UBUNTU AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE OVERBERG REGION OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of *Ubuntu* forms an integral part of tourism and tourism development in underdeveloped and neglected regions in South Africa. The Overberg region in the Western Cape is a classic example of where this philosophy can be applied for the benefit of the entire region. It is high time that the tourist 'rand' be extended to the local communities to empower them in a real and significant manner.

The untapped secrets of the Overberg were revealed and identified in a very recent study of the region. The Overberg is situated between Cape Town central and the Garden Route, and because the access route is between Caledon and Swellendam, the area tends to be ignored, whereas Cape Town with its popular branding and abundant tourist offerings attracts many international tourists annually.

The Western Cape is divided into ten different regions, each with its own unique characteristics and appeal, of which the Overberg is the third biggest in terms of its geographical area. This unspoilt area boasts some of the region's richest birdlife and a wealth of fauna and flora; the southernmost tip of Africa, where the cold Atlantic and warm Indian oceans meet; sprawling, white, sandy beaches and dunes; an abundance of whales and last, but not least, it has the greatest historical and cultural significance of all the regions.

Given that Cape Town is the gateway to the entire region and benefits from the strong Mother City brand, the Overberg should also be branded and marketed strongly to expose the 'untapped secrets' of the region. If this became a regional priority of Cape Town Routes Unlimited (DMO), the Overberg would enjoy the benefit of better tourism, which would

stimulate greater skills development for the owners and employees of the region's tourism Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).

Standing together, building the brand together and promoting the essence of real empowerment in the region can only lead to more sustainable tourism enterprises. The biggest challenge however, is the level of skills, expertise and product knowledge of the current operators in the Overberg region.

Equipping the people of this region with skills, determination and passion will inevitably lead to the highest standard of satisfaction in terms of the unlimited needs of tourists.

Ubuntu, the way forward.

INTRODUCTION

The Overberg region is located in the Western Cape Province and is situated at the southernmost tip of Africa. It provides some well-known and well-marketed events and attractions such as The Two Oceans Marathon, Hermanus and Cape Agulhas. Furthermore, the Overberg is the place where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet.

This article reports on the findings of a study conducted in 2009 by the Tourism Management Honours students of the University of Pretoria (Francis et al, 2009) In order to analyse the Overberg destination as a tourist attraction, various aspects of the tourism industry were investigated. The objective and purpose of the research was to improve the competitiveness of the region in terms of tourism. In order to do this, the development and acquisition of a well trained and qualified workforce is of the utmost importance to deliver the standard of products and service delivery which will be acceptable to accommodate the needs of all tourists, local as well as foreign.

In many countries, cultural tourism allows local communities with a cultural heritage to engage in the economic environment of the region. From the host community's point of view, the essential goals of tourism development must include generating higher levels of income, creating new employment opportunities, and increasing foreign exchange flows in the region (World Tourism Organisation: 2006:5).

A vital component of cultural tourism which can contribute to tourism development is the local cuisine of a host community. The Overberg region is an area rich with many diverse cultures due to the historical movement of communities throughout the ages. This has left the area with many traditional dishes which have circulated throughout South Africa. By attracting attention to the birthplaces of traditional food, it provides visitors not only with the experience of eating an authentic dish, but with the stories of where it originated, allowing them to learn about the destination they are visiting.

Eco- and adventure tourism are both fields that show significant growth in tourism currently. Thus their potential for the Overberg region is significant, especially in terms of the 'new experience seeker' profile of tourists. In this study, eco-, agri- and adventure tourism offerings of the area will be analysed to sustainably capitalise on them for the future. Ecotourism in particular shows great potential for the sustainable development and use of

local resources for tourism. Agricultural tourism will also be discussed as an extension of eco- and adventure tourism.

The three most important dimensions of the success of a destination include the activities offered, the accessibility of the destination and the quality of the hospitality offerings. With the fast-changing nature of tourists today, it is extremely important to know what satisfies them and how certain elements can enhance the travel experience. The hospitality industry is saturated and therefore extremely competitive (Atilgan, Akinc and Aksoy, 2003; Haemoon, 2005). Furthermore, some of the largest expenditures of a trip include food, drink and accommodation (Ross, 1997:251), which are the main components of hospitality. Therefore, it is of extreme importance to look at this element in tourism as it can determine the future success of any tourism destination.

The Overberg needs to identify a brand for itself. A destination's branding is vital to the life source and competitive advantage of the destination. Branding is defined as 'what images people have of the state and what kind of relationship they have with it' (Nickerson and Moisey 1999:217). A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods from those of competitors (Aaker 1991).

The World Wide Web is constantly evolving and as a result, consumers are finding new ways to communicate with each other and to acquire information. The internet is the primary mass medium of the 21st Century, and this has had a huge impact on the tourism industry. Social media networks have added impetus to the development of faster means of accessing information. This provides a free marketing platform for tourism organisations, thus enhancing their competitive advantage.

The overall success of the abovementioned components are all dependent on available skills and expertise and how these are developed in the Overberg region. The philosophy of *Ubuntu* highlights the importance of a common vision so as to benefit all in the region and restore the principles of care and prosperity for all.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main purpose of the Overberg study (Francis et al, 2009) was to investigate and assess the viability of the Overberg as a tourist destination and align it with the skills development requirements for making the region sustainable, and in so doing ensure empowerment for the local host communities.

The core research question that guided this study can be stated as follows:

Could the Overberg region develop and train current and potential tourism employees to develop a sustainable destination?

The following research objectives were set:

- o   to analyse and investigate the Overberg tourism offering
- o   to compare the current visitor numbers with the broader Western cape region
- o   to identify and assess the current infrastructure
- o   to identify the stakeholders involved
- o   to assess the skills level of employers/employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study was based on empirical work and observation. The literature review drew on relevant information and statistics from textbooks, journals and electronic media. The elements of observational research were based on the following:

- o Choosing the site (Overberg)
- o Observation point (various areas within the region)
- o Study time period (seasonality)
- o Structure of gathering information (informal interviews).

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The philosophy of *Ubuntu*

The word *Ubuntu* has its roots deeply buried in Africa and stems from an African language.[3] The philosophy of *Ubuntu* is centred on people and their wellbeing, offering people an understanding of themselves in relation to other people and the world at large, with all its humanitarian problems.

According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, *Ubuntu* speaks of wholeness, a sense of belonging, and compassion. If a person lives according to the principles of *Ubuntu*, he or she will welcome others, be hospitable, be warm and caring and look after the needs of others before him- or herself. All these principles are crucial elements for success in tourism, as they form the basic cornerstone of hospitality (www.buzzle.com/editorials/7-22-2006-103206.asp).

Skills development and tourism

Tourism is a total experience and is defined as 'encompassing all travel with the exception of commuting which includes any activity concerned with the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work' (Francis, 2003:3). The food service sector is regarded as a vital component in the tourism and hospitality industry and food is an essential element of the tourist experience. (Francis, 2003:120; Hall, 2003, Hall and Sharples, 2003:1; Ross, 1997:251). Some of the largest expenditures of a trip are on food, drink and accommodation (Ross, 1997:251). Tourism spending in South Africa for 2000 shows that international tourists spend, on average, 8% of their total spending on food and dining out, while domestic tourists spend on average 24% (Du Rand, Heath and Alberts, 2003:98). Ross (1997:252) states that the food experience can be associated with the high or low points of the holiday experience. It can therefore be argued that food is a crucial element in building good and lasting memories of a trip.

The fast-changing nature of the business environment today demands that organisations have a good understanding of what is required to satisfy their customer's needs. The tourism industry is saturated and therefore extremely competitive, thus requiring tourism

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[3]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/*Ubuntu*_(philosophy)

organisations to be on the cutting edge, delivering the highest level of customer satisfaction possible (Atilgan, Akinc and Aksoy, 2003; Haemoon, 2005).

It is a very challenging task to ensure that each tourist who leaves your establishment will return or inform someone else of the excellent product and service combination they received. The success of this process is totally dependent on the knowledge and skills levels of all employees engaged in the process.

The Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority (Theta) is the responsible organisation for ensuring the development of skills and expertise in the South African tourism sector. This is, however, a daunting and challenging task, as it requires the co-ordination and co-operation of all stakeholders in the country. According to Theta's Sector Skills Plan 2005-2009, five national priorities have been identified and these include:

- o prioritising critical skills for growth and development
- o stimulating quality training for all in the workplace
- o promoting employability and sustainable livelihoods through skills development
- o assisting new entrants into the labour market and self-employment
- o improving the quality and relevance of provision.

These are all very important aspects of skills improvement and development, but in many instances time may be a factor, especially with the 2010 Soccer World Cup. It is further stated that South Africa has experienced significant growth since 1994 and currently shares about 0,4% of the world tourism market. It is predicted that this figure will increase.

This reality places more pressure on local industry. Skills development will therefore have to be fast-tracked in view of the following global trends in tourism:

- o The industry is increasingly being organised at a global level.
- o The industry is experiencing a demand for shorter tours.
- o Consumers are becoming more knowledgeable regarding products and offerings.
- o Reservations are increasingly becoming 'last minute'.
- o The internet is being used increasingly as a source for finding product suppliers.
- o Umbrella bodies frequently assist in setting up government-business partnerships.
- o Umbrella bodies co-ordinate and integrate tourism education and training and assist in the monitoring of emerging market trends.

Cape Town Tourism arrival statistics

Along with the Kruger Park and Sun City, Cape Town ranks as one of South Africa's top destinations for foreign visitors. Furthermore, it rates as the third most visited local destination, after Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (SAT Domestic Tourism Surveys, 2008).

During 2008, 13,9 million adults travelled in South Africa, generating R23,5 billion in revenue. This includes an average spend per night of R780 per traveller, with an average length of stay of 4,5 nights (SAT Domestic Tourism Surveys, 2008).

On the international front, during the last quarter of 2008, 2,6 million foreign tourists visited South Africa for the following reasons (an increase of 5,6% on the previous year):

- o 77,2% for holiday
- o 13,4% for work

- o 6,8% for business
- o 0,7% for study purposes

<div align="right">(Statistics SA, 2008).</div>

During this period, 208 385 foreign tourists arrived at Cape Town International Airport. The concentration of foreign tourists in the Cape Town region can be summarised as follows:

Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens	191 637
Table Mountain	181 260
Robben Island	61 505

In contrast, visits to other regions in the Cape can be summarised as follows:

Cango Caves (Small Karoo regions)	68 642
De Hoop Nature reserve (Overberg)	5 118
Lighthouse at L'Agulhas (Overberg)	6 395
Shipwreck Museum (Overberg)	2 917
Agulhas National Park (Overberg)	6 122

<div align="right">(Western Cape Barometer Q4, 2008 (3)1)</div>

## The Overberg tourism product

Cultural and heritage tourism

The classic definition regards 'culture' as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society. Cultural tourism is defined as the movement of persons from their normal places of residence to specific destinations such as artistic and cultural attractions (including heritage sites, exhibitions of arts and crafts, and dramatic presentations). However, it is important to break down cultural tourism into 'high' and 'low' culture. Cultural tourism encompasses both. Classical forms of music, theatre and literature are matched by 'popular culture' attractions, which include sports and music, along with traditional forms of entertainment like folk dancing, gastronomy and handicraft (Holloway 2006:242).

The main forms of cultural tourism include:

- o heritage
- o arts
- o urban culture
- o rural culture
- o indigenous tourism
- o contemporary popular culture (Ivanovic, 2008:80-89).

Cultural products include heritage sites, performing arts, visual arts, festival and special events, religious sites, rural environments, indigenous communities and traditions, arts and crafts, industry and commerce and gastronomy.

Figure 1 Products of culture
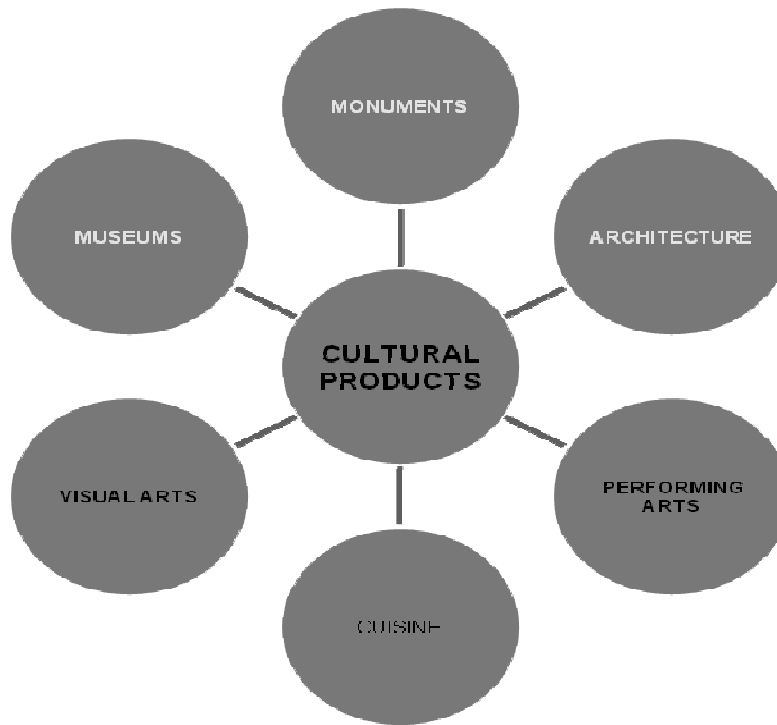
Source: Adapted from David and Hendrick, 2009

Cultural tourism doesn't only empower the local people; it also develops the destination area. The following four factors were used for the purposes of the Overberg study (Francis et al, 2009):

o Firstly, cultural tourism helps the local people to understand and appreciate their own history.

o Secondly, cultural tourism helps locals to demonstrate and affirm their social status. People accept their culture as important and valuable, and it encourages a sense of unity and ownership among the people to whom the culture belongs.

o Thirdly, cultural tourism helps to develop, promote and protect culture because the local people see and understand that other people appreciate their culture.

o Lastly, cultural tourism acts as a means of unification in the pursuit of identity. In this regard, it also enhances and strengthens the identity of members of the cultural group, thus contributing to their happiness and wellbeing.

(Lubbe, 2003:89).

As seen in Figure 1, cuisine is considered to be both a tangible and intangible facet of culture. The tangible aspect refers to the food itself, whereas the intangible aspect (service) refers to a psychological component, which implies that cuisine is an experience for visitors which ends on their departure from the place where they have eaten. Therefore it is important for the service to be of such a high standard that tourists will have a positive and memorable image of the establishment. The Overberg region is famous for its Malay foods, seafood, *boerekos*, Cape-Dutch and fusion foods.

Eco-, agri- and adventure tourism

The Overberg region is host to many eco-, agri- and adventure tourism treasures. According to Heath (2009), the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) 2020 Vision report states that adventure tourism shows significant growth. Furthermore, tourists are becoming more experience orientated, as opposed to being mere passive participants. Therefore, adventure activities offer the right opportunities to satisfy their needs. Travellers engage in healthier lifestyles and are increasingly concerned with and more aware of the threat of global climate change. Therefore, the employment of 'greening practices' to enhance the conservation and survival of global resources is significant (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 57-58). As a result, sustainable forms of tourism have become increasingly important, which has caused ecotourism to become the fastest-growing tourism industry.

The focus of the Overberg study (Francis et al, 2009) was on eco- and adventure tourism, as various 'hard' and 'soft' adventure activities already exist in the region. A focus on ecotourism would be ideal to obviate potential damage by tourism activities. Furthermore, regional tourism should capitalise on the fact that the Cape Flora area is a World Heritage Site. Ecotourism would ensure economic growth and development for the region without harming the natural and cultural resources of the area; ecotourism focuses on the *quality* of the product provided, rather than on *quantity* (ie the number of tourists that visit the area). As an added bonus, agricultural tourism has great potential, since there is an abundance of products in the area.

The profile of tourists has changed over the past few years. Tourists have more money to spend, but less time in which to spend it. The so-called 'new tourists' tend to be experience-seekers, who like to claim 'I've done it' rather than to say 'I've seen it' (Trifflin, 2005). Therefore, the area should direct its marketing efforts towards experience-seekers. The Overberg region should therefore capitalise on its unique attractions, as well as its product and service offerings.

In summary, Overberg should offer enlightening, interactive travel experiences to natural or cultural environments, ensuring the sustainable use of resources and producing economic opportunities for the tourism industry in the region and for the local community (Lubbe, 2003:79).

The study also investigated the potential of ecotourism in the Overberg. As Beeler (2000:1) points out, ecotourism is seen as a responsible form of tourism and involves training, conservation and community involvement. Introducing ecotourism into an area can create great opportunities for the local community

Ecotourists like to experience what an area has to offer and they are even willing to pay to work on ecotourism projects. For this reason, the Overberg area should consider volunteer tourism. The money gained could then be used for conservation and upliftment in the communities. Ecotourism is a way of reducing the negative impact tourism has on both natural and cultural resources. Ecotourism, through education, can contribute to conservation, better visitor understanding about local communities and the environment, social improvement and economic sustainability (Powell and Ham 2008:468-470).

Ecotourism is meant to be a sustainable activity. This is not always the case, however, since tourists frequently deplete environmental resources. Sustainability is essential in order to counteract potential negative impacts on the environment (Koeman, nd). Sustainability can be defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Lubbe, 2003:74).

Sustainability has four main benefits for ecotourism establishments (Powell and Ham 2008:468):

o environmental conservation
o equity
o education
o economic profits.

Eco-and adventure tourists differ from other kind of tourists. The advantage is that they prefer areas that are generally underdeveloped and they are willing to spend more money provided that their money goes to conservation actions. Ecotourism is known to have a generally beneficial effect on regional tourism. This is needed in the Overberg area, since Hermanus is such a tourism draw-card. The other towns need to raise their profile whilst simultaneously keeping the environment in mind with regard to the carrying capacity of the area. This can only enhance sustainable development in the area.

Adventure tourism primarily involves the elements of risk, physical exertion and the need for specialist skills to enhance successful and safe participation in the activities or products on offer (Weaver, 2001: 17). Characteristics of adventure tourism include an uncertain outcome, elements of danger and intellectual, spiritual, physical or emotional risk. The expectation of having to cope with difficult circumstances poses a challenge to experience-seekers. Tourists engage in this form of travel, recreation or leisure in anticipation of a number of outcomes (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 9-27):

o novelty
o stimulation and excitement
o escapism and separation
o exploration and discovery
o absorption and focus
o contrasting emotions.

Adventure tourists, as experience-seekers, travel in the pursuit of self-fulfilment and excitement. They actively participate in a diverse range of activities, travel to 'remote destinations' or engage in 'adrenaline-rush experiences' (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 55), and as such, demand 'unique and enticing holiday experiences' (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 55).

Various types of adventure activities and products are on offer to tourists. The level of independence in adventure tourism is significant, since 'the degree to which participants rely on others to organise the experience for them' differs (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 32). This is not always beneficial for the tourism industry, as it 'reflects the degree to which tourists are reliant on suppliers to organise and manage the experience' (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 32).

The 'hard' and 'soft' adventure activities and products referred to earlier are described in detail in Table 2 below. 'Hard' adventure refers to activities that involve a high level of risk. As a result, 'intense commitment and advanced skills' are required' (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 33, 104). Participants need to be mentally and physically fit, therefore this often means that some level of 'experience and proficiency in the activity prior to the tourism experience' is necessary (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 33, 104). 'Soft' adventure, on the other hand, 'refers to activities with a perceived risk but low level of real risk, requiring minimal commitment and beginning skills; most of these

activities are led by experienced guides' (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003: 33, 104). These activities can be physically demanding, but are often more leisurely.

Table 1: Range of hard and soft adventure activities available in Overberg

'Hard' Adventure Activities	'Soft' Adventure Activities
Kayaking	Whale watching
Shark cage diving	Whale watching flights
Rock climbing and abseiling	Fly fishing
4x4 excursions	Boat cruises and picnics
Sand boarding	Bird-watching
Canoeing	Golf
Scuba diving	Cycling
Waterskiing	Horse riding
Water tubing	Hiking
River rafting	

Source: www.overberg.co.za

Hospitality offerings

Hospitality is the art of satisfying guests' needs. It is concerned with creating a home-from-home atmosphere, and the service provider's main aim should be to exceed the perceptions and expectations of each guest (Lubbe, 2003:114; Francis, 2004). Certain tangible and intangible elements are needed in order to achieve this. Factors like quality, location, range of facilities, ambience, standard of comfort, speed at which service is rendered, hospitability of staff and price all influence the hospitality experience and ultimately impact on customer satisfaction. Some of the largest expenses on a trip are food, drink and accommodation (Ross, 1997:251)

A great deal of research has been done to identify the components responsible for the success of a tourist destination. According to Ratz (2004:11), the success of any tourist destination depends on three major components:

- o the attractions within the destination (such as the southernmost tip of Africa)
- o the destination's accessibility (such as the quality of the roads)
- o the quality of the destination's hospitality industry (the quality of products and services).

A destination's attractions used to be the sole critical factor for its success (Boniface and Cooper, 2005:40). However, as the new generation of tourists places increasing importance on authentic and unique travel experiences, an exclusive focus on attractions will be unsuccessful. Instead, a combination of unique travel experiences and attractions is needed to appeal to the sophisticated 21st Century tourist (Kwiatoski, 2007:11). The hospitality industry plays an increasingly important role in this regard. It is also stated that a unique gastronomic experience within a destination is becoming increasingly important to the success of a tourist destination.

The Overberg Tourism website (www.overberg.co.za) indicates that there are 598 hospitality offerings currently available. The most common offerings are self-catering units and bed and

breakfast establishments. Other types of accommodation such as hotels, guest houses, camping and backpacking facilities are also readily available (see Figure 2). The Overberg caters for young and old, in any price range, making the Overberg an affordable and accessible destination.[4]

Figure 2: Accommodation establishments according to www.Overberg.co.za
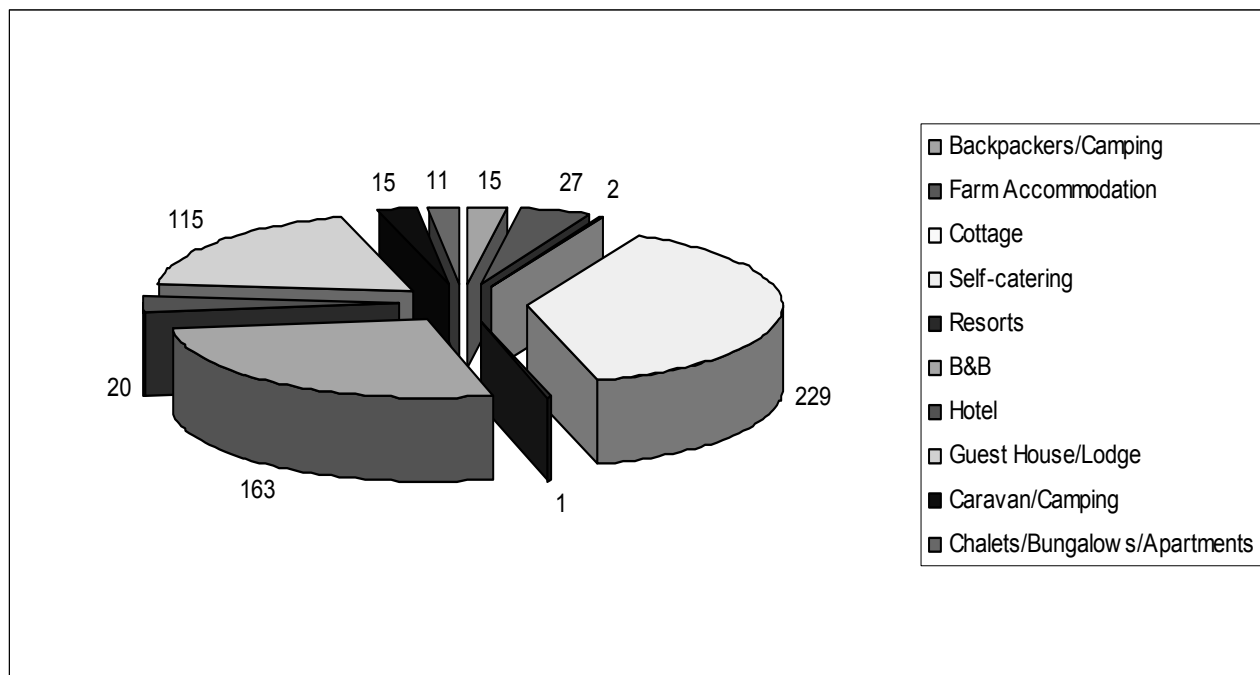
A study conducted in 2007 (*The Western Cape Tourism Barometer*) 2007, in Swellendam and Kleinmond by Cape Town Routes Unlimited identified the following important statistical information:

- o 65.5% of all visitors visiting the Overberg region were foreigners from the UK, Germany and the Netherlands.
- o 34% were domestic visitors mostly from the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.
- o Most of the tourists travelled in groups of two and their average length of stay was one night.
- o The most common travel group size was two people travelling together.
- o 77.6 % of all visitors stayed in the region for at least one night (*Western Cape Tourism Barometer, 2007:30-34*).

The slogan 'overnight in Overberg' was clearly perfect for all hospitality establishments.
Branding and competitive positioning

A destination's branding is vital to its life source and competitive advantage (Cai, 2002:722). Destination branding is about selecting a consistent element mix, which could comprise

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4   According to two other sources, the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA, www.tourismgrading.co.za) and Safari now (www.safarinow.com>Africa>South Africa>Western Cape), the Overberg has 245 and 227 establishments. The discrepancy between these sources is problematic inasmuch as they clearly do not accurately reflect the current state of the industry.

nature or hiking trails or just plain tourism. This is done to give the destination a unique identity and promote a positive image.

With that said, we should also look at the reasons for wanting to brand a destination. Park and Petrick (2006:262-265) state the following reasons:

- o to build a desirable image
- o for differentiation
- o to attract high spenders
- o to manage the destination image
- o for a better livelihood
- o to increase the economic contribution of tourism.

The above definition demonstrates how important destination branding is.

The competitive positioning of a destination can explained as being not only about a location, but about how something is viewed by a customer.

> Positioning is more than just image creation. This important form of market communication helps to distinguish tourism destinations from similar destinations so that customers can choose the one that is the most attractive. Thus, true positioning differentiates a destination from its competitors on attributes that are meaningful to customers and gives it a competitive edge. (Chacko, 1997)

The above statement illustrates that positioning also gives a destination a competitive edge among its competitors, which is beneficial. Competitiveness is explained by Dwyer and Kim (2003:369) as follows:

> ... any destination must ensure that its overall 'appeal', and the tourist experience offered, must be superior to that of the alternative destinations open to potential visitors.

Thus, for a destination to be competitive and successful it should have a certain appeal for the visitor, and stakeholders should be involved. Moreover, the destination should be able to compete with its competitors at the same level or higher.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

It is evident from both the literature study and the observation visit that the Overberg is a very unique tourist destination. Examples of features that attract visitors are:

- o The southernmost tip of Africa is found in L'Agulhas, the actual place where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet. A stone monument is erected to signify its position.
- o Wagenhuiskrans in Arniston, where the Boers hid their ox-wagons to be out of sight of the British military.
- o Between Gansbaai and Arniston more whales are sighted in their natural environment than in Hermanus, which is currently branded as the South African whale capital.
- o The oldest water wheel, the oldest working clock and the slave museum are found in the impoverished area of Elim.
- o An abundance of fauna (including the South African national bird, the blue crane) and flora (including the South African national plant, the protea) are found throughout the Overberg.

o The area is also rich in agricultural products such as wheat, rooibos tea, apples, waterblommetjies and cattle.

o The Overberg is also the area from which the Xoi-San people originated, and their rich cultural heritage is evident here.

o Some of the major attributes of the Overberg are its serene beauty and peaceful atmosphere.

o The Overberg also offers a wide variety of cuisine, such as '*boerekos'*, Cape-Dutch and Cape-Malay style cooking. Seafood and fusion food are also available in abundance.

The growth and sustainability of the destination are hampered by the following:

o Relatively few people arriving at Cape Town International visit the Overberg.

o The destination does not have a strong brand identity and is not adequately marketed.

o Infrastructure is lacking in terms of tarred roads, proper signage, visitor facilities and accommodation.

o The various tourism authorities lack a common vision, exacerbated by the conflict between the African National Congress (ANC)-operated and Democratic Alliance (DA)-operated municipalities.

o A lack of skills and expertise exists in the tourism field. Operators and employees generally lack enthusiasm, passion and drive, and have little product knowledge. The basic skills required to operate a successful tourism business are not evident.

o Poverty and unemployment are rife in the area. Most of the population in areas such as Elim and Kassiebaai live off farming and the ocean. In Elim, 70% of the population is unemployed. Those who are employed work on farms in the vicinity.

o Most of the local children attend farm schools or other small schools in the vicinity. These do not always provide the best possible learning and development opportunities.

o A few tourism development programmes were started in the Overberg, but no proper mentoring and development programmes are in place to assist people engaged in them. The end result is frustration resulting in the closure of many establishments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tourism development in underdeveloped areas is a major concern for the national Department of Tourism and its regional affiliates. The biggest contributing factor to the slow pace of development in skills and expertise is a lack of a common vision between tourism bodies and regional stakeholders. Sharing a common vision is one of the fundamentals of *Ubuntu*. By inference, *Ubuntu* should be actively promoted in the region to overcome the issues explored in this article.

Cape Town Route Unlimited is the destination marketing association for the entire Western Cape, and is therefore in a position to promote the value and application of *Ubuntu* in the tourism context. The philosophy of *Ubuntu*, in terms of caring for and looking after the needs and wellbeing of the local communities in the Overberg could be fostered by developing a local brand in line with the strong 'Mother City' brand of Cape Town. This would expose all the untapped secrets of the Overberg to foreign and local tourists.

A well-structured training and development programme should be put in place by all the tourism authorities in Overberg. These programmes should be THETA accredited, and should involve assessors and mentors from the more successful tourism nodes around Cape Town.

Another important point to consider is the need for true economic empowerment of the local communities. They should be encouraged in a very professional manner to build 'proudly South African entities' that will be sustainable and engender pride for the proprietors.

Local municipalities have a critical role to play in developing job creation programmes to promote infrastructure development and other projects. Quality workmanship should be a major criterion in such development.

The local tourism operators and owners should also develop a common vision for their own products and brands and form alliances to encourage a better distribution of tourists across the Overberg. A classic example of such a working relationship can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Towns and activities available on suggested routes

Eastern Secret eco food route		Western Secret eco food route	
Town	**Activities/Attraction**	**Town**	**Activities/Attraction**
Barrydale	Heritage garden Craft shops Dutch Reformed Church Abseiling Quad bikes Guided hikes Donkey cart rides and farm visits	Grabouw	Apple Museum
Suurbraak	Guided hikes and mountain bike trails Fynbos and birds	Botrivier	Hiking and horse-riding trails Quad biking Fishing Wild horses
Swellendam	Canoeing 4×4 trails Mountain biking Bird watching and fishing Bontebok National Park Boosmansbos Wilderness Area Area	Hermanus	Harbour museum Craft markets Canoes Pedal boats Windsurfing Fernkloof Nature Reserve Blue Crane and whales
Malgas	Wool Wheat Aloe juice Pontoon (only one in SA) Sailing on the Breede River	Stanford	Handmade products Salmans Dam Nature Reserve Hiking
Arniston	Fishing Visiting the caves Hiking and mountain biking Snorkelling Shipwrecks	Pearly Bay	White beaches Dyer Island: Great white shark diving Dolphins Southern Right Whales African Penguin
Napier	The southernmost gold mine Strawberry farms Monument to the 'Ox-wagon Trek'	Cape L'Agulhas	Southernmost tip of Africa Lighthouse African Black Oystercatcher
Elim	Waterwheel	Arniston	Fishing Visiting the caves Hiking and mountain biking Snorkelling Shipwrecks

The Overberg is one of the most serene and peaceful areas in South Africa and much could be done to promote its untapped potential.

In conclusion, the 2009 study conducted on the Overberg provides a useful starting point for further research. Future topics could range from sustainable tourism development to skills development, to the impact of global warming on the area.

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