**About the authors**

**Maria Baryamujura** is an alumnus of Makerere International Institute of Environment and Practical Skills, the University of California Berkeley, and the Golda Meir Mount Carmel Training Institute Haifa Israel. She is a community tourism consultant, Founder and Executive Director of Community Based Tourism Initiative (COBATI) and an Ashoka Fellow since 2006. She has over 30 years' experience in sustainable tourism development and women empowerment within and outside East Africa. She is an advocate for increased awareness of players in the tourism sector and of the opportunities that can be generated if Uganda and Africa in general, provided market driven programs that protect the environment, preserve cultural heritage and contribute to sustainable economic development. She has worked closely with Government, local and International Agencies in promoting the enhancement of household incomes through community tourism and sustainable environment. As a founder of COBATI, she has created a niche as a capacity developer for communities to come up with innovative ideas that generate income through community based tourism. Maria was inducted into the inaugural **Hall of Fame** during the 2013 African Diaspora World Tourism Awards in Atlanta Georgia, USA "For **Outstanding Contributions & Dedicated Service in Cultural Heritage Tourism**". Her work in tourism has been recognised locally and internationally.



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**COBATI**

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