

**Local community participation in tourism in the case of the Manyeleti Game  
Reserve, Limpopo Province and South Africa**

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### **DECLARATION**

I declare that this is my own original work and that all the sources used are quoted and acknowledged by means of references. This dissertation has never been submitted to any other University, Technikon or College.

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and to welcoming the newly born Pebetsi Rakwena. To Mohlapa, my dear mother, Letoloane and Sekwekwe's family, Selaelo and Soul's family, my aunts Manawa and Mahlodi, thank you for your support during hard times. To the boys, Matome, Molepa, Polelo, Mamolotje and Marege, and the girls, Dikeledi, Matjatji, Pheladi and Selaelo, thank you for understanding my academic struggle. To all my family members, I appreciate your psychological and spiritual motivation. To the late Mmane Jane, thank you very much for your encouragement and trust in me. May your soul rest in peace.

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**E BE KGOTSO.** Psalm 23 and Difela tsa Zion 111.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADMADDE	Administrative Design for Game Management Areas
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resources Management
CBTO	Community-Based Tourism Organization
CEDA	Community Ecotourism Development Association
CPA	Community Property Association
CPPP	Community Public Private Partnership
CTA	Community Tourism Association
DARUDEEC	Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DFED	Department of Finance and Economic Development
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DWAF	Department of Forestry and Water Affairs
INTAC	Integrated Nature-Based Tourism and Conservation Management
KNP	Kruger National Parks Board
KZN	Kwa Zulu-Natal
LIRDPA	Luangwa Integrated Rural Development Project
LTPB	Limpopo Tourism and Parks Board
MNRT	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
NACOBTA	Namibian Community-Based Tourism Organization
NTPB	Northern Tourism Parks Board

PSDI	Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SMME	Small Medium Micro Enterprise
TDP	Tourism Development Programme
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WTO	World Tourism Organization
VAT	Village Tourism Association

**Local community participation in tourism: the case of the Manyeleti Game  
Reserve, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

By

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**ABSTRACT**

Ecotourism in the Manyeleti Game Reserve is intended to be a community-based ecotourism project. The frontline communities are supposed to be actively participating in the current ecotourism operation in this reserve. However, eight years down the line community-based ecotourism practice in the Manyeleti Game Reserve by the African Ivory Route seemingly does not provide any tangible benefits to the frontline communities or to the local communities adjacent to the reserve. These communities' participation in ecotourism operations is also inadequate. The only members of the local communities who are benefiting from such activities in the reserve are its current employees.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism, Concession Company, Department of Finance and Economic Development, Ecotourism, Frontline Communities, Limpopo Tourism and Parks Board, Manyeleti Game Reserve, Mnisi Traditional Authority, The African Ivory Route and Tourism Stakeholders.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The State President, Thabo Mbeki, launched an integrated rural development strategy in South Africa in 2000 as part of a comprehensive campaign against poverty and underdevelopment. Thirteen nodal points were identified in the country as initial targets of the programme that will eventually be rolled out across the length and breadth of the country (Ramahlodi, 2002). The Bohlabela District Municipality in the Limpopo Province is one of these nodal areas and is relatively poor and predominantly rural (DFED, 2002). According to Ramahlodi (2002) rural development and the strengthening of structures that deliver basic and essential services to grassroots communities have constituted the primary focus areas of the Limpopo provincial government since the establishment of a democratic government in 1994.

The Manyeleti Game Reserve (Figure 1.1) falls within the Bohlabela District Municipality constituency. Historically this reserve has not contributed greatly to the provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the former Gazankulu Government, since community development continues to be negligible despite the huge potential of the game reserve (Index and Setplan, 1993). According to samaYende (2002) the reserve owns 1 000 hectares of virgin bush on the border

of the private Sabi Sands Reserve and the Kruger National Park (KNP), with a market value estimated at R20-million, that could be developed as a tourism destination. However, the Limpopo provincial tourism authority argues that the reserve has not been evaluated to ascertain its monetary value (*Sunday times*, 2002).

The executive council of the Limpopo Province decided in 2000 to commercialize the Manyeleti Game Reserve. In spite of being managed on its own, the reserve has physically formed part of the KNP since the fence was removed by the Department of Finance and Economic Development (DFED) in 2000 and will therefore be included in the emerging Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (Magomola, 2004). The DFED perceived that the frontline communities could benefit from the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve if community-based tourism were encouraged (DFED, 2000). The potential benefits arising from ecotourism in this game reserve were viewed by the DFED in the broader regional development context (DFED, 2000).

*The frontline communities* in this study refer to the six villages of Dixie, Gottenburg, Seville, Thondale, Uta and Welverdiend. Their proximity to the reserve directly affects them either to their advantage or disadvantage. Hence the process of their selection as beneficiaries has taken the form of intensive interaction with all relevant stakeholders and DFED (DFED, 2000).

Several provincial game reserves have been earmarked for commercialization, particularly by means of the improvement of the tourism infrastructure. The

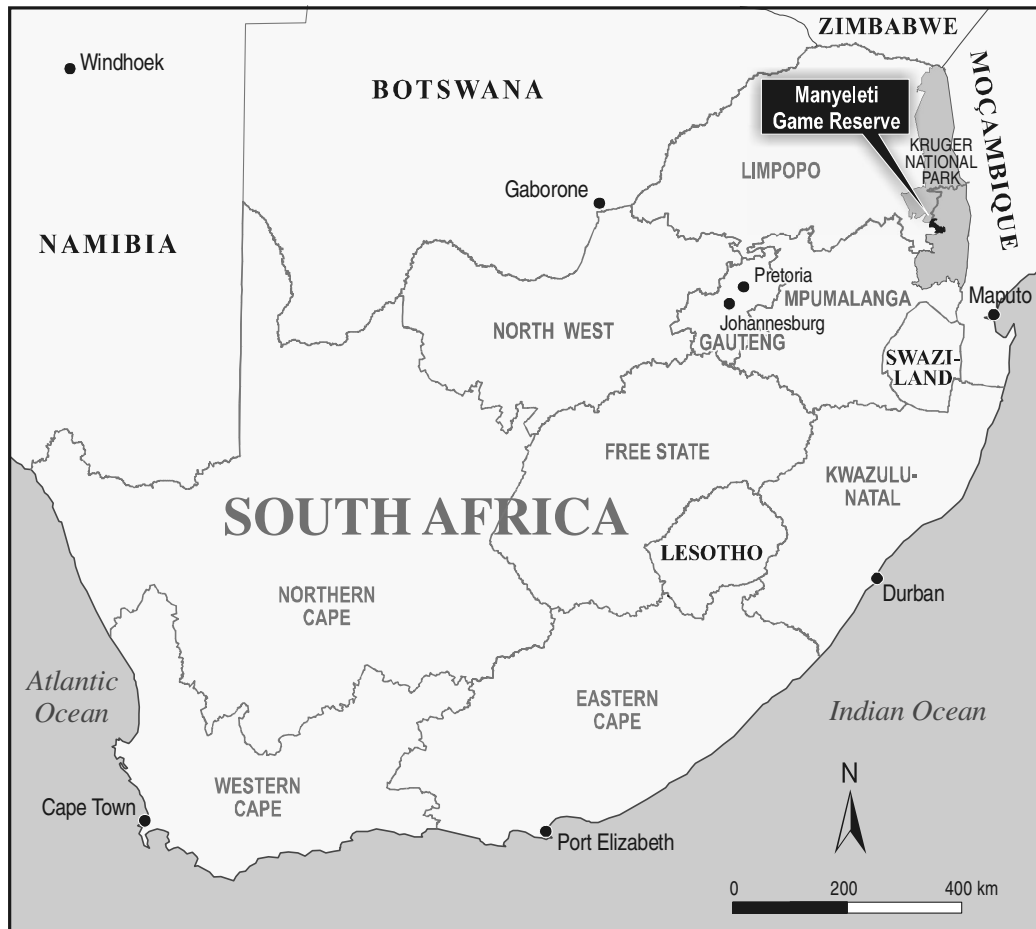
commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve is linked with the Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) project and the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative (DFED, 2000). This decision was guided by the fact that the reserve is under-utilized economically, environmentally and socially.

The philosophy of outsourcing and commercializing tourism operations and activities in protected areas enables conservationists to focus on the core business of biodiversity (Haines, 1996a & 1996b). However, the dilemma of attaining financial viability has been associated with protected areas since their inception all over the world (James, 1999). This inability to mobilize sufficient financial resources in protected areas worldwide has had a negative impact on conservation agencies, which are then unable to deliver adequately on their conservation mandate (Littlejon, 1996).

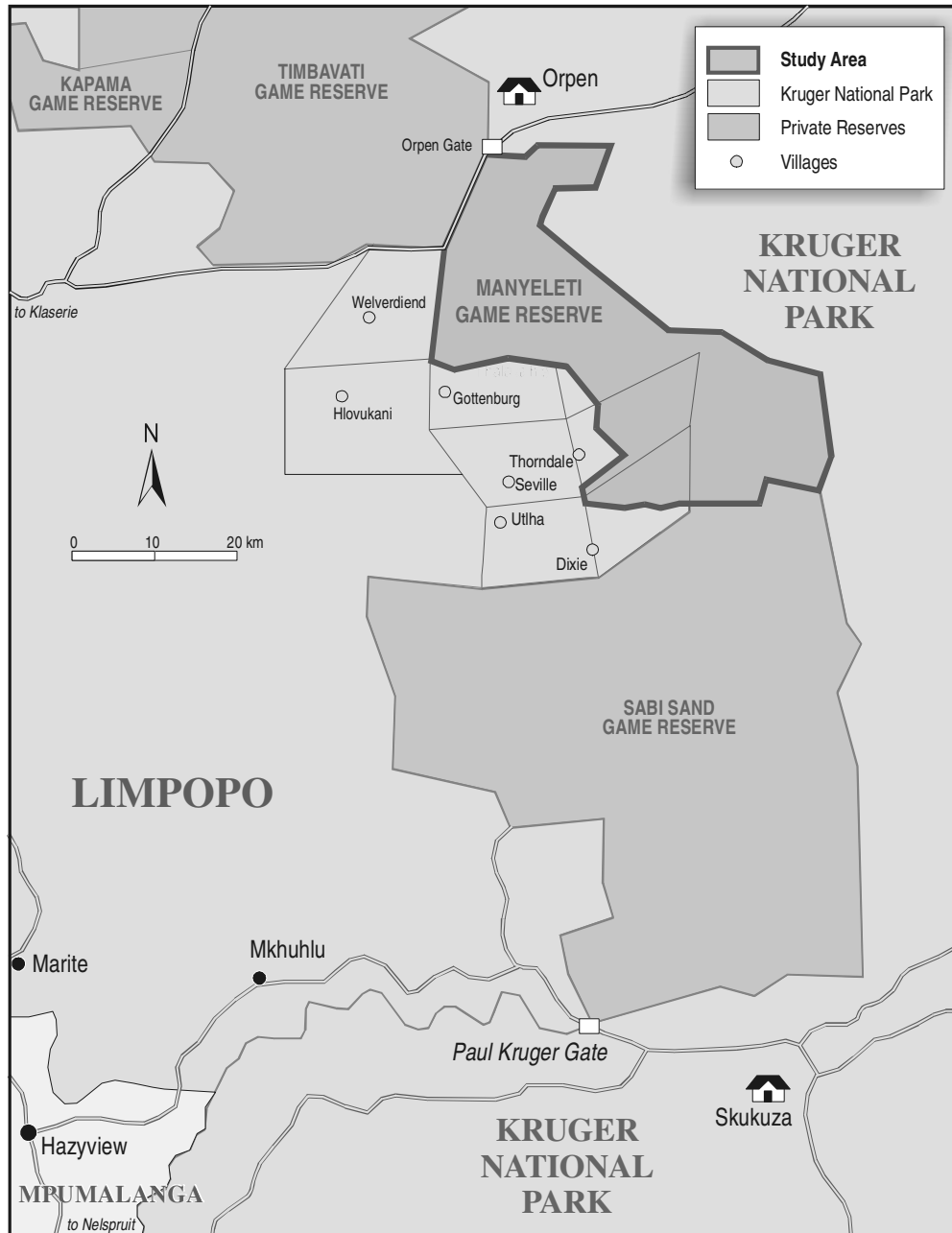
According to Western and Wright (1994:6); "Internationally, there is a shift from the classical approach whereby indigenous people were forcefully removed from their indigenous homes and stripped of their possessions and human dignity towards participatory approaches that integrate ecological concern with the needs of communities living within the neighbourhood of protected areas". Participatory approaches aim at involving local people not only in sharing the financial gain of projects but also in the total process of natural resource management.

This movement from the classical conservation approach to the modern approach brings the concept of the commercialization of protected areas into the picture. Mabunda (2004) observes that this type of development aims to ensure that

previously neglected people are able to participate in and benefit from conservation and tourism by means of the commercialization of the protected areas. Mabunda (2004) defines *neglected people* as people who were forcefully removed from their original land by the former South Africa government.



**FIGURE 1.1 Location of the Manyeleti Game Reserve** [Map by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, Geoinformatics and Meteorology, University of Pretoria].



**FIGURE 1.2** Location of the frontline communities [Map by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, Geoinformatics and Meteorology, University of Pretoria].

Worldwide, many protected areas are under enormous pressure because they lack integrated management plans that can be used to determine management effectiveness (Mabunda, 2004). *Management effectiveness* denotes the ability of a protected area to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to a range of stakeholders (Hocking & Phillips, 2003). There is a need for management plans that can manage, balance and harmonize conservation, tourism and financial resources and bring communities on board for them to participate in conservation and tourism activities (Mabunda, 2004).

Els and Bothma (2004:8) argue that "the largest section of the wildlife managers and academics involved in conservation activities in South Africa have to, albeit with reluctance, make a shift in the manner in which they think about the management of wildlife and conservation principles". For example, the concept of community-based tourism fits within the approach known as community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and within the ecotourism development paradigm. Both concepts encourage local community participation and utilization of natural renewable resources in a sustainable way in order to promote both nature conservation and tourism.

One way of dealing with rural communities is to know and understand their strategies of making livelihoods. One should also acknowledge that these people have the right to protect their lives, their crops and their livestock from wild animals. According to Els (2002) hunting, poaching and the protection granted to poachers by villagers should be understood in the same light as the practices of hunting and culling by tourists and game farm owners that take place in private

game reserves. Furthermore, certain traditional practices in communal areas, such as burning field vegetation and pastures as a way of controlling rodents and snakes, need to be understood rather than condemned (Els, 2002).

The socio-economic dynamics of the frontline communities and the way in which they perceive community-based tourism initiatives in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and surrounding area provide a clear indication of how tourism is operating in the study area. The expression *Limpopo tourism stakeholders* here refers to the organizations, individuals and tourism sectors (DFED, LTPB, concession companies, consultants and the African Ivory Route) that are operating directly and indirectly in this reserve.

## 1.2 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

For the purpose of this study definitions are used to ensure that the meanings of the terms used in the study are fully understood. The following important terms are defined:

### 1.2.1 Tourism

According to Lubbe *et al.* (undated: 1) and Hohnholz (1994), tourism is described by various authors as being an activity, as comprising interrelated systems, and as an industry. Tourism as an *activity* includes all temporary travel, for whatever purpose, which results in one or more nights being spent away from places of work and home (DEAT, 1996). Tourism as *a number of interrelated systems*

"includes tourists and the associated services that are provided and utilised (facilities, attractions, transportation and accommodation) to aid in their movement" (Fannel, 1999:4). Tourism as an *industry* "is described as a multifaceted environment-dependent development industry utilising the natural and built environment for its particular economic value" (Hattingh, 1994b: 3).

### **1.2.2 Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism is defined as any development that meets the needs of the present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (WTO, 1998).

### **1.2.3 Rural Tourism**

Rural tourism comprises the multi-faceted activity that takes place in an environment outside urban areas. It is an industrial sector characterized by small-scale and scattered tourism businesses, set in areas where agricultural pursuits and forestry predominate in land use. The range of tourism products includes rural attractions, rural adventure and nature-based tours, country towns, rural resorts, farm stays and other styles of rural village accommodation, cultural festivals and events, arts and heritage, and agricultural education (Butler *et al.*, 1998, cited in Mafunzwaini, 2003). Rural tourism brings together natural and cultural tourism

products, but differs from nature-based tourism in the sense that it includes the cultural or traditional heritage, as well as the local people themselves, as part of tourism's focus (Mafunzwaini, 2003).

#### **1.2.4 Nature-based Tourism**

Nature-based tourism by definition describes a niche within ecotourism, and caters specifically for tourists who are searching for an encounter with wildlife within some form of protected area. It can and does also contain certain elements of ecotourism and rural tourism such as local community involvement. According to Valentine (1993a: 108), nature-based tourism encompasses "tourism primarily concerned with the direct enjoyment of some phenomenon of nature".

#### **1.2.5 Ecotourism**

Ecotourism denotes an enlightening, participatory travel experience, in environments both natural and cultural, that ensures the sustainable use, at an appropriate level, of environmental resources and that, while producing viable economic opportunities for the tourism industry and host communities, makes use of resources through conservation and is beneficial to all role players (Hattingh, 1996).

### **1.2.6 Eco-cultural Tourism**

Eco-cultural tourism preserves endangered cultural resources. It offers a tangible reason to preserve a traditional way of life, including how people eat and dress, and what they believe. It allows communities to follow their traditional way of existence without changing their location or adapting to foreign ways of working and living (Anon, 2003).

### **1.2.7 Local Community Participation**

For the purpose of this study local community participation embraces "giving the local people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities, empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage their resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives" (Sproule, 2000).

### **1.2.8 Community-based Tourism**

The terms community-based tourism and community-based ecotourism are used interchangeably in this study. The North West Parks Board (NTPB) definition is employed. It defines community-based tourism as the ownership of tourism assets and enterprises, either wholly or in part, by the local community. Successful community-based tourism requires that communities are capacitated or empowered to participate meaningfully in the mainstream (formal) tourism economy (NWTPB 2003).

The community-based tourism concept offers great potential for improving the lives of local communities and their opportunities for survival without eroding the environmental base on which they depend (NWTPB 2003). Economic data alone do not adequately reflect the benefits of the productive utilization of natural resources by local communities (Hall, 2000). Moreover, a solely economic approach does not record the environmental and social costs that may be associated with economic production in the ecotourism destination (Pearce, 1989).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Community-based tourism is becoming increasingly popular in developmental circles worldwide as a means of contributing towards rural development and poverty alleviation. In South Africa community-based tourism projects are fully supported and funded by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) through poverty alleviation grants, as part of a broader government project to assist South Africa's poor communities. According to DEAT (1996) many communities and previously neglected groups, particularly those in rural areas that have not actively participated in the tourism industry, possess significant tourism resources.

The major problem in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and surroundings is the lack of an integrated tourism plan and tourism policy statement that could guide the implementation of community-based tourism. In the literature on tourism, researchers have introduced and emphasized the importance of community-based

ecotourism in this area (African Ivory Route, 1998; 1999; 2000; the DFED, 2000; Mahony & Van Zyl, 2001 and 2002). Most of these studies have focused on how community-based tourism can improve the livelihood of the local communities.

To make this target a reality in the area being studied the frontline communities were selected by the Limpopo provincial government to benefit immediately from the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve. The communities adjacent to the reserve were also perceived by the DFED to be the sole beneficiaries of the African Ivory Route tourism projects and development initiatives in the Manyeleti Game Reserve. However, no empirical studies have been undertaken to develop a strategic integrated framework capable of identifying and integrating the local communities' participation and the nature of the benefits to be derived from tourism activities. There is also a lack of scientific knowledge regarding the socio-economic and historical background of the frontline communities. The following research questions are addressed in this study:

- What are the frontline communities' and the Limpopo tourism stakeholders' perceptions of and attitudes towards community-based tourism in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, including those of the communities themselves?
- Do the frontline communities participate in and benefit from tourism activities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve?
- Do the frontline communities participate in community-based tourism activities?
- What are the frontline communities' and the Limpopo tourism stakeholders' perceptions regarding ecotourism in terms of it solving community problems?

## **1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of this study is to assess the degree to which local communities are participating in tourism activities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and to determine whether these communities derive any benefit from the reserve. To accomplish this aim it was decided to make the following research objectives the focus of this study:

- 1 To assess the way in which the current tourism operations in this reserve are implemented.
- 2 To establish whether the frontline communities participate in the management of the existing tourism activities in the said reserve.
- 3 To establish whether the frontline communities see any potential for community-based tourism within their villages.
- 4 To identify the needs, aspirations and problems that the frontline communities are meeting through community-based tourism.
- 5 To suggest how community-based tourism could best contribute towards solving the poverty issues in the frontline communities.

## **1.5 THE STUDY OUTLINE**

This chapter contains the introduction to and theoretical background of the study. Community-based tourism development paradigms are described and terms defined; the research problem statement, aim and objectives are outlined,

including an analysis of the research gap. Research target groups and data collection methods are also described.

Chapter Two offers a perspective on community-based tourism in sub-Saharan Africa. The rationale of the concept of such tourism, its sustainability, conceptual constraints and problems as well as regional governments' perspectives on community-based tourism are discussed.

Chapter Three explores the ecotourism situation in the Manyeleti Game Reserve. The researcher describes the historical background of the area and examines the relationship between conservation and ecotourism by looking at commercialization and the property relation and land tenure system in this area. The chapter further evaluates tourism enterprises in the area, namely Manyeleti main camp, the African Ivory Route and the Honey Guide. In Chapter Four a short description of the location and the perceptions of the frontline community regarding ecotourism development projects in the Manyeleti Game Reserve are provided.

The research methods are discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six comprises the study results. Chapter Seven summarizes the dissertation and sets out its conclusion, recommendations and study limitations, as well as offering some directives for future study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the local community's participation in ecotourism development and planning, as well as the social and cultural impact of ecotourism on the local communities. The community-based tourism development paradigm and concept, including the general constraints and problems of such tourism in sub-Saharan Africa, are discussed. The emphasis is on local community participation and benefits, possible guidelines for and challenges to this type of tourism in sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Relevant conceptual constraints and challenges pinpointed in this chapter stem from the survey of community-based tourism concepts, such as the rationale for this kind of tourism. The sustainability of such tourism is considered and a situation analysis is provided in the context of a literature review. A summary of key issues and basic concepts is presented in the final section of this chapter.

#### **2.2 COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM**

Since 1980 the philosophy arguing for the dependence of biodiversity conservation on direct interaction with local communities by linking sustainable utilization to sustainable development has become an important part of wildlife management policy all over the world. In South Africa, however, the

developmental orientation implicit in the meaning and content of community participation in wildlife management still seems not to be well understood. Consequently, the development of communal rural communities has for the most part been viewed as an add-on rather than an integral value in the broad spectrum of conservation activities being pursued in South Africa today (Els and Bothma, 2000).

In addition, over the past few years the general conception has developed in South Africa that tourism, especially ecotourism, holds the key to unlocking the development potential of poor communities living in the communal rural areas of South Africa, particularly the former homelands (Els, 2004). Ecotourism opportunities are usually linked to nature-based tourism offered in communal areas bordering on conservation areas. Recently, ecotourism linked to nature-based tourism has also been understood to include cultural tourism (Fowkes & Johnson, 2001).

The linkage of these three tourism-related concepts, namely cultural tourism, ecotourism and nature-based tourism, has culminated in a concept termed community-based tourism (as defined in 1.3), which had its origin in Europe (especially Greece, Italy and England). In these countries, tourism in the rural areas is managed and driven to a large extent by the local people themselves through the practice of their cultural activities (see McIntoch *et al.*; 1986; Fridgen, 1991; Boniface, 1995).

According to Hugo (2004) development and conservation have for many decades been seen as opposing each other. Normally, rural community development projects were seen as either development projects or conservation projects. The future of wildlife management in southern Africa undoubtedly depends on the successful integration of the everyday needs of rural communities with the principles of conservation-based development through sustainable use (Els, 2002). It needs to be understood that hunters or poachers, for example, do not actively campaign to get rid of wildlife but rather hunt for household consumption.

Positively speaking, in Limpopo Province the Makuleke community situated next to the KNP is enjoying the benefits of the CPPP created by the community-based tourism project in the KNP in terms of the sustainable land restitution process and the Communal Property Association (CPA) that has been established. This community is characterized by a high degree of internal social cohesion and its members have effectively combined their traditional structures with the new civic bodies. The CPA fulfils the important roles of training local people and marketing their village as a tourism destination, as well as providing access to capital for joint venture development with private sector partners (CPPP, 2000).

However, Mafunzwaini (2003:6) argues that “tourism in South Africa has a poor history of involving the local communities and previously neglected groups in tourist related activities.” Smit (1990) noted that many ecotourism initiatives operate in rural areas but that few of the local communities form a meaningful part of the entrepreneurial base. In the former Northern Province and the current Limpopo Province, community-based tourism activities are perceived not to have

benefited the people for whom these projects were intended. The Limpopo Province therefore lacks a coherent, comprehensive, integrated and co-ordinated strategy for rural tourism development (Mafunzwaini, 2003).

### **2.3 LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ECOTOURISM**

Existing models of community participation, such as Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, although adequate to the task of analysis in developed countries, provide misleading results within a development context (Marisa & Choguill, 1996). Samuel (1986) identified several objectives of the community participation process in its broadest sense, and indicated that community participation may be thought of as an instrument of empowerment. According to his view, development should lead to an equitable sharing of power and a higher level of political awareness and strength amongst peoples, in particular among the weaker groups.

As mentioned above, the terms community "involvement" and "participation" are used interchangeably in this study, referring to the involvement or participation of local communities in the formal decision-making process that constitutes the formulation and implementation of the projects and programmes affecting them. Marisa & Ghoguill (1996) argued that community participation must not be seen as a means to enable people to influence decisions in the political arena about the issues that affect them, but as a means to fostering mutual-help initiatives. Some researchers have suggested that the term "community-based ecotourism ventures" should be used to distinguish those initiatives that are environmentally sensitive, but should also aim to ensure that members of local communities exercise a high

degree of control over the activities taking place, and that a significant proportion of the benefits accrue to them (Liu, 1994; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). However Scheyvens (1999) believes that a community-based approach to ecotourism should recognize the need to promote both the quality of life of people and the conservation of resources.

It is now recognized in parts of Africa that local people should be compensated for the loss of access to resources that they suffer when wildlife sanctuaries and parks are created (Scheyvens, 1999). However, local community participation and benefits from community-based tourism were not addressed in this study. According to Sindiga (1995) the Narok Country Council, which has jurisdiction over the Masai Mara Park, puts money into a trust fund that is used to finance schools, cattle dips and health services to benefit entire communities. In New Zealand, Maori communities are using ecotourism as a means of sustaining their livelihood by utilizing the physical resources at their disposal in a way that can provide employment options. The Ngai Tahu, for example, has trained local communities to deliver information so as to complement tourist activities such as the highly successful Whale Watch Venture.

Widespread discussion of development and ecotourism rhetoric has led to much support for community-based tourism ventures. However, Woodward (1997:166) notes that, “even the most enlightened South African ecotourism operators involve local communities primarily in terms of their public relations value. There is little commitment to support the rights of rural communal people to benefit from their traditional land and wildlife”. According to Poon (1996) involving local people is

undoubtedly one of the missing ingredients undermining the success of many tourist destinations.

Furthermore, community-based tourism theory emphasizes that local community participation ranges from inclusion in the planning and development stage of a venture to the ownership and operation of the business. In addition, members of the local community could sit on advisory boards and tourism planning committees, and could participate directly in the management of a project, depending on its size (Pinnock, 2000). The local community tends to evaluate the level of success of an ecotourism venture according to its level of involvement. *Passive involvement* includes menial jobs and handouts (the extreme case), moving across a continuum towards a more successful and *active involvement*, which represents a level resulting in equitable partnership, planning and participation (Pinnock, 2000).

According to Zeppel (1997) there are a number of advantages to be gained by consulting with a host community. For example, tour operators are able to gain access to local villages, while local people receive an income and the elders within the community are spreading the knowledge of their culture. In this way, the tourists consume the local community's culture, whereas the local people are improving the quality of their lives and enhancing their self-esteem by maintaining their social and religious values (Zeppel, 1997).

The local community's participation in a project should form an integral part of ecotourism development and planning. In this regard, Sproule (2000) has asked the following questions:

- Who are the people participating in these ventures?
- What is their division of work?
- What are the contributions of men, women, rich and poor?
- Who are the people involved in the decision-making?
- How would the elected group of people be represented?
- The method of selection of the representatives?
- The prices of goods sold?
- Who will collect the money?
- The distribution of profits?

There is a need to determine which people from the local community should participate and how much time the local people are prepared to spend on a project (Mametja, 2001). For example, in some communities the indigenous people will not allow their women to take part in such activities for cultural purposes. It is therefore important to work in partnership with other organizations, because they may have experience of other similar projects, which could help to avoid stumbling blocks encountered previously (Mametja, 2001). With the aid of such organizations, the local community can set up effective policies, management strategies and development strategies.

## 2.4 BENEFITS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES FROM ECOTOURISM

Alternative ecotourism initiatives are needed to empower local people in order to maximize their benefits and exercise some control over ecotourism in their region (Akama, 1996). Local communities need to be empowered to decide what forms of tourism facilities and wildlife conservation programmes they would like to have developed in their respective communities, and to choose how tourism costs and benefits are to be shared among different stakeholders (Akama, 1996:573).

Ecotourism can bring substantial benefits to local communities only if it is carefully planned, developed and managed (Mametja, 2001). Some important potential benefits that local communities could consider are those identified by the World Tourism Organization, as follows:

- the generation of new jobs for and by the local community,
- the empowerment of young people, women and local ethnic minority groups,
- the establishment of small, medium and micro local tourism enterprises, and
- the provision of new markets for local products such as agriculture, arts and handicrafts (WTO, 1998).

According to the WTO (1998) an increased social and cultural awareness (amongst both hosts and tourists) should be viewed as comprising part of the social and environmental benefits to be derived from such projects. From the host community's perspective, ecotourists may be seen as being an adaptable clientèle that conveys a favourable impression, especially given their willingness to purchase local products and services (WTO, 1998).

As indicated by Woodward (1997), ecotourism rhetoric suggests that there is much support for community-based ecotourism ventures, yet it is difficult to find a successful case of this practice in South Africa. According to Poon (1996:83) "there is a belief that responsibilities in tourism lie with government. Many private operators give little thought to the relationship they should be building with their neighbours. Yet, they expect their guests to be safe, with everyone smiling at them". Furthermore, Poon (1996:83) has indicated that, "much of the effort of tourist authorities goes into awareness 'smile training'".

Previous discussions have illustrated that active local community participation in the management of ecotourism could provide the local community with opportunities that make it possible for them to conserve their natural environment and resources. In return for their participation, certain benefits are obtained. It should become clear that the benefits under discussion are those that can be linked to the six-step plan outlined below:

#### ***2.4.1 Maintenance of biologically diverse resources***

According to Koch (1997), the local communities could use the revenue generated by ecotourism to maintain biological diversity in the natural environment. The income could be used to conserve and protect nature reserves, historic towns, battlefields, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, river gorges, beaches and ocean reefs (Addison, 2000). In maintaining these environments the natural resources needed by communities to survive would remain intact.

#### ***2.4.2 Economic benefits to the local community***

Ecotourism may generate considerable revenue. Although some of this revenue could be used for the maintenance of biological diversity, the rest of it could be ploughed back into the community that is living in or around the natural or protected area (Koch, 1997). Economic benefits do not only come in the form of revenue though; the existence of an ecotourism destination could also lead to increased employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that generate much-needed hard currency (Furze *et al.*, 1997).

#### ***2.4.3 Participation in the management of natural resources***

Ecotourism should encourage local communities to participate in its projects for the purpose of sustainable development (Kock, 1997). Given the chance, these communities would be able to manage their natural resources better because they would take a longer view of management than that of outside commercial interests that come and go (IUCN, UNEP & WWF, 1991).

#### ***2.4.4 Empowerment of the community***

Through ecotourism, communities are given a chance to come into contact with various external institutions. In order to help communities become active partners in the management of ecotourism destinations, external institutions should provide the local people with opportunities to participate effectively in development

activities and decision-making processes. This could lead to the empowerment of the people to such an extent that they would be able to mobilize their own capacities, manage resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives (Brandon, 1993).

Ecotourism could therefore indirectly provide the appropriate institutions and skills to empower local communities (Koch, 1997). Friedman (1992) utilized four levels of empowerment in his framework, namely psychological, social, political and economic empowerment. Friedman's framework could be applied in the contexts of both western and developing countries but, because it takes as its central concern the concept of empowerment, it is perhaps particularly pertinent when examining the extent to which indigenous people, or other disadvantaged groups, are benefiting from ecotourism (Scheyvens 1999).

#### ***2.4.5 Appreciation and understanding of local cultures***

One of the best known benefits of ecotourism is the fact that it often results in building an appreciation for the culture of local communities among outsiders (Koch, 1997). This enhancement of appreciation often encourages local communities to develop their cultural assets, such as customs, handicrafts, architecture, food, theatre and dance (Addison, 2000). Ecotourism also leads to an appreciation of local knowledge (Koch, 1997) and a respect for it, because the local people can often translate ancient customs for Westerners who have long forgotten them, and their cultures are treasure-houses of earth wisdom for those willing to listen (Pinnock, 2000).

#### ***2.4.6 Creating awareness of conservation***

Communities that have been exposed to the benefits of ecotourism, such as the people involved in the CAMPFIRE projects, are becoming increasingly aware of the need for environmental protection and sustainable development of natural resources. They have learned to accept techniques imported by scientists and specialists that will help them in their attempts at conservation (Koch, 1997). Thus, by developing an awareness of conservation, local communities are able to experience all the benefits discussed thus far. Unfortunately, despite the fact that ecotourism can be beneficial to local communities, the opposite is also true. Ecotourism may also have a negative impact on them.

### **2.5 RATIONALE OF THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

The level of community involvement in tourism development varies with regard to the community's capacity and the level of information available to them, individual capacity, opportunity, education, training and location (Spenceley, 2001). An analysis of the differences between traditional community economic development and community tourism development clearly shows that tourism continues to be driven by government rather than community interests (Joppe, 1996). McLaren believes that this happens regularly in countries with a record of human rights abuses, where governments displace local people and sometimes even enslave them as workers to build hotels and other tourism sites. He further

argues that, "In most cases government and tourism officials prevent locals from having contact with tourists" (McLaren, 2003:11).

The rural people are often forced to stay away from tourists and have no say in decision-making regarding the frequency, numbers and types of tourists who enter their communities and the kinds of tourism that are promoted in the communal areas (Wearing & Neil, 1999). McLaren (2003) asserts that the poorest and most underrepresented and marginalized people are simply fighting for their right to have a place to live. Throughout the world indigenous people in tourist destinations and local communities are likewise fighting for their own land rights.

According to Clement *et al.* (1993) a partnership must therefore be struck to ensure that a higher-quality product is delivered, based on the notion that tourism experiences rely on all aspects of the community. This link should depend on the positive benefits of the partnership being evident to both the local and the non-local public. Hausler and Strasdas (2002) contend that the local people must enjoy substantial *control* over the tourism projects in their community.

Internationally, ecotourism is expected to maximize the benefits of poor and semi-skilled people in the rural areas through active involvement and participation in tourism development and planning as regards the destination. This is critical and not easy to achieve, because very high levels of poverty and hardship occur in most rural communal areas in sub-Saharan Africa. In order for local communities to gain optimum benefits from tourism, it is essential for planners and developers to make a proper analysis of the economic, socio-cultural, political and

environmental impacts of such development and also to understand their impact on the development of tourism (Asata, 1998).

According to Hausler and Strasdas (2002) the most vocal criticism of tourism in many rural communities often stems from those who have moved into the community, including people who have purchased second homes in the region, those who have retired to the destination and immigrant workers. The current situation in Southern Africa is that the lack of basic maintenance of existing resources and infrastructure is exerting a negative impact on community-based tourism in the rural areas (Hausler and Strasdas, 2002). High costs and the lack of tourism capacity and skills to manage community-based tourism destinations properly have also been emphasized as weak points. There is a lack of information on how tourism could directly benefit poor rural people in order to shift away from benefiting only the industry or its contribution to macroeconomic indicators.

The lack of sensible solutions is negatively influencing not only the future of these communities, but also that of the neighbouring game ranches and conservation areas (Els, 2000). In addition, Van Rooyen (2003) notes that such a situation may increase the negative effect of the tourism industry on a destination and may decrease the quality of the natural environment.

The current challenge facing the government and donors towards tourism development in southern Africa is that of responding to changes with broader developmental thinking by creating and implementing strategies to enhance the positive impact of community-based tourism on the poor people (COTASA

NEWS, 2003). Therefore, a need exists for the evaluation and monitoring as well as the implementation of community-based tourism development plans in order to determine to what extent the local communities actually participate in an apparently community-based tourism project. This could be determined by looking at the triple bottom line (social, environmental and economic benefits), as encouraged by the Responsible Tourism Guidelines (DEAT, 2003).

## **2.6 THE SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

The sustainability of natural and cultural resources depends on all the sectors involved directly and indirectly in the tourism industry working together towards common goals (Sharpley, 2000). Sustainable development and sustainability are important concepts, and their interpretation and operation have been fiercely debated in policy and planning decisions throughout the world. According to Hall (2000:4) "sustainable development and sustainability are not just abstracts of an academic idea, they are concepts, which trickle down and affect the day to day lives of everyone on the planet even if people never realise it".

One of the most widely accepted principles of sustainable tourism is the idea that tourism is only sustainable if the local community is involved in tourism planning and management (Hall, 2000; Harper, 1997; Swarbrooke, 2002; WTO, 1998). The terms "community-based tourism" and "sustainable tourism" are defined in paragraph 1.3. Other important factors must also be present if development is to meet the conditions of sustainability. Major political, economic, social and

environmental issues need be taken into account. This requires new ways of thinking about the nature and purpose of development.

According to Sharpley (2000) the community-based tourism and sustainable tourism sectors are meant to preserve community, cultural, environmental and industrial resources by involving the local community in planning and managing these resources. On a local level, the community groups that may be interested in participating in community-based ecotourism ventures in the rural areas would comprise tribal authorities, community development forums, youth and women's groups, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, conservation groups and recreational clubs (Boo, 1993). By including these groups the authorities that are in most frequent contact with the rural people will foster a broader view of development and the nature of the environment than has hitherto been operative in Western society.

The best approach to encouraging sustainable development is to identify local opinions and the senior leaders in the community, understand them, listen to them and work with them, so that the change process is driven and influenced by the local people rather than imposed from outside (Harper, 1997). According to Hausler and Strasdas (2002) if communities want to see tourism efforts that will have tangible benefits for them, they should realise that it is in their best interests to make community-based tourism a personal priority.

The general logic is that in order for this kind of tourism to work, the indigenous people must enjoy ownership of community-based projects. According to Harper

(1997) the indigenous people are (in most cases) the ultimate protectors of the natural heritage since they have close historical, cultural and spiritual ties with the land, just as their ancestors did before them.

## **2.7 CONCEPTUAL CONSTRAINTS AND PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

Studies of ecotourism usually view community-based tourism as a potential tool for alleviating rural poverty (Ashley *et al.*, 2000). The success of such tourism is largely dependent on the protection of the cultural and natural resources that drive tourism and on the ability to maximize the income retained locally (Smit, 1990). According to Akunaay *et al.* (2003:3) "the objectives of community-based tourism would be achieved through community-based tourism projects that consist of tourism activities carried out on community land in partnership with local people". The advantage of community-based tourism as a poverty reduction effort is its potential to channel investment directly to the rural communities where poverty is concentrated (URT, 2002b).

Community-based tourism research shows that the lack of specialists in this field puts such tourism at a disadvantage if it is to develop and grow in a sustainable way (Ashley *et al.*, 2000; Gujadhur, 2002; Smit, 1990). An inadequate infrastructure is viewed as the biggest constraint on the growth of tourism in the developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. A second difficulty of community-based tourism is the inadequate funds available (Gujadhur, 2002) for the specific financial needs of the local tourism sector.

The challenge that the sub-Saharan African countries are facing is actually that of generating enough income to sustain community-based tourism projects. Most of these countries are drafting policies and regulations that are very difficult to implement (Gujadhur, 2002). For example, in Tanzania the government is increasing regulations rather than empowering communities, which is more likely to undermine community-based tourism activities and limit rural economic opportunities (Akunaay *et al.*, 2003:10). In South Africa tourism policies and regulations have shown that the government has put much emphasis on community involvement in tourism, but without developing a proper evaluation and monitoring strategy (DEAT, 1996, 2003).

Lack of an understanding of tourism amongst the local communities is another restraining factor. This makes for a difficult situation, since such communities are often very close-knit and complex (Sproule, 2000). Williams and Shaw (1991) highlight two important elements in this regard. *Firstly*, the question of whether or not the tourist development is integrated into an existing local settlement and *secondly* whether or not the tourist industry is able to utilize the local community's resources. These elements influence the growth of the local economy and of tourism and also the impact of tourism on regional labour markets, including daily movements (from surrounding villages and cities), seasonal migration and permanent immigration, since the region where tourism is taking place often attracts labour from less developed rural regions (Williams and Shaw, 1991).

International visitors travelling in sub-Saharan African countries demand certain health and hygiene standards (McLaren, 2003). Besides being the home of some endemic diseases, sub-Saharan African areas have to contend with the spread of the HIV/AIDS and malaria infections, which worsens the situation. International tourists are often concerned about the infections and illnesses they might come into contact with while on vacation in such countries (McLaren, 2003). For example, China, Kenya and Thailand as well as some African countries suffered a drop in tourist numbers with the rise of HIV/AIDS, SARS and malaria in 2002 (McLaren, 2003).

A common problem in sub-Saharan Africa is a lack of capacity in tourism business management, which results in inadequate and unsustainable ecotourism or community-based tourism practices. Project planners must find out who is prepared to participate in the project and how much time the local people will be prepared to spend on a particular project. Swarbrooke (2002:126) indicates that governments should be more pro-active in deciding:

- which messages about the area should be included in destination brochures,
- which heritage themes will be developed in new destinations, and
- what changes would be acceptable to the community.

Most African destinations lack the research capability to find out what attracts potential tourists, as well as effective tourism promotion strategies (Gerosa, 2002). Apart from this, the marketing and promotion of community-based tourism does not form a major part of national policies and the planning of tourism activities in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Taylor (1995) it is important to set

up a good communication system that can attempt to satisfy everyone's information requirements and deal with any other tourism-related problems that may crop up.

Therefore, the management and promotional practices of tourism need to be reviewed and new ones adopted. A question that needs to be addressed is the mechanism whereby local people benefit or receive income from tourism, particularly the community elders who spread the knowledge of their culture within the destination. Moreover, the social dimension, religious beliefs, norms and values to be maintained should be taken into account.

## **2.8 THE SADC PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

A number of community-based tourism studies in the Southern African Developing Countries (SADC), such as Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, view tourism as an important tool for constructing an integrated rural development strategy. In these countries community-based tourism and cultural heritage tourism have been identified as possible avenues for diversification and community development (Rozemeijer *et al.*, 2000). Such countries however tend to approach the concept as a pro-poor strategy for poverty alleviation rather than as an ecotourism development tool (Gerosa, 2003).

### **2.8.1 Community-based tourism case studies**

Social impact studies usually involve an analysis of how the tourism industry has affected local people and their lifestyles, whereas ecological impact studies emphasize how the industry has transformed the biophysical nature of local and regional landscapes (Smith, 1990). Such studies seem to be in contrast to community-based tourism research, which in most cases tends only to concentrate on the income-generating power of the tourism industry within the community, regionally or in the country (Smith, 1990).

Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE has undoubtedly been the most famous community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programme in the region, through which rural communities benefited substantially from nature-based tourism before the political upheavals of the past ten years. The CAMPFIRE project had a small component related to tourism by means of which the Zimbabwe government was afforded an opportunity to drive community-based tourism. Unfortunately the land claim problems have virtually destroyed all the good achieved by the CAMPFIRE system. For this reason Zimbabwe will not be evaluated in this study.

#### **2.8.1.1 Botswana**

Botswana is ripe with opportunities for successful community-based tourism projects, because tourism is operating under the deliberate "low volume, high value" policy adopted by the government (Gujadhur, 2000; 2002; Rozermeijer, 2000). The aim of this policy is to limit the negative impact of tourism as well as

to optimize the opportunities for local communities to benefit from tourism. The community-based tourism policy and framework falls under the Botswana Tourism Development Programme. The facilitation of a community-based tourism development process as a supporting network for such an enterprise is quite effective (Symbiosis Consulting, 2000). However, the enterprise is constrained by lack of education, inability to absorb training, high staff turnover and a lack of business and management skills (Gujardhur *et al.*, 2002).

It has been estimated that tourism in Botswana provides employment for nearly 10 000 people (Kirkpatrick and Partners, 2000). The country has about 50 community-based tourism organizations (CBTOs) in various stages of development, which are all involved in CBNRM projects. There is a range of projects, from the collection of thatching grass and herbal tea and the marketing of handicrafts produced to campsite management and trophy hunting joint venture agreements with the private sector (Department of Tourism of Botswana, 2004). The Botswana Tourism Authority links community-based projects with community-based tourism (Kirkpatrick & Partners, 2000). All the projects are focused expressly on the poor local communities.

### **2.8.1.2 Tanzania**

The Tanzanian Rural Development Strategy identifies tourism as a key tool in rural poverty alleviation in order to stimulate the “pro-poor growth” strategy (URT, 2001). The Wildlife Policy of Tanzania supports community-based tourism by advocating the placement of “future major tourist developments outside

protected areas in order to reduce negative impacts and enhance benefit sharing with local communities” (MNRT, 1998).

This category of tourism in Tanzania has developed rapidly in recent years, as the tourism industry seeks to broaden and diversify its products in national parks and other protected areas (Akunaay *et al.*, 2003). Partnerships or joint ventures whereby local villages receive payment in exchange for access to their lands are multiplying in the northern part of the country. Tanzania’s Integrated Tourism Master Plan advocates developing community-based tourism in the northern part of the country on village lands in areas such as Lake Natron (TDP, 2002).

Such tourism projects are therefore operative in the Babati, Kuratu, Mbulu, Munduli, Ngorongoro and Simanjiro districts of Tanzania (Akunaay *et al.*, 2003). Seven villages are now earning over US\$100,000 annually from several ecotourism joint ventures that are being carried out on their land. Apart from this, however, the revenues are governed by contracts between the villages and the tourism companies that do not comply with the Local Government Act of 1982 and the Village Land Act of 1999 (Gaston, 2003, Nshala, 2002 cited in Akunaay *et al.*, 2003).

### **2.8.1.3 Namibia**

Tourism is considered to be one of the pillars of Namibia’s economy, with the travel and tourism economy accounting for over 20% of the GDP (WTTC, 1999). Namibia has by far the most developed community-based tourism framework in

southern Africa, operating under one national association, namely the Namibian Community-Based Tourism Organization (NACOBTA). Currently NACOBTA lists 41 community tourism enterprises in Namibia, though just under half are inoperative (Gujadhur, 2002).

According to Ashley and Garland (1994) the existing policy framework in Namibia encourages the development of tourism ventures run entirely by outsiders, with a long-term cost to the communities that constitute the resource base and the foundation of tourism products. Many government policies and actions affect the growth and form of community-based tourism development in communal areas. However, the joint venture lodges and community enterprises show the most potential for meeting a wide range of welfare, conservation and tourism objectives. The development of community benefits stemming from tourism in Namibia is reliant on the information and ideas that the people provide, the viability of different ventures in the Namibian tourism market, the legal rights of communities and the skills and institutions available.

#### **2.8.1.4 The development of community-based tourism in South Africa**

The 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism defines the role of the community in tourism development. In practice, these activities are not widely initiated by the communities themselves, but instead occur in response to invitations from other stakeholders to participate in or contribute towards the process (DEAT, 1996). Mechanisms, policies and legislation have been introduced to ensure the flow of benefits to the local communities (WTO, 1998).

The Responsible Tourism Guidelines designed in 2001 and published in 2003 are aimed at guiding tourism product developers and tourism practitioners in South Africa. In 2003 guidelines for the implementation of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) projects were completed, addressing and supporting community-based projects in protected areas.

Various projects to promote community-based tourism have been undertaken by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT, 2003). Each province has its own tourism authority at a different stage of development of community-based tourism. For example, the focus of community-based tourism in KZN is to facilitate more equitable tourism development throughout the province by supporting the formation of trusts, training community-based tourism product owners and marketing (KZN Tourism Authority, 2002). The KZN Tourism Authority has chosen this focus in order to achieve compliance with the Responsible Tourism Principles.

By contrast, in the North West Province community-based tourism is designed to complement the 1998 Provincial Tourism Master Plan (2000). The North West Parks and Tourism Board's 2003 vision is to become the community leader in CBNRM and the facilitator of growth in tourism for the upliftment of the people of this province.

Ineffective information dissemination is one of the negative factors influencing community-based tourism development in the rural areas of South Africa, where inhabitants often have little or no idea of how to start their own tourism operation

(Uys, 2003). Besides this, the level of poverty and hardship is high in the rural areas of this country. There is also a tendency amongst the tour operators not to involve rural people in their activities (Smith, 1990). In addition to this, tourism ownership in South Africa is facing a serious challenge in that the bulk of the tourism sector is run, owned and controlled by rich white entrepreneurs, mostly operating as private companies (Black Economic Empowerment Score Card, 2004).

#### **2.8.1.5 The development of community-based tourism in Limpopo Province**

The Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism introduced the African Ivory Route as a community-based tourism project in 1998 in order to position the province as an ecotourism destination. The product is based on the natural, cultural and historical assets of the area referred to as "the golden horseshoe" of the Limpopo Province (Limpopo Province Tourism Working Document, 2003:7).

The main objectives of this concept are as follows:

- To establish a model for ecotourism in the province (i.e. a model that complies with all the principles and criteria of ecotourism as defined), which will demonstrate empowerment and the benefits accruing to the disadvantaged rural communities who have access to natural, cultural and historical resources.
- The development of a diversified product based upon the primary resources for tourism in the provincial natural resource, wildlife and cultural heritage to which these communities have access.

- To unlock the inherent underdeveloped tourism potential of the remote areas of the province, which normally lack the necessary infrastructure that is perceived as a prerequisite for tourism development, by taking advantage of the expected rapid growth of adventure and off-road (4x4) tourism through the development of a product that will meet the requirements of that market.

The driving force behind community-based tourism in Limpopo Province lies in the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative (PSDI) and the Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) project. Overall, the Department of Finance and Economic Development (DFED) in the province of Limpopo is responsible for tourism development policies. The Limpopo Tourism and Parks Board is tasked with implementing the provincial tourism objectives, i.e. the commercialization of provincial reserves, tourism development and marketing the province as a preferred ecotourism destination. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring that the rural population does in fact benefit from these planned and community-based ecotourism initiatives are generally accepted (De Klerk, 2003).

## **2.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The development of tourism in sub-Saharan Africa has been impeded by an array of serious shortcomings. The critical issues contributing to this situation are related to a negative market image and include widespread corruption, political and social instability, environmental degradation, endemic poverty and poorly developed infrastructure. Paragraph 2.4 discusses other restraints that have hindered the development of community-based tourism.

The analysis of community-based tourism practices in the sub-Saharan countries presents an opportunity to attempt to assist the developers and planners of future community-based tourism ventures. In the SADC region countries such as Botswana, Namibia and Tanzania have recognized the importance and significance of community-based tourism, and the role that the local communities can play in this regard. The applicability of this concept in the Limpopo Province of South Africa is reviewed in Chapter Three. The study on the Manyeleti Game Reserve constitutes an in-depth case study investigating this theory in order to address the main research problem statement and to clarify some of the reasons why the theory has not as yet come to effective fruition.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE MANYELETI GAME RESERVE ECOTOURISM INITIATIVE**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Manyeleti Game Reserve has been selected as the subject of a case study to examine the promises made by the DFED regarding the frontline communities' involvement in tourism planning and development. There is an existing agreement between the DFED and the Mnsi Traditional Authority that the frontline communities will form part of the ecotourism management initiative and will benefit directly from the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve (DFED, 2000). In this chapter the first objective of the study as stated in paragraph 1.4 is critically assessed. The historical background of the study area is reviewed, including conservation and ecotourism development and planning in the region. These issues reflect the economic and social image of tourism institutions operating in the Manyeleti Game Reserve.

#### **3.2 THE STUDY AREA**

The Manyeleti Game Reserve is situated in the Limpopo Province of South Africa (see Figure 1.1). It is approximately 23 000 hectares in size (DFED, 2000). Its location with respect to other local nature conservation areas is shown in Figure 1.2. The Kruger National Park (KNP) borders it on the northeast and the east, the Sabi-Sand Game Reserve on the south and the Timbavati Private Game Reserve

on the northwest. The western boundary of the Manyeleti Game Reserve is the only area where there are homesteads and villages (Mahony and Van Zyl, 2001).

In 1967 the Manyeleti Game Reserve was proclaimed as a game reserve in an area that had previously been used predominantly for cattle ranching (Balyamujura, 1995). It was set up under the aegis of the Department of Development Aid to cater for the black population only (Index & Setplan, 1993). The reserve was opened to black people and its management was handed over to the Gazankulu government (Van Schalkwyk and Balyamujura, 1996). Since the advent of the present government it has been open to all races and it is currently managed by a black manager (WildNet Africa, 2003).

The reserve's elevation ranges from 360m above sea level at Sarabank farm to 500m above sea level at Mohwelereng on Albatross farm. Many seasonal rivers and dry rivers criss-cross the reserve (Van Schalkwyk and Balyamujura, 1996). There is no perennial river running through the reserve, but a number of dams exist that are used as permanent water sources (DFED, 2000).

According to Balyamujura (1995), the benefits that are derived from the Manyeleti Game Reserve by tourists and the local communities are twofold. *Firstly*, game viewing comprises the main tourist attraction. According to a helicopter census carried out in the reserve at the end of August 1995, the game found in the reserve in the greatest numbers were: blue wildebeest 596, buffalo 511, elephant 44, giraffe 181, hippo 14, impala 5117, kudu 228, reebuck 3, rhino (white) 51, warthog 83, waterbuck 128 and zebra 515. Other species included are

leopards, cheetah, lion, nyala, wild dog, jackal, baboon, bushbuck, duiker, steenbuck, hyena and others (Index and Setplan, 1993). In the case of natural flora the reserve provides an open savannah where knobthorn, marula, sekelbos, huilboom, tamboti and acacia species are dominant; the vegetation ranges from mopani veld mixes to bushveld (Balyamujura and Van Schalkwyk, 1996).

*Secondly*, the game reserve serves as a source of employment. It has created 160 jobs. Approximately 111 employees are permanent while another 49 are employed as casual labourers (Du Toit, 2003). The majority of staff members come from Hluvukane and Gottenburg, with 52 originating from the Gottenburg area and the rest from other parts of the Mhala district (Du Toit, 2003).

Income gained by means of the accommodation and catering offered by tourism enterprises in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, such as the African Ivory Route Camps and the Honey Guide Camps, also plays a major role by improving the socio-economic conditions and the employment rate in the area.

### **3.3 CONSERVATION AND ECOTOURISM IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

The essence of South Africa's conservation policies under apartheid was to give special attention to formal conservation areas at the expense of the local people; during that period the local communities were evicted from areas designated as reserves (Naguran, 2002). The Big Five were promoted and the black people only benefited from under-paid jobs; this strategy was followed in many protected areas, including the famous Kruger National Park and the Ndumo Game Reserve

in the Maputaland Region of the Kwazulu-Natal Province (Naguran, 2002). The Manyeleti Game Reserve also falls within this category.

In these protected areas the local black people were forcibly removed from their ancestral land by the conservation developers in South Africa (Naguran, 2002). They were translocated, given alternative grazing land, and were not permitted to continue their customary way of life in the areas declared as “protected”. The establishment of such areas meant that many black people were denied access to grazing, collecting firewood, traditional hunting and the harvesting of medicinal plants, thatching grass and water within these areas (Naguran, 2002).

Since 1994, the middle and top management staff involved in conservation activities in South Africa have to a certain extent realised the need for community involvement in any valid conservation activity (Bothma, 1995). As has been pointed out, this is popular in the sub-Saharan African countries, especially when the sustainable utilization of the renewable natural resources is under the direct control of the rural community (Els, 2002).

In the Limpopo Province the DFED has identified ecotourism development as one of its key strategic objectives that will position the “Limpopo Province as the preferred ecotourism destination in Southern Africa” (DFED, 2001a). The Manyeleti Game Reserve was therefore declared as an ecotourism destination in the Limpopo Province. Both the DFED and conservation organizations acknowledged that this reserve could simultaneously provide environmental and economic benefits to the local community only if it was commercially viable

(DFED, 2000) and constituted a niche market for environmentally aware tourists who were interested in observing nature at its best.

In South Africa the Responsible Tourism Guidelines (2003) encourage tourism operators to grow their businesses whilst providing social and economic benefits to local communities and respecting the environment (DEAT, 2003). The realization of this goal will result in rural development becoming closely linked with conservation and ecotourism in the Limpopo Province. As mentioned earlier, the engagement of all community-based tourism stakeholders in this project should ensure the upholding of all the principles of Responsible Tourism, namely social, economic and environmental growth (DEAT, 2003).

### **3.4 THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF PROVINCIAL STATE RESERVES**

The commercialization of the Limpopo provincial state game reserves is taking place under the guidance and auspices of the DFED. The decision to commercialize these reserves was guided by the fact that the game reserves were being under-utilized in terms of economic potential and were operating at a loss. The structuring and commercialization process endeavours to recognize the spectrum of ways in which a community public private partnership (CPPP) can be established (DFED, 2000). The Limpopo Tourism and Parks Board (LTPB) is the provincial parastatal responsible for implementing the commercialization process in prioritized game reserves in the Limpopo Province (LTPB, 2004).

The rationale behind the DFED's efforts to commercialize the Manyeleti Game Reserve is the desire to achieve equal satisfaction in the private sector, the government and the frontline communities (DFED, 2000). Commercialization of the provincial reserves is also perceived as a conservation strategy that endeavours to balance the needs of both tourism enterprises and the frontline communities, while at the same time ensuring that the management of these reserves operates efficiently.

However, the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve presents a unique opportunity for investors, government and local communities to collaborate in achieving the key tourism policy objectives. The following objectives of commercialization were identified by the DFED:

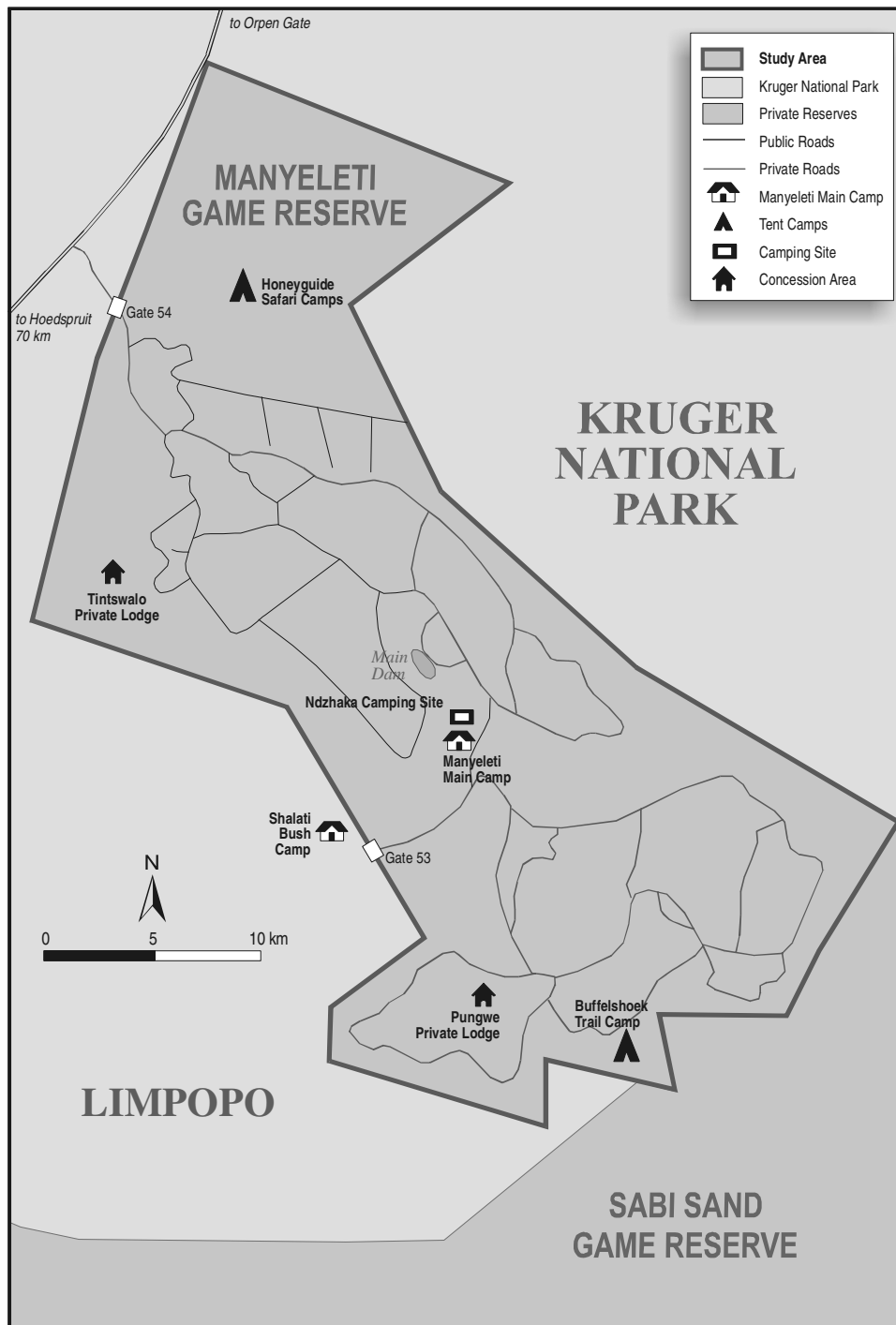
- to create both short and long-term job opportunities;
- to empower the previously disadvantaged communities;
- to develop business, particularly black business enterprises (BEE);
- to reduce the game reserve's fiscal impact on the provincial reserves;
- to promote sound and sustainable growth and socio-economic development;
- to generate income streams that can be utilized for conservation; and
- to protect the natural resource base through appropriate and sustainable land use (LTPB, 2004).

In addition to this positive move towards development occurring as part of the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve, some authors view the concept differently (Hardley, 1996; Lewis and Delise, 2004; Wearing, 1999), pointing out that there is a need for rural people to understand tourism

development and the process better. According to Lewis and Delise (2004) this is especially true in regard to how tourism develops in rural areas and it is important to base that understanding on theory. However, Hardley (1996) emphasises that the history of community resistance to conservation in such areas has coloured perceptions of both tourism and conservation, which are often perceived as a threat to community-based tourism. According to Wearing (1999) the opportunities demanded by tourists can trivialize or exploit the involvement of the local communities or those they represent.

### **3.5 TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN THE MANYELETI GAME RESERVE**

The success of the Manyeleti Game Reserve as an ecotourism destination depends on its wildlife and accommodation. Achieving a balanced interrelationship between these two aspects constitutes the main aim of the Limpopo Provincial Government, which is introducing tourism enterprises in order to develop the economic potential of and diversify the market for the Manyeleti Game Reserve by encouraging community-based tourism (DFED, 2000). However, Hocking *et al.* (2000) indicate that it is very important to evaluate each and every developmental project separately.



**Figure 3.1 Tourism infrastructure of the Manyeleti Game Reserve [Map by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, Geoinformatics and Meteorology, University of Pretoria]**

The current tourism activities and facilities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve will now be reviewed, in order to achieve the first objective of the study (paragraph 1.4). In this regard the provision of accommodation appears to be the main enterprise currently operative in the Manyeleti Game Reserve (see Figure 3.1).

### **3.5.1 Government venture: Manyeleti Main Camp**

Manyeleti means "place of the stars," according to the indigenous people of the Shangaan tribe (Anon, 2003). Manyeleti main camp offers accommodation covering a range of themes and catering for a variety of tastes and income ranges. These include thirty-four colonial-style rondavels (chalets), graded into two standards (luxury and standard), six dormitories for group travellers (mainly students) and the colonial corrugated iron roof and thatched rondavel accommodation for employees (DEAT, 2000).

The DFED has proposed various community-based ecotourism development options and declared the Manyeleti Game Reserve an ecotourism destination (DFED, 2000). The DFED (2004:36) supports the commercialization of the Manyeleti main camp, and has stated that: "there is a demand for the up-market game lodges and wildlife experiences offered in the Manyeleti Game Reserve".

The Manyeleti main camp will therefore be commercialized and will operate in the same profitable way as do other private reserves such as the Sabi Sand and Timbavati reserves that border the Kruger National Park (DFED, 2004). As

indicated in paragraph 3.4, the commercialization of this camp is still in the infant stage. The main purpose of the LTPB is to:

- attract quality tourism investment to the reserve;
- maximize job creation;
- empower neighbouring local communities;
- promote the use of local small and medium enterprises; and
- obtain a long-term secure income from concessionaires (LTPB Management Plan, 2004).

The proposed community-based ecotourism development option is well placed to offer a viable source of income for rural communities while making it possible to insist on long-term investment by and commitment from tourism operators (LTPB Management Plan, 2004).

### **3.5.2 Community-based tourism initiative: The African Ivory Route**

The African Ivory Route is an initiative of the former Northern Province Tourism Directorate that aims to empower and benefit the disadvantaged rural communities in the province by means of tourism. The concept was initiated in 1998 as a community-empowerment-through-tourism initiative under the Community Tourism Development Programme, which subscribed to the principle of ecotourism. The project also aspires to promote the Limpopo Province as an ecotourism destination and aims to exert a catalytic effect on tourism development in the province, particularly community-based tourism (African Ivory Route Manual, 2002).

The African Ivory Route will involve the local communities in the products and services offered by these camps (African Ivory Route; 1998). According to the African Ivory Route (1999:2) report "planners developed this product in order to provide the poorest communities in the remote parts of the province with an opportunity to benefit from tourism and to become participants (as operators, product owners and service providers) in the tourism industry".

The main objectives of the African Ivory Route concept are to:

- promote responsible tourism through sustainable utilization of the natural, cultural and archaeological assets of the province (in certain identified areas);
- provide for the rapidly growing adventure tourism market;
- create feasible opportunities for previously disadvantaged communities to participate as managers, operators and owners of resources and products in the tourism industry, with benefits to the communities where these resources occur, through the establishment of community-based ecotourism projects;
- promote the image of the province as an adventure ecotourism destination;
- empower local communities and local entrepreneurs to become participants in and beneficiaries of the tourism industry; and
- give an impetus to the development of the "Golden Horseshoe" tourism and conservation development concept (African Ivory Route, 1999).

Furthermore, the African Ivory Route camps were introduced in the Manyeleti Game Reserve in an effort to solve the rural development problem by promoting community-based tourism that could benefit the nearby people (the frontline communities) (DFED, 1998). The African Ivory Route project operates two

camps in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, namely the Ndzaka Safari Camp and the Buffelshoek Safari Camp (Figure 3.1).

### 3.5.3 Private Ventures: The Honey Guide

The Honey Guide is a private sector initiative operating in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, with a total of 74 beds in two camps - Mantobeni Camp and Khokha Moya Camp. Each camp contains 12 tents with twin or double beds, *en-suite* bathrooms with hot and cold running water, showers and flush toilets. The future success of the Honey Guide depends on whether or not the accommodation can be run as a profitable business. Since the main motivation behind profitability lies in the satisfaction of the guest, the concession challenge is to design partnerships that are commercially attractive, fair and sustainable, so as to maintain their long-term goal.

The Honey Guide concession agreement was concluded between private sector developers and the former Gazankulu homeland government and ran until the year 2000 (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2001). The current concession agreement is between the Honey Guide and the DFED, with a lease agreement of 30 years; in exchange for rights the private company will pay a concession fee to the government of Limpopo (DFED, 2000). According to the DFED (2000) the private ventures in the Manyeleti Game Reserve must follow the provincial concession development principles provided by the DFED to guide the overall development process, i.e.:

- Socio-economic and empowerment principles,
- institutional principles,

- financial principles,
- planning principles,
- environmental principles,
- land management principles, and
- human resources management principles (DFED, 2000: 17).

According to the DFED (2000) these principles were designed to promote sustainable development within the Manyeleti Game Reserve. The investors and operators are required to create a venture that will provide economic stability to the region, and should in addition aim at:

- establishing tourism-related activities that will confirm the area as a key destination able to contribute to the growth within the region;
- conducting their affairs in accordance with the environmental principles defined by the DFED and clearly demonstrating their own environmental ethics;
- marketing and managing the lodges in a manner that not only ensures income sustainability, but also provides for wealth creation in the greater region;
- offering employment to people from the neighbouring community and particularly those currently employed in the reserve;
- providing contracts to local SMMEs for services and produce;
- setting up appropriate capacity building structures; and
- maintaining the facilities and related infrastructure for the period of the concession (DFED, 2000: 18).

### **3.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The historical background of the area studied and the planning and development of tourism in the region have been reviewed. Tourism enterprises, namely the Manyeleti main camp, the African Ivory Route camps and the Honey Guide concession company were considered in order to address the first objectives of the study. The current tourism activities and facilities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve will now be contextualised in Chapter Four in order to address the second and third objectives of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN THE FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The key components of the national tourism strategy focus specifically on the economic transformation of the sector, with the emphasis on the potential of the industry to make a positive, direct, substantial and lasting impact on the lives of the poor (Mahony and Van Zyl, 2002). In this chapter attention is given respectively to the historical context, the socio-economic overview of the frontline communities (particularly Dixie and Welverdiend), the management of tourism developments and the current attitudes and perceptions towards community-based tourism in the villages.

#### **4.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

##### **4.2.1 Historical background**

The frontline communities fall within the Bushbuckridge Region that forms part of the former Lowveld, currently known as Bohlabela District Municipality. Bushbuckridge was originally part of the Pilgrim's Rest district, which incorporated the Drakensburg plateau (ECI) (Ebony Consulting International, 2002). The Bushbuckridge homeland areas were generally developed in such a way as to make it possible for white interests to accommodate black needs.

Historically, two things originally brought whites to the Lowveld: game and gold. The first group included the elephant hunters, who exploited the ivory. Subsequent hunting practices and the pursuit of biltong and skins placed the existing resources under severe pressure, so that the game in the Lowveld was rapidly depleted. The discovery of alluvial gold also brought a large number of whites to the region, in particular to Pilgrim's Rest and the Sabie diggings (ECI, 2002). Following the discovering of gold, more whites moved into the plateau areas of the district. They established control over the Pilgrim's Rest district and settled primarily on the higher areas of the plateau.

According to the ECI (2002) whites did not settle in the Lowveld area because of the endemic malaria (there were only 20 whites in the area between the Klaserie and Sabie Rivers by 1917). They preferred to settle in the plateau areas of the district and competition for tenure, control and land use by the whites subsequently developed. In 1936 (in accordance with the nature of the competition and the preference given to white interests) the area was demarcated as follows:

- The plateau areas were declared white (to preserve established farming and future forestry interests).
- Land for blacks was released in the Lowveld area (below the mountain) between the Sabie and Olifants Rivers.

According to the ECI (2002) large-scale relocation to the area below the Drakensburg and the Kruger Park resulted from this demarcation. The population

density is currently relatively high and the need for water for domestic and agricultural purposes cannot be met (Shackleton, *et al.*, 1995).

#### **4.2.2 Land use and ownership**

In the early 1900s and up to the 1960s the black population of the Lowveld did not own or control the land on which they lived (ECI, 2002). A homeland was developed in the 1960s in the Bushbuckridge district. The area became the homeland of the Sotho and Shangaan-speaking people, with Bushbuckridge as the administrative centre. The “betterment” system, which was introduced during the apartheid era, restricted settlements to certain designated areas within fixed boundaries, where people were resettled with a high population density (Du Toit, 2003). Households were allocated a residential stand in the residential area and had access to both arable and grazing land (Du Toit, 2003; ECI, 2002). This disrupted the traditional resource use practices, which needed to be more integrated with and dispersed into the environment (Du Toit, 2003).

Today only a limited number of households have access to arable land, due to population pressure (Du Toit, 2003). Plot sizes have also been reduced so that they are no longer of an economically viable size (Shackleton, *et al.*, 1995). In the frontline communities, most cultivation takes place in individual home gardens and community gardens. Individual home gardens are situated on the residential plots together with houses and livestock. The average size of the residential plots is 0,25 to 0,75 ha. Community gardens are on average 2 ha in size, whereas individuals are allocated a 100-200m plot (Du Toit, 2003). The cultivators of

community gardens are mostly women. The bulk of the production is intended for the household's own consumption and the surplus is sold to supplement the household's income.

### **4.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC OVERVIEW**

#### **4.3.1 Study area**

The frontline community consists of six villages: Dixie, Gottenburg, Seville, Thondale, Uta and Welverdiend (see Figure 1.2). The villages are situated on the western boundary of the Manyeleti Game Reserve and in the eastern part of Bushbuckridge, adjacent to the Timbavati, Manyeleti and Sabie Sand Reserves, as indicated in paragraph 3.2. According to the ECI (2002) this area contains smaller rural villages and some of the villagers still maintain rural livelihoods. Generally speaking, the area is more sparsely populated, community services are lacking and the area is also behind the foot-and-mouth corridor.

The Manyeleti Game Reserve was released as a state asset for the development of an ecotourism investment destination in which the local community's involvement, black economic empowerment and land rights, as well as sound environmental management would be priorities; this has become standard policy (Mahony and Van Zyl, 2002). These principles create a platform for an investment deal that has a direct impact on the impoverished local communities surrounding the reserve (DFED, 2000).

The frontline communities were selected as the sole beneficiaries of the above-mentioned initiatives. The process of selecting these communities took the form of intensive interaction with all relevant stakeholders (DFED, 2000). “This ... included the Provincial Government in the form of heads of department from the areas under consideration (also the Chairperson of the Provincial sub-committee on Tourism); the Transitional Local Councils (TLCs); Chiefs and Headmen; Communities, the current operators and staff at various anchor projects” (DFED, 2000:25).

The communities were selected by the above-mentioned stakeholders on the basis of the following agreed criteria:

- Proximity to the reserve where frontline communities were directly affected and/or disadvantaged and vice versa.
- A material contribution to the project in the form of land that was incorporated or investments that were made.
- Some land claim, which, in the opinion of the commissioner, had the potential to impact the project.
- Consensus from the various structures in the communities identified in terms of these criteria (DFED, 2000:25:25).

The intention was that the frontline communities would immediately benefit from the commercialization process of the Manyeleti Game Reserve (DFED, 2000). According to Mahony and Van Zyl (2001) it was envisaged that the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve would present a unique opportunity for investors, government and communities to collaborate in

achieving key policy objectives concerning tourism, job creation, economic empowerment and land reform.

#### **4.3.2 Socio-economic development**

In view of the dearth of income-earning opportunities in the frontline communities, the communities had been frustrated by the lack of development in their neighbouring tourism asset and were keen to enter into a partnership with government and the private sector (Mahony and Van Zyl, 2001). The principles outlined above were intended to create a platform for an investment deal that would have a direct impact on the poor frontline communities surrounding the game reserve.

According to Els and Bothma (2000) approximately 30% of the annual income of the people adjacent to the government reserve is derived from the old age pensions that are paid to the elderly in some families. Du Toit (2003) states that between 40% and 45% of the men in these communities are not employed. "This situation is further negatively compounded by the continual increase of human population in the communal rural areas as the survival of these communities is directly influenced by the country-wide joblessness which is projected to reach 43% in the year 2004" (Van Tonder, cited in Els, 2000:5). In 2006 this is still a stark reality, which further increases the real survival-driven pressure on the utilization of natural resources in the frontline communities.

The frontline communities supplement their source of income by means of the sale of firewood to tourists (Du Toit, 2003). According to Mahony and Van Zyl (2001) this is an indication that the frontline communities have recognized the value of tourism and environmental resources and are committed to optimizing their socio-economic benefits by utilizing these resources.

According to the ECI (2002) community services such as clinics, shops and post offices are available to serve the local populations as well as rural villages. In contrast, Du Toit (2003) states that the social services and infrastructure within the frontline communities consist of schools, clinics, general dealers, market stalls, a piped water supply, pit latrines and gravel roads, and that only a few households have electricity. Some of these facilities are in a poor state of repair. Part of the road network within the villages is threatened by gully erosion. The water pipe project is incomplete and the standpipes are often in need of repair. The community members therefore supplement their domestic water needs with unpurified water from the river and streams. These communities experience a low level of social service and infrastructure development; economically they are poor and little development is taking place in their villages. Their homesteads comprise a mixture of traditional mud-and-thatch structures and modern brick-and-iron or tiled dwelling units.

#### **4.3.3 Socio-political organization**

At the local level the frontline communities are administered by two local governance structures: the Traditional Authority, headed by Chief Phillip Mnisi,

and the Transitional Local Council (TLC). The TLC is the democratically elected third tier of the government, elected in terms of the Transitional Local Government Act (TLGA) of 1995 (South Africa, 1995).

The traditional political-administrative system of the frontline communities here functions in much the same way as that of the other South African traditional systems. Chief Mnisi and the village headmen control the frontline communities. The headmen reside in the communities and the chief resides in Edinburg, approximately 20 km from the communities (Du Toit, 2003). The village headmen represent the chief at the local level; they are not policy or decision-makers, but act on behalf of the chief. The headman's responsibilities include the allocation of land and dealing with tribal matters and ceremonies. He also acts as a mediator in family disputes.

Political power is vested in the TLC, as it is the responsibility of the local councils to establish their main functions and priorities. These include service provision and town planning, housing and managing health care, as well as the drinking water and electricity supply (Du Toit, 2003). Bushbuckridge is divided into 16 wards and a ward councillor has been elected for each ward. The frontline communities fall within ward 16. The office of the ward councillor is situated in Hluvukani. The councillors responsible for the frontline communities appear to be willing to cooperate with other local structures, including the chief of the area and his headmen, in order to promote the development of their area.

The local political parties also form part of these communities' structures; the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) were the most popular political parties in the area. Other structures that were identified within the frontline communities were community-based organizations, such as civic structures, women's clubs, eco- and environmental clubs and childcare centres.

#### **4.4 TOWARDS THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

The roots of the existing land tenure system in the Manyeleti Game Reserve were entrenched during the apartheid era. Nevertheless, the speeding up of land reform may contribute greatly towards resolving this issue by encouraging investors to invest in the area. The land and other resources in the frontline communities are degraded because of artificial land pressures resulting from skewed land distribution (Rihoy *et al.*, 1999). A basis for environmental and natural resource rehabilitation in the area is lacking.

The Limpopo Provincial Government has strongly emphasized the fact that the frontline communities should be involved in and should derive direct benefits from the Manyeleti Game Reserve (DFED, 1998). Community-based tourism will, however, be beneficial for the frontline communities and other local communities only if the right development and planning strategies are developed and the right stakeholders are involved in the project from the beginning. As the Berlin Declaration of 1997 argues, tourism should be developed in such a way

that it benefits local communities, strengthens the local economy, and utilizes local materials, such as local agricultural products and traditional skills (WTO, 1998).

According to the LTPB Management Plan (2004), the communal reserves in the province enjoy a 50% mark-up sharing of profit with the community, which is deposited into a communal trust. The main objective of this management plan is to see 30% the of tourist establishments in the province in the hands of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) by the year 2008.

## **4.5 COMMUNITY-DRIVEN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE STUDY AREA**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

In the Manyeleti Game Reserve community-based tourism has been emerging since 1998 via the African Ivory Route. In addition, the frontline communities are becoming increasingly aware of this type of tourism as a major socio-economic developmental tool. According to the DFED (2000) it is important to involve all tourism stakeholders, including the frontline communities, from the beginning of any type of development initiated in the Manyeleti Game Reserve.

Becton (1998) also supports the idea that tourism operators can gain community support by supporting the local community and “giving something back” in terms of supporting local conservation initiatives. The DFED articulates clearly that

each village in the frontline communities should set up a voluntary association, committee or trust to coordinate its needs and to elect representatives of Section 21 companies (DFED, 2000).

The Mnisi clan believes that they are being cheated out of their rightful inheritance in the Manyeleti Game Reserve as the local land claim commissioner is also considering claims by two other clans, namely the Moletela and Sehlare clans (samaYende, 2003).

Balyamujura (1995) highlights the perceptions, attitudes and values held by some of the frontline communities, in particular Uthla and Seville, regarding the Manyeleti Game Reserve. Balyamujura (1995:122) established that "these communities viewed the Manyeleti Game Reserve as a potential grazing, cultivating and wood collection area". The study also stated that: "the wildlife is of limited use to the community and is in fact a source of 'problems to domestic animals' as the wildlife continues to cause both livestock and crop losses" (Balyamujura, 1995:123).

According to Mahony and Van Zyl (2001:43), "tourism projects in the Manyeleti Game Reserve should not be regarded as the panacea for rural development, but rather be a component of a larger rural development programme for the area". The heritage and culture of the frontline communities in this area could assist in attracting tourists to the area. These attractions would complement those offered by the wildlife and landscape of the district. The frontline communities could

afford some unique advantages and opportunities regarding the diversification of socio-cultural resources by means of community-based tourism.

#### **4.5.2 Attitudes concerning tourism development in Dixie communal village**

Dixie village is situated adjacent to the Ndjuma and Manyeleti Game Reserves and is on the way to the Sabi Sand Game Reserve. According to the Limpopo Population Statistics (2001), Dixie is the smallest village amongst the frontline communities; it consists of more than fifty but less than a hundred households, with a total of 546 people living in the village. The village occupies the Dixie farm that falls under the jurisdiction of the Mnsi Traditional Authority (DFED, 2000). According to Gilfillan (2001) this authority was conferred on the Mnsi Traditional Authority even though the Dixie community has no traditional relationship with the Mnsi Traditional Authority.

The inhabitants of the village were fighting to keep control of valuable tribal land which was about to be included in an exclusive game reserve (Jordan, 2003). This has led to a tribal conflict about new tourism developments in Dixie village and the surroundings of the Manyeleti Game Reserve. The Dixie community, the village leadership and tourism developers held different opinions (both negative and positive) about the Manyeleti Game Reserve as well as about tourism development in their village (samaYende, 2003). The communal people of Dixie claimed that without consulting with them, their chief had signed away development rights over 1 000 hectares of virgin bushveld for R4 000 per month to private developers (samaYende, 2002). Exclusive use of this land was granted

to Curato Investments (Pty) for 40 years, but the community was never consulted (Gilfin not dated, cited in samaYende, 2003).

Moreover, the Mnisi Traditional Authority had leased the farm to Curato Investments for 40 years for the purpose of developing a luxury lodge, also without consulting the people of Dixie (Gilfillan, 2001). According to Gilfillan (2001), if the development of the lodge went ahead the communal people of Dixie would lose a large area of their grazing land, including access to the river and the resources available there. The lease signed between the developer and the Mnisi Tribal Authority has so far proved an empty shell, unable to deliver on its promise of lucrative tourism development (Gilfillan, 2001).

Mathieson and Wall (1982) warn that the combined tourism outcome demonstrates that the benefits of tourism in rural villages are not necessarily flowing to the average village member. The inhabitants of Dixie do not oppose tourism development *per se*. They are only critical of the manner in which the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and the Mnisi Traditional Authority are approaching tourism development in their village.

#### **4.5.3 Tourism in the Welverdiend communal village**

Wolverdiend village is situated 7km from the Orpen Gate of the Kruger National Park and 5km from Gate 54 of the Manyeleti Game Reserve. According to the Limpopo population sample (2001), Welverdiend is the largest village amongst the frontline communities, with 7 488 residents. The village is overpopulated and

has a very high rate of unemployment; hence people have resorted to intensive crop production throughout the village (Du Toit, 2003). Most of the members of the professional working classes in the village are teachers, nurses, professional community developers, business people and government officials.

Unlike other villages, Welverdiend boasts a strong community development forum (CDF), which receives advice from the Wits Rural Facility and the Southern Africa Wildlife College. Welverdiend is a heterogeneous community comprising distinct ethnic groups, including Zulus, Swazis, Bapedi, Mapulane, and Tsongas from Mhala District, as well as Tsongas from Mozambique who have settled in Gottenburg and Welverdiend.

The Bush Community Development Forum, the Wits Rural Facility and the Southern Africa Wildlife College have clearly articulated the need for community-based development projects that cover rural development, community-based tourism, conservation and environmental aspects, in order to achieve sustainable rural development objectives. The frontline communities also interact with external sources of capacity building, namely NGO,s including Resource Africa, the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DARUDEC) and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF).

In addition, several community-based projects have been successfully established in the Welverdiend village, with the main aim of increasing local resources to assist the inhabitants to sustain their livelihoods and rural development. The main aim of these projects is to alleviate poverty in Welverdiend village. The Limpopo

Provincial Government allocated 50 hectares at Moganzone for the community to build Vuhlanganu Cultural Village. The people were participating effectively and had initiated four tourist projects, namely Vuhlanganu Cultural Village, Tipfuxeni Women Empowerment Project, Pfukani Theatre Group and the Renaissance Traditional Dancers, in order to enhance the sustainability of the livelihood of the villagers (Morale, 2003).

These projects were introduced after some of the Welverdiend people had completed courses in community-based ecotourism, conservation management, environmental education and tour guiding at the Southern Africa Wildlife College. The Welverdiend community development forum is marketing the village's tourism products locally and internationally with the help of the LTPB. They have participated in two international conferences, namely the Indaba International Tourism Conference held in Durban in 2004 and the People and Parks Conference held in Durban in 2003 (Morale, 2004).

The Welverdiend projects have created 100 jobs for the community so far. This employment figure has contributed to the community's desire to change their attitudes towards natural resources, community-based tourism and their own livelihoods.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter dealt with the second objective of the study. The objective was to ascertain whether community-based tourism potential existed in the frontline

communities, particularly in Welverdiend. It was found that the community had initiated its own projects. Its members have also demonstrated that they possess the capacity to run community-based tourism projects, since 70% of the participants (women) had completed the skills development training programme. The Dixie community, on the other hand, lacks the necessary development skills to be able to participate to the fullest extent in community-based tourism and ecotourism activities in the study area. The problem is that they are not working as a team. The same applies to the Limpopo tourism stakeholders, as they do not conform to developmental principles by cooperating with the Dixie community, despite the fact that the frontline communities, per agreement with the DFED, were supposed to be the first communities to benefit from the Manyeleti Game Reserve under the Mnisi Tribal Authority. This is unfortunate in view of the opportunity for hands-on experience provided by the activities of the game reserve.

The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study and the results obtained.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research was conducted under the auspices of the Tourism Directorate of the DFED) in Limpopo Province. The work done formed part of the Community-Public Private Partnership (CPPP) within the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiatives (PSDI), the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve and the African Ivory Route (a government community-based ecotourism initiative). According to the DFED (2000) the involvement of local communities in a meaningful manner is essential to the sustainability of investment projects, especially in the case of ecotourism projects where rural communities are adjacent to provincially owned game reserves.

The DFED highlighted three types of opportunities that could benefit of the local communities:

- Firstly, linkages between ecotourism initiatives within protected areas and the surrounding communities in the form of employment, business development and community-based tourism initiatives or equity sharing in the developments themselves.
- Secondly, community-based tourism initiatives based on the land owned by the community outside or adjacent to the game reserve/protected area.
- Thirdly, in cases where communities possess established land rights over the game reserve/protected area in terms of Land Rights Act, No. 22 of

1994, or tenure rights in terms of the Land Rights Act, No. 31 of 1996, such communities need to play their rightful role in the development of the ecotourism opportunities within the reserve/protected area (DFED, 2000:7).

The research focused on the first and second opportunities of the larger programme. To this end, the aim and objectives in paragraph (1.4) were put forward. To investigate the opportunities described above, quantitative and qualitative data were used. Combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies creates a valid and reliable tool to establish the realities and value judgements of rural people living in communal areas within their natural environment (Kloppers, 2001).

The survey in this study was conducted in two frontline communities, namely Dixie and Welverdiend. The study also gathered information on community relations with the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and on other issues that affect community-based tourism.

## **5.2 RESEARCH METHODS**

The research methods entailed the collection of primary and secondary data. The primary data sources consist of participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key resource people and in-depth interviews with members of the frontline communities. Secondary sources, such as tourism textbooks, journals, community

records and documents compiled by government and non-governmental institutions, academics and researchers provided additional data.

### **5.3 DATA COLLECTION, SAMPLE METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

The research was conducted between June 2003 and June 2004, and was broken up into three contact phases. The first phase was conducted with the provincial government, the DFED and certain tourism parastatals, namely the LTPB and the African Ivory Route project, based in Polokwane. In the second phase, research was conducted within the Manyeleti Game Reserve, with the reserve management, reserve employees, the African Ivory Route camp supervisors and the Honey Guide concession management. The third phase was conducted outside the reserve with the following members of the frontline communities: ward councillors, indunas, community developers, youth structures, community elders, randomly selected communal people and researchers who had previously worked in the area.

The target sample consisted of 70 individuals and was divided into two groups. The first group consisted of individuals from the frontline communities, the tribal leadership and the community development forums. The Limpopo tourism stakeholders operating directly within the study area, namely the DFED, the LTPB, the management of the African Ivory Route, the Manyeleti Game Reserve management and that of the Honey Guide comprised the second group.

The researcher distributed the 20 questionnaires to the Limpopo tourism stakeholders personally. The Limpopo tourism stakeholders in Polokwane were given three weeks to complete the questionnaire in their private time. Some of them lost interest and withdrew their cooperation and some of the questionnaires were incomplete. The questionnaires distributed to the Limpopo tourism stakeholders in the Manyeleti Game Reserve were successfully completed. Only 10 questionnaires from all the Limpopo tourism stakeholders were considered for data capturing.

In the frontline communities 50 questionnaires were successfully completed in five days. Those inhabitants who were engaged in village-related developmental issues were selected to complete the questionnaires, as well as ordinary people in the two frontline communities. These were randomly selected and asked to complete the questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed according to the size of the village. No formal questionnaires were completed in Gottenburg village although the area was extensively travelled and the frontline communities' opinions gathered.

Five enumerators, namely two community developers, two ward councillors and the ward member, aided the researcher by interviewing the participants because the questionnaires were only available in English. The enumerators were a great help as they spoke the local language and completed the questionnaire in English. All the enumerators were from the communities involved and were teachers by profession. They had already participated in other research projects conducted in some of the frontline communities.

The researcher visited Welverdiend four times, and Gottenburg and Dixie twice each. During these visits, both the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and the frontline communities were interviewed. Interviews were guided by employing two different structured questionnaires (see Appendices 1 and 2).

The Limpopo tourism stakeholders' questionnaire dealt with the local community's participation and benefits derived from the Manyeleti Game Reserve. The frontline communities' questionnaire dealt with the potential of community-based tourism in their villages.

Questions regarding frontline community participation and benefits derived from the Manyeleti Game Reserve were intentionally not put to the frontline communities in order to minimize community politics due to the fact that there is a serious land claim issue in the study area. Because of the sensitive nature of this issue the local community participation questions were directed at the Limpopo tourism stakeholders only. The only question asked was: "Have you participated in community-based tourism activities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve"? The answer was no and then followed the research questions as they appear in Appendix 2.

The quantitative questions were coded and the number of respondents to specific items conveyed by using descriptive statistics. With regard to the qualitative questions, responses from the participants were grouped according to topic area and the data were categorized into sub-themes.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to achieve the third and fourth objectives of the study, a brief background to data collection, sample methods and data analysis is presented, followed by a discussion of the survey to determine whether any potential exists for community-based tourism, the degree of local community participation in tourism activities and whether any tangible benefits are flowing from the Manyeleti Game Reserve to the frontline communities.

According to Mabunda (2004) the relationship between communities and protected areas is "a marriage of heaven and hell". Likewise, Blignaut and Moolman (2004) argue that, in all, community conservation is hardly ever acknowledged and local people are too often erroneously perceived as enemies of nature. The study by Balyamujura (1995) reflects the perceptions, attitudes and values of some of the frontline communities (Uthla and Seville) regarding the Manyeleti Game Reserve and wildlife in general. They did not perceive any value in maintaining the reserve for tourism purposes and exhibited a negative view of wild animals and the Manyeleti Game Reserve.

The socio-economic baseline survey conducted by the ECI (2002) differs from the present study in respect of its demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

The survey in this study was conducted in the area of Dixie and Weverdiend, the communities adjacent to the Manyeleti Game Reserve, whereas the ECI socio-economic baseline survey was conducted in the communal areas west of the Kruger National Park. The two surveys do have similar characteristics in that both are so set out as to identify the gender balance, age group, marital status and educational profile or status of the participants.

## **6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES**

The frontline communities had experienced a rapid population growth due to the removals and resettlement of people in those villages in 1960s. The influx of refugees from Mozambique as a result of the civil war during the 1980s also contributed to population growth in the area (Du Toit, 2003). The survey done by the ECI (2002) found that in Bushbuckridge the average household size was large (approximately six people) and that across the different strata (rural, rural-service and rural-urban) the majority of households consisted of between five and ten members.

The ECI (2002) had found that analyzing the status of household heads could contribute to a better understanding of the demographic profile of the survey population. They therefore looked at issues such as:

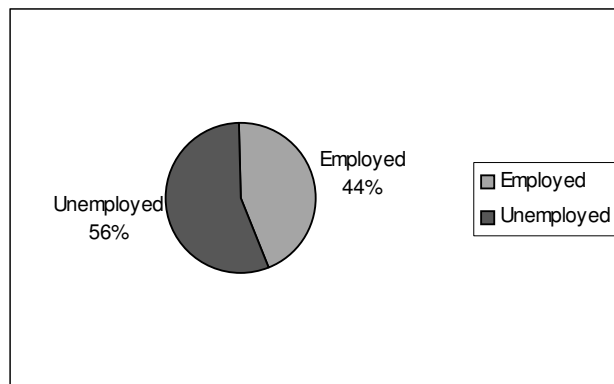
- Gender, to establish the extent of female-headed households;
- age, to obtain an indication of the age distribution in households;
- marital status;

- literacy and educational level, to assess livelihood opportunities; and
- main occupation, to determine material status and security.

The present study took into account the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the frontline communities in the form the survey questionnaire discussed in this chapter. The questionnaire is not really representative of the actual situation pertaining to the demographic and socio-economic profile of the frontline communities, but it is the most convenient way to understand the demographic and socio-economic background of the participants.

### 6.2.1 Employment situation of the participants

The current survey reveals that the employment rate (Figure 6.1) is low; the majority (56%) of the interviewed respondents were unemployed. On average, families who completed the questionnaires consisted of more than five people and lived in impoverished socio-economic conditions. They were underpaid and had little job security.



**Figure 6.1: Employment of respondents by household.**

### **6.2.2 Gender status of the frontline communities' participants**

An analysis of gender in the households surveyed could contribute to a better understanding of the demographic profile of the study. As can be seen in Table 6.1, from the sample of 50 households that participated in the study, 68% of the participants were female. "It is often generally assumed that female-headed households are poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households" (ECI, 2002: 27).

The fact that the majority (70%) of the participants were women who headed their families can be attributed to the following reasons: men have migrated elsewhere in the country to find a better job, or the women's husbands have died, or the women never married. A total of 20% of the participants indicated that they were married, while 40% indicated that they were single and 32% that they were widowed.

### **6.2.3 Age and educational profile of the participants**

The ECI (2002) findings showed that 70% of the Survey Population could read and write. The survey in the present study reveals that a total of 34% of the frontline communities' participants have obtained tertiary qualifications (see Table 6.1). More than 90% of the participants can read and write, which indicates that the general literacy level is relatively high. Education is usually recognized by the ECI (2002) as contributing a means of ensuring employment and thus

guaranteeing material security; parents and families have therefore long been committed to the education of their children.

The education level in the frontline communities as indicated in Table 6.1 is very high. In the Manyeleti Game Reserve the ABET project offers tourism as a scarce skills subject, whereas Gottenburg High School is teaching tourism as a school subject. Some institutions and organizations (THETA, SANPARKS and the Southern Africa Wildlife College) also play a major role by creating educational opportunities for the frontline communities.

Table 6.1 shows that a high percentage of the participants (84%) had completed the community-based tourism and environmental management skills development courses offered by INTAC in the area. The largest number of participants in this project were in the age group between 20 to 39 years of age. The higher percentage of young people participating in community-based tourism scarce skills development projects may be linked to the fact that 34% of the participants were graduates and this could signify higher chances of sustainable community-based tourism in Welverdiend.

**Table 6.1 Demographic and socio-economic profile of the frontline communities**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Frontline communities</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender of respondents</b>		
Male	15	30%
Female	35	70%
<b>Age Range</b>		
<19	5	10%
20-29	20	40%
30-39	15	30%
40-49	6	12%
50-59	2	4%
60>	2	4%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	20	40%
Married	10	20%
Divorced	0	0
Traditional Marriage	4	8%
Widowed	16	32%
Other	0	0
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Up to grade 6	4	8%
Standard 6-8	11	22%
Standard 8-10	11	22%
Diploma	8	16%
Degree	9	18%
Short course	7	14%
<b>Tourism training</b>		
Professional training	0	0
Skills development short courses	42	84%
No training	8	16%
<b>Occupations held by those who are working in the tourism sector</b>		
Manager	1	10%
Supervisor	1	10%
Ordinary employee	3	30%

## **6.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In order to evaluate the research results it is necessary to revisit the four key research questions mentioned in paragraph 1.3 as well as the study's main aim and objectives in paragraph 1.4. The results are presented in two sections, which contain the qualitative and quantitative results respectively.

### **6.3.1 Frontline communities' participation in and benefits derived from tourism activities**

The first objective of the study was addressed by critically assessing the current tourism operation in the Manyeleti Game Reserve. This was undertaken by means of personal discussions with the frontline communities and a questionnaire survey with the Limpopo tourism stakeholders. Tourism activities are evolving in the Manyeleti Game Reserve without the involvement of local communities. The reality of the situation is that the frontline communities are passive participants, while the Limpopo tourism stakeholders have become active participants.

The Limpopo tourism stakeholders argue that the most critical factor in the success of community-based tourism in the Manyeleti Game Reserve is the degree of political participation in decision-making. This is supported by the fact that the provincial government has declared the Manyeleti Game Reserve as an Ecotourism Destination without any legal documentation and policies to indicate that the frontline communities should be the sole beneficiaries of the reserve. The

Limpopo tourism stakeholders are still in the dark as to how the local communities should be directly involved.

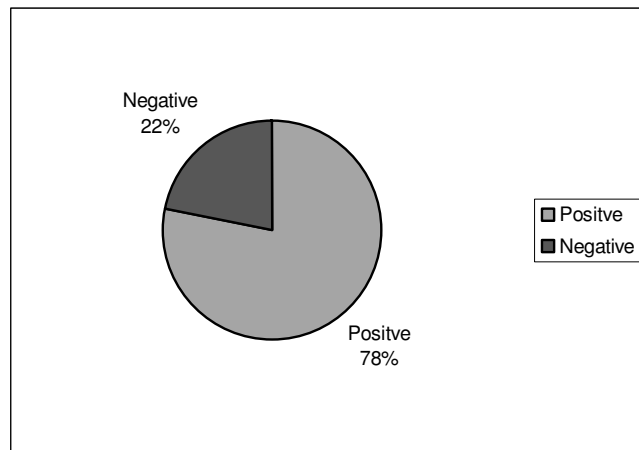
To achieve the second objective of the study, the researcher investigated the degree to which the frontline communities were participating in the tourism operations within the Manyeleti Game Reserve. The survey of the Limpopo tourism stakeholders revealed that the local communities' participation in and benefits derived from the Manyeleti Game Reserve took the form of menial jobs offered by tourism enterprises in the reserve and by the reserve itself.

### **6.3.2 Frontline communities' and the Limpopo tourism stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards community-based tourism**

The third and fourth objectives were successfully addressed. The study reveals that all the participants (the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and the frontline communities) perceive community-based tourism in the study area as a remarkable phenomenon. These findings were determined by measuring the present level at which the frontline communities (Dixie and Welverdiend) had embarked upon initiatives in community-based tourism, which have so far exhibited only a limited degree of success.

The link that, according to the DFED, should have been in place between the communities involved and the Manyeleti Game Reserve was investigated.

According to Figure 6.2, 78% of the frontline communities are positive about and willing to participate in community-based tourism related projects. The majority (83%) of all the participants see a need for ecotourism projects in their villages. They have all indicated that untapped community-based tourism potential exists in the villages as well as in the Manyeleti Game Reserve.



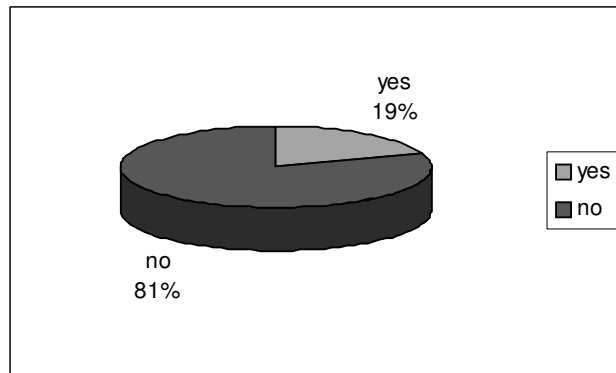
**Figure 6.2: The attitude towards the frontline communities' needs for community-based tourism**

The participants displayed a positive attitude towards community-based tourism, perceiving it as a tool for poverty alleviation that would benefit the local communities by creating jobs.

### **6.3.3 Frontline communities' participation in community-based tourism meetings/conferences**

It was clear that all the role players tended to act on their own initiative rather than cooperating. Figure 6.3 shows that only 19% of the respondents had attended

tourism meetings and conferences in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, which indicates that only a minority of the frontline communities are aware of such initiatives in the reserve.



**Figure 6.3: The involvement of the frontline communities in community-based tourism activities**

Furthermore, the qualitative results indicate that the Limpopo tourism stakeholders do not encourage the frontline communities to participate in tourism-related meetings held in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and its environs. It was also discovered that some of the Limpopo tourism stakeholders in Polokwane did not know who the frontline communities were.

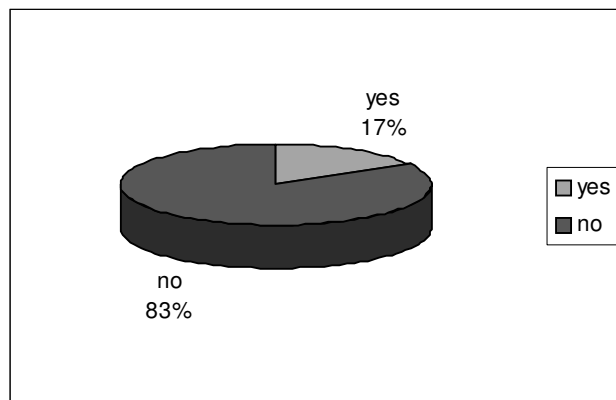
The Welverdiend community have indeed initiated their own community-based tourism projects in their villages. This initiative has attracted large numbers of youth groups and they have also participated in various international conferences. They do not, however, liaise with the Manyeleti Game Reserve.

The majority (80%) of the Welverdiend community between 20 and 39 years old are participating in community-based tourism projects that have been initiated in the village. This group perceived craft markets and traditional dancing as the most affordable projects because this type of project does not need any financial capital; only human capital is required.

#### 6.3.4 Perceptions concerning ecotourism as a factor in solving community problems

The last objective, which was to suggest how community-based tourism could contribute towards solving the poverty issue in the frontline communities, is covered in this chapter. The minority of the frontline communities perceive tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation but feel that it would not solve other community-related problems.

Figure 6.4 indicates that 83% of the frontline communities do not agree that ecotourism can solve the problems that are the main problems in the study area.



**Figure 6.4: Respondents' perceptions concerning ecotourism as a factor in solving community problems**

The frontline communities strongly emphasize that their problems differ from household to household, and that ecotourism constitutes only one of the socio-economic development components required. Referring to the needs, aspirations and problems of these communities, it was found that the conflict of interests between the frontline communities themselves and the Limpopo tourism stakeholders exerted a negative impact on the success of community-based tourism.

#### **6.4 GENERAL DISCUSSIONS AND INTERPRETATION**

Community-based tourism is (unfortunately) widely viewed as a complex industry driven by the private sector. In practice, large international companies and the national government often control such projects. The 2004 Limpopo tourism growth strategy indicates that the local communities have recognized the value of tourism and of environmental resources as well as the socio-economic benefits arising from an improved utilization of tourist facilities. The Manyeleti Game Reserve under its present management has nothing to offer the frontline communities. The Limpopo tourism stakeholders are hardly involving the frontline communities at all in tourism-related projects.

Mixed feelings are evident in Dixie; the villagers are more concerned about land claims and tribal conflict than anything else and fear losing their grazing area if they were to start tourism projects in their village. They argued strongly that the traditional authority did not consult with them concerning tourism development

initiatives in their village. They felt that some people and companies wanted to cheat them.

However, on the whole, the frontline communities' attitudes towards community-based tourism in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and its environs were found to be positive. It is therefore evident that, generally speaking, the frontline communities are prepared and willing to participate in tourism planning and development in this area. The Welverdiend community have initiated their own tourism activities in the village.

From the qualitative responses it transpired that the frontline communities wished to be part of tourism development and planning in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and its environs. Unfortunately, the current management system of the reserve offers them only limited opportunities to participate in tourism activities. The concept of an equal partnership between the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and the frontline communities was not understood by those responsible for managing the reserve. The need for partnership was not given sufficient thought during the planning and implementation of the African Ivory Route and the commercialization of the Manyeleti Game Reserve.

Despite this, the DFED rather naively seems to expect the frontline communities to be benefiting from tourism in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, which is not in fact the case. The fieldwork showed that the tourism stakeholders are not encouraging these communities to participate in ecotourism projects in the Manyeleti Game Reserve. It is unrealistic to expect the local community to benefit from tourism in

this reserve because there is no formal relationship to facilitate benefit sharing. Overall, the survey found that the frontline communities were ready to participate in tourism activities and implementation in and around the reserve. The DFED would therefore be able to achieve their main ecotourism objectives only if they could manage to link private sector projects with the frontline communities' own initiatives, as well as with conservation ideals in the reserve.

## **6.5 SUMMARY**

The above findings demonstrate that the passive participation of the frontline communities in tourism activities, together with the lack of an integrated rural development plan and a conservation policy, puts community-based tourism at risk in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and its environs. The only tourism benefits enjoyed by such communities consist of the employment offered by tourism enterprises in the reserve and by the reserve itself. The DFED has therefore not achieved its main objective nor fulfilled the promises it made to the frontline communities.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 SUMMARY

The main aim of this study is to assess the degree to which local communities are participating in tourism activities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and to determine whether they derive any benefit from the reserve. To gain a broader understanding of the community-based tourism situation in Limpopo both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. These demonstrated that the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and the frontline communities were moving into ecotourism for the sake of community and economic development but also for reasons of employment or personal benefits. Hence the development of this sector is complex in origin. This has been confirmed by the literature review and research findings.

In terms of local communities' participation and the benefits gained thereby, as highlighted in Chapter Two, it is quite evident from the research that the inadequate local community participation in tourism structures in the Manyeleti Game Reserve results from both the lack of relevant knowledge amongst the local people and poor management of the reserve by the current owners. Hence, discovering ways of achieving sustainable community-based tourism is a challenging task, as there is only an inadequately integrated co-ordination strategy in the study area at present.

In the light of the above findings, developing sustainable community-based tourism products, which would integrate both nature and cultural activities, is a necessity for the Manyeleti Game Reserve and its environs. The area studied is well positioned to offer a community-based tourism experience, given its natural and cultural resources as well as its people. Therefore, if the DFED in Limpopo Province were to actively support the frontline communities' activities and facilities and integrate these with the Manyeleti Game Reserve's tourism activities to form a complete community-based tourism product, the area could become a competitive ecotourism destination.

After critically reviewing these results, the following conclusions were drawn and recommendations made:

## **7.2 CONCLUSIONS**

The main problem statement established that the lack of an integrated tourism plan and tourism policy in the area investigated contributes greatly to the minimal participation of the frontline communities in tourism-related activities within this region.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs (Boo, 1993), people must first meet the basic needs of survival before they can move towards fulfilling higher needs. It was found that the impoverished local communities could not move up

this hierarchy owing, amongst other reasons, to the inability of the existing tourism structures to uplift them.

The DFED has not fulfilled the expectations they created that the frontline communities would benefit from the Manyeleti Game Reserve. For these communities to gain direct benefits from tourism, projects must be structured in such way that they can accommodate the problems that may arise owing to different collective goals, such as conflicts of interest, misunderstandings amongst members, suspicions and lack of trust.

Tourism enterprises are supposed to initiate labour-intensive projects and encourage active local community participation as well as project ownership by the local communities in order to ensure that tourism projects are sustainable. Yet no strategic integrated tourism plan for this purpose exists.

In addition, the frontline communities, as well as the Limpopo tourism stakeholders, possess limited capacity to deliver because the majority of the participants have not acquired formal professional tourism training qualifications. The tourism stakeholders' level of education, amongst other factors, exerts much influence on tourism development, planning, research, marketing and investment opportunities. Tourism education and training deserve serious attention in the study area as well as in Limpopo Province in general.

In conclusion, it can be confidently asserted that if tourism developers believe that local communities will be satisfied if they are used as labourers instead of being

actively participating owners, sustainable community-based tourism in this area will not be achieved. This study will have served its purpose if it brings about a change in this unsatisfactory situation, and perhaps in similar cases elsewhere.

### **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The DFED needs to support, evaluate and monitor ecotourism and community-based tourism development in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and the surrounding area. The tourism policy and legislation should be structured in such a way as to encourage record keeping for research purposes as well as allowing continuous updating of the tourism knowledge base in the reserve and its surroundings.
2. The DFED needs to alter its approach towards tourism development, planning and implementation in the Manyeleti Game Reserve. Community-based tourism in the study area should be given special recognition in its master plan. The DFED should adhere to the CPPP concept in order to unlock the economic potential in the provincial Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI). This concept must be encouraged and implemented by skilful personnel in order to maximize community participation and economic potential in the area investigated.
3. For community-based tourism to materialize in the Manyeleti Game Reserve and the surrounding area, the frontline communities should develop a pool of resources, including human capital, financial support, marketing exposure and

ownership of tourism projects. These communities must be actively involved in each and every stage of tourism planning and development in order to ensure that all their tourism projects and products are integrated into the reserve's programmes for visitors, e.g. the Welverdiend choral music and traditional dancers.

4. Anthropologists, economists, environmental specialists, politicians and sociologists must develop a better understanding the dynamics of rural communities. They should familiarize themselves with the latter's behaviour, attitudes, norms and values as well as with the way in which rural people approach the idea of development leading to a sustainable livelihood.
5. The local communities must be listened to and involved in development programmes or projects in their villages right from the start. This process will represent a significant step forward in ensuring more adequate community participation in tourism.

#### **7.4 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

The Manyeleti Game Reserve management and concession managers refused (for undisclosed reasons) to release their tender documents and concession agreement documents. Possibly they were concerned about such information being published or perhaps they had not complied with the necessary procedures for tender documents or concession agreements. This gap in the researcher's knowledge constituted one of the major difficulties and limitations encountered in the study.

The researcher was not able to involve the local community in the Manyeleti Game Reserve questionnaire. Because of the land claim and local politics the stakeholders were talking on behalf of the frontline communities. This constituted a further limitation on the study.

To make optimal development possible in this reserve, some knowledge of rural development is essential. Therefore future research projects should try to engender mutual trust amongst the tourism stakeholders and encourage information dissemination as well as record keeping by both the Limpopo tourism stakeholders and the frontline communities.

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# **LIST OF APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRES**

## Appendix 1: The Limpopo Tourism Stakeholders' Questionnaire

My Name is Charles Mametja. I am an Ecotourism Master's Degree Student at the University of Pretoria. Will you please complete this questionnaire for me? The information provided is for an academic research project.

Name of the interviewer ..... Date.....

Department.....

Province .....

### 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Please indicate your:

#### 1.1 Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

#### 1.2 Age group

20-29	<input type="checkbox"/>
30-39	<input type="checkbox"/>
40-49	<input type="checkbox"/>
50-59	<input type="checkbox"/>
60+	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.3 Highest educational qualifications

Up to standard 5	
Standard 6-8	
Standard 8-10	
Diploma	
Degree	
Other	

1.4 What is your occupation?.....

.....

.....

**2 PROJECT**

2.1 Have you hosted any Ecotourism conferences/meetings with the Mnisi communal people?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

How many times? .....

.....

When? .....

.....

2.2 In your opinion, do the frontline communities perceive any need for Ecotourism in the Manyeleti Game Reserve?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Why do you say so?.....  
.....  
.....

2.3 In your opinion, can Ecotourism contribute towards solving frontline communities' problems?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Why do you say so?.....  
.....  
.....

What do you conceive community-based tourism to be?.....  
.....  
.....

2.4 What is the level of community participation?

2.4.1 In the African Ivory Route camps?

Good	Fair	Poor

2.4.2 In the Manyeleti main camp?

Good	Fair	Poor

2.4.3 In the concession camps?

Good	Fair	Poor

2.5 Are the frontline communities allowed to use natural resources from/ in the  
Manyeleti Game Reserve?

Livestock grazing	
Fetching water	
Collecting wood	
Cutting thatching grass	
Hunting	
Other	

Who decides?.....  
.....  
.....

2.6 Do you think that the commercialization of the Manyeleti is going to benefit the frontline communities?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Why do you say so?.....  
.....  
.....

2.7 Do you offer any skills development training to the individuals or to the frontline communities in and around Manyeleti?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Why do you say so?.....  
.....  
.....

2.8 How do you perceive the Ecotourism potential in the Manyeleti?

.....  
.....  
.....

2.9 How do you perceive the Ecotourism potential in the frontline communities?

.....  
.....  
.....

2.10 What are the ecotourism opportunities that you have identified?

2.10.1 In the main camp.....

.....  
.....

2.10.2 In the frontline communities.....

.....  
.....

2.11 What are the ecotourism threats that you have identified?

2.11.1 In the

Manyeleti.....

.....  
.....

2.11.2 In the frontline communities .....

.....  
.....

2.11.3 In the province.....

.....  
.....

2.11.4 National.....

.....  
.....

2.11.5 In conservation areas.....

.....  
.....

2.12 What are your future plans concerning local community involvement in the  
Manyeleti Game Reserve?.....

.....  
.....

**Appendix 2: The Socio-economic needs assessment in the frontline  
communities**

My Name is Charles Mametja. I am an Ecotourism Master's Student at the University of Pretoria. Will you please complete this questionnaire for me? The information provided is for an academic research project.

Name of the interviewer ..... Date.....

Department.....

Province .....

**1 GENERAL INFORMATION**

Please indicate your:

1.1 Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

### 1.2 Age group

20-29	
30-39	
40-49	
50-59	
60+	
Other	

### 1.3 Marital status of respondents

Single	
Married	
Divorced	
Widow or Widowed	
Other	

### 1.4 How many dependants/people do you have in your household?

Number	Dependants
1-4	
4-5	
5-8	
8-12	

1.5 Can you read?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

1.6 Can you write?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

1.7 Highest level of education

Up to standard 5	
Standard 6-8	
Standard 8-10	
Diploma	
Degree	
Other	

1.8 What is your occupation? .....

## 2 PROJECT

2.1 Have you attended any community-based tourism activities in the Manyeleti Game Reserve?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

2.2 If yes, please state how many in:

Past five years since 1997	
Past four years since 1998	
Past three years since 1999	
Past two years since 2000	
Last year 2002	
This year 2003	

2.3 If not, why not?.....

.....

.....

2.4 In your opinion, do you think there is any need for community-based tourism  
in the Manyeleti Game Reserve or in your village?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes, please indicate why your answer is yes?.....

.....

.....

If no, please indicate why you say so?.....

.....

.....

2.5 In your opinion, does community-based tourism contribute towards solving community problems?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes, specify how?.....

.....

.....

If no, why?.....

.....

.....

2.6 Have you attended any tourism-related courses?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes,

where?.....

.....

For how long?.....

.....

2.7 Did you identify any community-based tourism opportunities in your village?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

2.8 Do you have any future plans concerning community-based tourism in your village?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

2.9 Which trends have you identified in community-based tourism? Be more specific?.....

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPORATION**

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU**