

Determinants of Gender Willingness to Participate in Co-Management of Ecotourism Resources: The Case of Kisumu County

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Abstract:

Gender is one of the integral aspects that emerge in environmental resource management for ecotourism planning amongst various players. There are hardly any gender studies that have been carried out in Kisumu to consider the significance differences of gender division of roles within the community towards ecotourism as an important component of environmental resource management. The glaring gap that has emerged from these studies is gender equity framework for men and women to carry out environmental activities has either been left out, or minimally considered. This study's objective was to examine differences in willingness of men and women to participate in environment based ecotourism activities in Kisumu County. The study was a qualitative study that used case study design. The study was conducted in Kisumu County, the sample are adeduced through purposive. Purposive sampling was also used to identify key informants. Data was collected using key informant interviews, Focus Group Discussions, direct participant observation and review of secondary sources. Data analysis methods used were, Content Analysis and Force Field Analysis. The study findings revealed that there are intervening variables identified as Force Fields, which are external determinant factors that either catalyzed or impeded willingness to participate in ecotourism activities by men and women. Key recommendations of this study were: to enhance gender participation, there was need for: induction and targeted training modules; convene gender responsive meetings; skill enhancement training to reduce language barrier; exposure tours; gender needs- based financial and budgeting capacity building; strategize ecotourism as a top-notch income source and forge global-wide strategic networks and Private Public Partnerships (PPP)

Key words: *Ecotourism, Co-management, Environment Based Resources, Gender*

1. Introduction

Ecotourism as a community activity is globally considered the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry, growing at rates of 10%–12% per year, which is three times faster than the traditional tourism industry as a whole (The International Ecotourism Society TIES, 2008). More importantly, ecotourism has been embraced by a number of developing countries- that are home to many of the world's rare and threatened species - with a hope of improving their economies in a way that is environmentally sustainable (Brooks, *et al* 2006). In addition, there has been a steady increase of interest in the number of local communities becoming more involved in the tourism industry, and more particularly with ecotourism seeking to gain from it's robust economic benefits (Hinch, 2004). Integrated conservation models have specifically presented ecotourism as an effective instrument of enhancing rural livelihoods while protecting the environment (Becken and Schellhorn, 2007). Thus, ecotourism is being embraced as a potential economic alternative by many rural communities who are motivated by the economic opportunities for job

creation, new business ventures, local skill development and a possibility of securing greater control over natural resource utilization.

At a global scale, the international agenda is shifting towards environmental concerns and sustainability in ecotourism planning. It therefore becomes paramount in ecotourism planning to understand women's and men's relationships to the environment. The gender relationship to the environment is an important aspect that facilitates the development of solutions for more sustainable use of natural resources. Therefore, ignoring gender distorts the understanding of human impacts on the environment since women and men have different gender-based roles and responsibilities in their own lives, families, households, and communities. Gender differences are also manifested in different environmental attitudes, access to, and control over natural resources, and in the different opportunities that present themselves for participation in decisions regarding natural resource use.

In many countries, socially prescribed roles mean that women and girls generally have greater interaction with nature than men. According to Scheyvens (2000), in many parts of the developing world, rural women and girls compared to men, are more willing to be involved in environmental activities such as being responsible for collection of water, fodder and fuel wood. They are also in some instances involved in income generating activities based on the sale of environmental products, and crafts made from reeds and grasses. Similarly, in marine environments women are involved in gathering of fish for both household and commercial consumption. Therefore, a general trend is women as the natural constituency for environmental endeavors, suffer the most when soil erodes, water sources go dry, or trees disappear compared to men. According to Joekes, *et al* (1996), this then justifies why many environmental intervention projects are inclined towards women as the entry points. In contrast, men especially in many developing regions of the world play a greater role than women in the exploitation of natural resources for commercial purpose activities such as logging, grazing livestock, fishing, mining, and extracting various tree products.

However, it is notable that while both women and men are involved in economic activities such as farming, women have additional domestic responsibilities such as food preparation, water and fuel wood collection, child care, and maintaining family health, thus men's domestic responsibilities may be limited. In Africa for instance, women are the main food producers because of their major role in subsistence farming (Gladwin, *et al*, 2001). In addition, where women's roles place them in close connection with the physical environment, they develop willingness to engage in environmental activities as well as an interest in protecting the environment. Women as a constituency are the main nurturers of the natural environment and their gender roles do blend well with ecotourism planning activities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Gender Willingness

Gender willingness is a key aspect in the success of co-management of environment resources in ecotourism planning. Hayombe, Agong, Maria, Mossberg and Odede (2012), identified willingness to participate or local community intention and readiness to engage in ecotourism as a sustainability factor for ecotourism transformation. However, willingness as a function of the environmental conditions, according to Bahri (2012), is essential in providing better explanations about the extent to which physical, ecological and environmental status of beaches influence participation. Numerous studies indicate that the most important factor that accounts for the success of ecotourism is the willingness for active participation and involvement by the local community (Isaac Kuuder and Wuleka, 2012). This confirms Chambers (1998) earlier argument that for ecotourism to have a local impact then the success of the impact largely depends on the level of willingness by the community to participate within the project. Thus, ecotourism projects are generally formed with the idea that they will lead to sustainable development and that communities will be able to "initiate and control development" over a period of time (Lyons *et al*, 2001, 1237). This follows then participation is a function of willingness and attitudes. Therefore, it is the involvement of stakeholders in a decision-making process is referred to as participation in decision-making, because any meaningful relation with a decision-making process should require a mutually exchange of views and information.

2.2 Willingness and Participatory ecotourism planning

According to Reed (2008), participation as an approach needs to be underpinned by the philosophy that emphasizes gender empowerment, equity, trust and learning. As a way to mainstream gender issues, a gender perspective in participation to environmental management should be considered as early as possible

in the thought process, representing the various gender needs systematically. Arguments have been advanced that sustainable and viable ecotourism planning is that which empowers the local communities. Community participation in ecotourism planning and development is often regarded as panacea for the social and environmental impacts ascribed to mass tourism (Southgate, 2006). The empowerment implied here is that of local participation. (Akama, 1996; Gauthier, 1993). These views can further be summarized in what Larsen (1996) opined that effective ecotourism planning can empower local communities by giving them a sense of pride in and awareness of the importance of their natural resources and control over their own development. According to Staudt (1990), empowerment herein is taken to be 'as a process by which people acquire the ability to act in ways to control their lives'. Based on these arguments, one then can conclude that from a development perspective, planned ecotourism ventures should only be considered 'successful' if they promote empowerment, with local communities having some measure of control over ecotourism development and sharing equitably in any benefits deriving there from.

Therefore, for ecotourism planning to be participatory, integration of people's attitudes as a building block to community involvement has to be incorporated. A study by KLIP (2013), points to the fact that an entry point to harnessing ecotourism in a local context is need for a change of attitude among community members. This is imperative because local community members possess the ability to directly affect quality of their natural environment through individual behaviors, which may depend on people's perceptions of the environment. Zhang and Lei (2009); Honey (2008), underpin an individual's perception affects environmental quality. Hayombe, Agong, Nystrom, Mossberg, Malbert and Odede, (2012), recommend that one of the significant sustainability factors in ecotourism planning is local community's perceptions, which is critical at the planning and initiation of any ecotourism project. these arguments however are not inclusive of the other factors that determine differences in willingness towards participating in environmental activities, and among them is gender; a concept that is based on being male or female.

3. Study Method

The study was carried out in Kisumu County. Dunga beach in this study was considered as a convergence point for ecotourism activities, therefore through purposive sampling Dunga beach was selected based on its unique characteristics out of the 25 beaches in Kisumu Central and West Sub-counties.

Primary and secondary data were sourced from the study field, libraries, reputable internet websites, government institutions, NGOs and CBOs.

Interview schedules were used for face-to-face interviews with key informants. The key informants were end users and managers of environmental resources. The key informants were identified as resource persons because of their institutional position and expertise. The key informants consisted of BMU committee officials, a male and female, were interviewed from Dunga beach to obtain the gender view of the issues discussed.

Discussion Guides were used for Focus Group Discussion. The guides were structured around a set of carefully predetermined probing questions to guide the group discussions. The researcher played the facilitator role during the FGDs.

Secondary data was collected through document analysis of existing archival records from the County offices of Kisumu. Thematic data was sourced from thematic information obtained from the Physical Planning Department, Environment-related data from National Environment and Coordination Authority, Fisheries office and Gender data from the County Gender office. Literature reviews based on relevant thematic areas of the study was done and data extracted from published books, scholarly articles and journals.

The research procedure for data collection entailed carrying out a reconnaissance visit to the study area in the month of June 2014 to have a general appreciation of the area dynamics by the researcher.

Qualitative data was analyzed using Force Field Analysis. Force Field Analysis was used as a qualitative method of analysis to get a whole view of all the forces for or against achievement of gender equity in the ecotourism decision making process towards accommodating the interests of both men and women.

IBM SPSS version 20, a computer aided software, was utilized in the study to facilitate analysis and processing of data gathered from the field. Data that was generated was presented in the form of charts,

photographs and thematic statements to describe various aspects of willingness to participate in co-management of environmental resources for ecotourism planning.

4. Results and Discussions

Through a qualitative analysis known as Force Field analysis, the study confirmed that there are other intervening variables identified as Force Fields. Force fields in willingness to participate were external determinant factors that either catalyzed or impeded willingness to participate. Using the Dunga Ecotourism Association (DECTA) FGDs for men and women in Dunga beach, two categories of Force Fields were identified; the driving forces (catalyzing factors) and restraining forces (impeding factors) as depicted in figure 1.

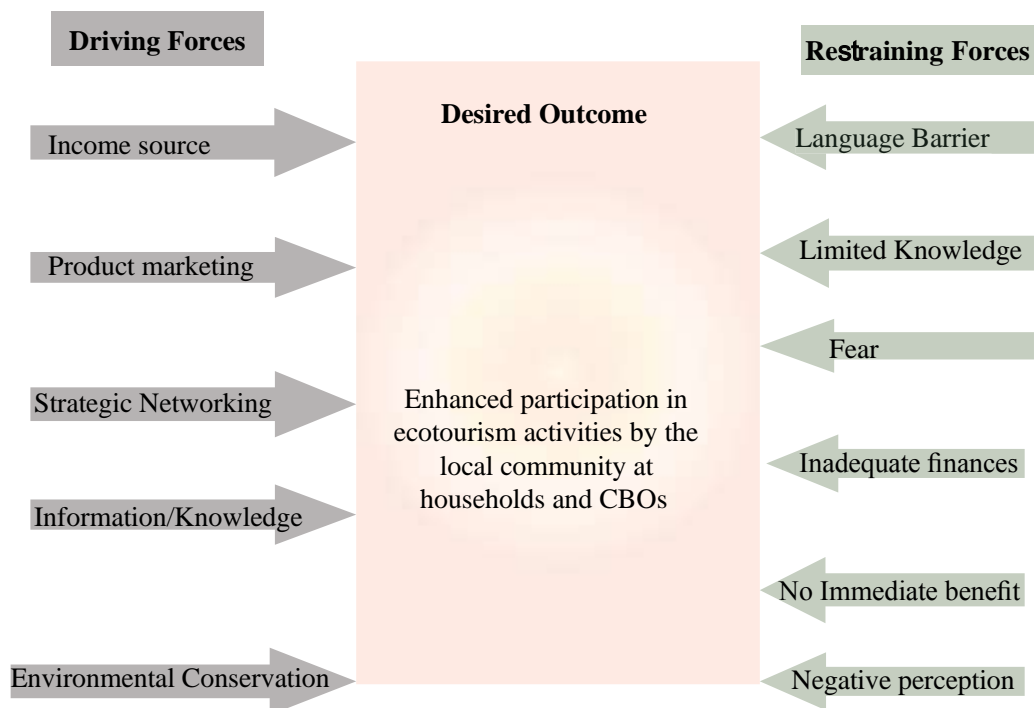


Figure 1: Results of Force Field Analysis (DECTA)

4.1 Catalyzing factors of willingness to participate (Driving force)

4.1.1 Alternative income source

Involvement in ecotourism was seen as an alternative source of income, considering that fishing as a main economic activity was no longer viable. A female participant from the women DECTA group indicated that the benefits of ecotourism were: it brings food on table because their fish was being bought, crafts were being bought and tour guides were being paid. This finding is consistent with results from a study by Dowley, Amy, (2007), that assessed how women in the floating village of Prek Toal in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, participated and benefitted from the ecotourism activities in their area. The study also investigated women’s perspective on ecotourism within their community, how it affects their lives, and if they have expectations of current and future benefits or changes resulting from ecotourism. A study by Redmond (2001), analyzed the participation of rural women in ecotourism in Belize, recommended that from a Gender, Environment and Development perspective, which recognizes that women were more adversely affected by environmental degradation than men are, ecotourism initiatives should only be considered sustainable if the diverse needs of men, women and children within a community are met. Healy (1994) had also found out that environmental conservation was very difficult unless economic benefits can

be secured for local people, thus ecotourism offers a possible income source, provided that there is a means of local revenue capture from the ecotourists.

4.1.2 Product marketing

Involvement in ecotourism had enabled the community in Dunga diversify and come up with alternative income generating projects. Some of the activities that the Dunga Women in tour guiding group were involved in entailed; fishing mongering, selling of crafts products like mats, tour guiding of different species of tree, wetland and bird watching. The male DECTA group had developed a wetland gallery. Those interviewed indicated that product marketing had helped them grow their customer base, enabled them have identify as an industry leader and to some extent meet their market goals. Product marketing had also aided them stay in touch with their customers because they were able to respond to customer-driven needs depending on their preference, taste and perception. It was through product marketing that they were able to be responsive by developing a strong competitive edge and niche product. While it may not be cost-effective to develop a new product for every customer need, they managed to identify the most common needs and developed products in consonance to the specific customers. Product marketing had also helped them constantly monitor the market so you know when a new product has come to the end of its useful life to necessitate innovativeness by creating unique products other than the routine traditional products.

4.1.3 Strategic networking

Those interviewed indicated that they had greatly benefitted as groups and as a local community through strategic networking. It was revealed that since they became involved in ecotourism activities, they were able to meet people of different walks of life: One of the females said; *“they had met wazungus, professors, visitors from Nairobi and everybody else...”* A male participant revealed that through ecotourism, he had been able to visit Sweden on an ecotourism exchange programme on behalf of his group. The broad spectrum of people they had met enabled them make new friends and have new contacts. From the interviews, the benefits of strategic networking would be summarized as follows:

Networking was considered to have valuable benefits such as expanding their knowledge base, as well as learning from the success of others, attaining new clients and passing information to others about their ecotourism activities. Strategic networking also opened an avenue for generation of referrals and increased business opportunities for joint ventures that were aligned to their ecotourism business goals. Networking additionally provided them with a great source of connections, through exposure as they attended training workshops and interacted with people who were highly influential both in government and the private sector, of which without networking they would not have been otherwise able to easily talk to or find. Through these networks they became visible, noticeable as a group and were able to tap into advice and expertise that they wouldn't otherwise have been able to get hold of. Research by Plummer and Fitzgibbon (2004) and Pahl-Wostl (2009), have proved that social networks between groups of local resource users and local communities played a major role in reflective knowledge generation. Berkes (2009), underpinned the importance of bringing together different actors as well as the importance of networks that span multiple levels of social organization for accessing diverse information, learning, and engagement with the external world.

4.1.4 Acquired new knowledge

It was revealed through the interviews that ecotourism had enabled both men and women learn new things and gain knowledge which they did not have before. For instance, one female participant remarked that they did not know the names of the various trees species in Dunga but after being involved in ecotourism they were able to remember the specific names of the plants. In contrast, the male participant seemed to have acquired more knowledge than the women, because they were able give the specific naming the plants species such as Yellow Liander, Nim tree, Ginetia African, Iron Wood, Papyrus and aquatic plants such as Water Lilies, Water Hyacinth and Hippo Grass. The women however indicated that they had acquired knowledge that added value to their work. Some of the women had acquired knowledge on crafting using hyacinth and papyrus, branding of traditional food cuisine and tour guiding. On the other hand, some of the men also had acquired new skills on boat racing and riding, fishing and tour guiding. Zhang and Lei (2012), in a study of residents' intention to participate in ecotourism in a wetland community of Beimen,

established that residents' environmental knowledge positively affects attitudes towards ecotourism, which in turn directly and indirectly determine the intention to participate in ecotourism through their individual choice of activities.

4.1.5 Environmental conservation

Environmental conservation activities were considered to have increased as result of being involved in ecotourism ventures as a DECTA group. The main mandate of the DECTA group in conservation was conservation of the DUNGA wetland, collect environmental data and create awareness on environmental information. According to those interviewed environmental conservation meant planting trees along the lake shores, attending trainings organized by various NGOs and implementing knowledge acquired by applying at household level and in groups they were members. The results of conserving the environment were evident because members of the DECTA group had formed vigilante groups to watch over those who cut down trees along the beach shores for firewood or charcoal. Both men and women had also started off beautification of the beaches through ensuring that there is no indiscriminate dumping of waste, preservation of indigenous species, sweeping of the beach line especially by the women. The male DECTA had started of a Dunga Ecological School that displayed environmental artifacts, documented environmental data and played documentaries on environmental ecotourism sites in Dunga. The female DECTA were involved in a program of reviving the papyrus plant through planting, growing and nurturing papyrus and using it as a raw material for crafting. The local community in general was involved in raising tree nurseries with an aim of increasing the number of trees both at home and at the beaches. Environmental conservation according to a study done by USAID in Costa Rica (2012), proved that environmental conservation of ecotourism resources helped in raising appreciation for biological resources and leading to better conservation practices by the local populations.

4.2 Challenges impeding willingness to participate (Restraining forces)

4.2.1 Language barrier

Although level of literacy was average in the local community, majority of the women's level of education was at primary level was 55.3%, while that for men was 41.0%. Both male and female participants indicated that they were not competent enough to communicate in English as the official language and Kiswahili as the national language. One female participant remarked: "it is difficult to talk to visitors like Chinese...." while a male participant said, "...English is hard visitor language..." These statements confirmed that as tour guides, they experienced language barrier especially when they encountered ecotourists of other nationalities, whose main language of communication was English. In essence a tour guide needed some specific jargon that was used in the ecotourism sector, for instance the scientific names for the aquatic plants and animals. Tour guiding as an ecotourism activity basically involved being a good conversationalist, namely welcoming the ecotourists, smiling, gesturing cordially, showing around the ecotourism sites and giving historical and cultural narratives. Both the male and female participants indicated that they were more competent in the dholuo dialect compared to any other dialect. This sometimes resulted in them as tour guides needing someone to translate what they said to the ecotourist, thus in turn would distort the original meaning. Studies conducted previously have emphasized literacy levels as a key determinant in the extent to which communities participate in ecotourism planning (Thakadu ,2005; Htun, et.al 2012; Cole, 2006). The results of these studies were indicative of the relationship between the lack of confidence in community participation and language prowess. A large majority of local interviewees noted that, they failed to involve ecotourism activities as well as natural conservation effectively due to the limitation of their capacity to communicate.

4.2.2 Inadequate training

Training is requisite factor for building adequate capacities within local communities that are involved in ecotourism planning. Those males engaged in ecotourism activities in Dunga beach compared to their female counterparts had been exposed to more training opportunities. However, both gender felt the trainings they had got were intermittent and inadequate. DECTA members in the group discussion expressed concern on the inadequacy of the training sessions, with a female participant who expressed this by saying, "... training, training, training not enough...". The male participant said "...would say, there are many things that need to teach us. They teach us very little, we are still hungry for ecotourism workshop."

A number of studies have shown that the lack of sufficient training can be seen as one factor hindering most locals from taking up the responsibility to practice ecotourism activities (Himoonde, 2007; Neth, 2008). To explain this point, it is argued that, the supply of practical skills training programs such as language skills, hygiene and food safety, hospitality services, communication skills, is very important for communities as an ingredient of more confidence for active planning of ecotourism ventures (Neth, 2008). Although some of the local people from Dunga, for example, were trained by KLIP in ecotourism skills and income generation activities such as cooking, guiding, business management, site branding and record keeping; the training was considered not adequate. With regard to training, most of the interviewees were in concurrence that the training programs provided by government and NGOs were limited compared to a wide range of ecotourism activities they were involved in.

4.2.3 Limited knowledge

It was also evident from the FGD that specific knowledge was required in most activities of ecotourism. One of the female participants indicated that: I have small knowing of ecotourism, how to do it to bring good money and feel good. A male participant remarked: ecotourism is all about fishing, while another female participant said: we know boat riding is a very good activity and we admire doing it even if we don't know how to boat ride. The participants cited for instance that they lacked requisite knowledge skills in proposal writing, fund mobilization and raising. Previous studies undertaken have shown that to carry out ecotourism as a profitable venture one requires knowledge, both traditional and scientific knowledge (Castro and Nielsen, 2001). An official within the fisheries department in Kisumu County confirmed that the lack of knowledge by the women in the community had hampered their effective participation in ecotourism activities.

4.2.4 Fear

Fear was a predominant phenomenon in women compared to men in some of the ecotourism activities that both gender participated in such as tour guiding. The interviews revealed that most women feared being fully involved in ecotourism because of the perception that ecotourism was a male dominated activity. Moreover, men were considered to be thriving more than women. Women also feared that the ecotourist would see them not as equally capable as their male counterparts. The fear of meeting first time ecotourists as strangers was more evident among females, more so because of being accustomed to spending most of the time at home while undertaking household chores. One of the female interviewee said that: *I fear speaking because I may speak the wrong thing or may not say anything right, so I run away.* Much of the fear expressed by the women was associated with lack of confidence due to inadequate practical skills.

In his study research findings, Neth (2008), argued that, the supply of practical skills training programs, such as language skills, hygiene and food safety, hospitality services and communication skills is very important. Practical skills according to Neth (2008), is important to a community that is actively involved in ecotourism planning, because overtime, the community develops confidence. Though both men and women were involved in tour guiding, the women were more constrained to participate in tour guiding compared to men thus tour guiding was done more by men than women. Results showed that habitually women's availability as tour guides was prompted by being beckoned upon by an ecotourist to take them around. The male on the contrary strategically positioned themselves for the arrival ecotourists and expeditiously extended help to the ecotourist before being prompted to do so.

4.2.5 Inadequate finances

It was evident that lack of financial resources to start up ecotourism activities was a major impediment to being involved in ecotourism activities for both men and women. For a long time, there had been overreliance on fish as the mainstay of the local economy, as men fished from the lake women depended on men for fish stock that had drastically declined, thus the need for diversification. According to Sindiga (1999), ecotourism forms the basis for diversification of local people as an alternative source of finance. The women indicated that they were not able to diversify to other economically viable activities such as ecotourism because they lacked the seed capital to set up new businesses. They also indicated that even if they had money which they would plough back into ecotourism ventures, it was difficult to place ecotourism ventures as priority activities while other domestic demands related to fending for the family

were still not met. The FDGS findings showed that the other reason for inadequate finance was because of low local ecotourist payment fees and intermittent flow of ecotourists. Cumulatively this resulted into a feeling of apathy towards ecotourism, especially among women.

4.2.6 No immediate benefit

The other challenge to willingness to participation in ecotourism was that ecotourism did not bring immediate returns that would be felt directly. A requisite for establishment in any ecotourism activity, they needed to go through a number of support activities first. As individual members of the DECTA group they had to first form the group. Thereafter register it, make contributions and meet severally for planning and trainings. Women were more specific that as a group they have had to package and market themselves as equally capable as their male counterparts. Despite such enormous effort, they still did not feel much economic benefit trickling in. This is in concurrence with the findings of study carried by Duong Thi Minh Phuong (2015), of Talai Commune, in Nam Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam, that found out that most of the villagers in the Talai considered themselves poor, with unstable and limited income sources. The Talai community through engagement in ecotourism were just able to meet their basic and immediate needs. As a result, it was very difficult for them to think about ecotourism conservation activities, which required long-term planning and a clear vision. Thus, engaging the women in ecotourism activities continuously was a challenge, since they preferred to do other routine income generating activities such as vending vegetables or wares before engaging in ecotourism activities later in the day.

4.2.7 Negative perception

The culturally “unspoken” restrictions on what roles would be appropriate for women within such ventures were a great impediment to participation by women compared to men. Though women welcomed ecotourism, quite often they were restricted from the most lucrative aspects of the enterprise, thus resorted to working as cooks or cleaners. The women indicated that many people found it awkward of them as women to be guides in the beaches, yet it was those women who dared to assume responsibility for guiding around ecotourism sites that were doing it well. Through direct observation and photography at Dunga beach, it was evident that the women mainly carried out activities related to fish scaling, frying or selling. In contrast the men seemed to readily wait by for any ecotourists who arrived. This they did, because of the confidence they had acquired overtime as tour guides.

The study findings revealed that the impact of negative perception on women involvement was conspicuous in that compared to their male counterparts, because women tour guiding was not yet known and popular. They also indicated that there was negative perception of ecotourism being considered an activity for spoilt women. One of the participants indicated that those involved in tour guiding would be told in the local dialect “ter ler dalani” which when loosely translated meant “take cleanliness to your home”. Such a statement is an example of an indicator that depicts the general community’s negative perception on those who venture to be involved in ecotourism activities.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that there were determinant factors to willingness to participate. The determinant factors were either driving forces (catalyzing factors) or restraining forces ((impending factors). Driving forces that needed to be enhanced were: ecotourism as a source of income, the benefit of product marketing, forging strategic networks, knowledge acquisition and environmental conservation, while the restraining forces to be enhanced were ecotourism as a source of income, the benefit of product marketing, forging strategic networks, knowledge acquisition and environmental conservation restraining factors to be mitigated were language barrier, limited knowledge, fear, inadequate finances, no immediate benefit and negative perception.

6. Recommendations

Induction and targeted training modules: This would be conducted to minimize the language barrier, limited knowledge, fear, inadequate finances, no immediate benefit and negative perception. These trainings can be done periodically, based on the gender felt need. The trainings would also be developed thematically

with intentional gender lenses, aimed at achieving power equity, empowerment and capacity building for the community in the context of sustainable ecotourism management. When such strategic training is done, eventually they would improve the management capacity of the local community and local knowledge through some activities that focus on ecological, social and economic aspects.

Convene Gender responsive meetings: The findings indicated that women were passive participants in meetings. To improve women's participation in decision-making in public meetings, separate group discussions for men and women should first be held, with each group then electing a representative to speak at the actual meeting. This would encourage women to have confidence to stand up and speak. In addition, women would specifically be asked to give their views when preparing for meetings in order to ensure that the interests of female in the study area were heard.

Skill enhancement training to reduce language barrier: The two national languages spoken in Kisumu County were Swahili and English. Dholuo was the most widely spoken native language in the area. To mitigate against language barrier, informal language learning classes would be started with an emphasis on gender peer learning amongst the local community. Women would teach fellow women and men would do the same amongst themselves. This would apply to all the three languages. Incrementally, more emphasis would be placed on the relevant ecotourism jargon, so as to enhance their verbal communication skills with the ecotourism industry players. On a more upscaled level, they would identify amongst themselves those with more language communication prowess and make them their trainers.

Exposure tours: The exposure tours would entail exchange programmes and activities. This would be done with an aim of reducing the challenge of limited knowledge and negative perception. They would visit best practice ecotourism groups and activities, more specifically for and by women. They would then replicate the success stories in Kisumu. Also, those from Kisumu would encourage other groups that are successful to visit them and carry out ecotourism expos and exhibitions, so as to transfer knowledge and change the negative perception about women involvement in ecotourism.

Gender needs- based financial and budgeting capacity building: Continuous needs based gender financial and budgeting capacity building, would help in community members especially women appreciate that financial benefits are graduated, they would be immediate or long term. To therefore mitigate against the challenge of inadequate finances and no immediate benefit, they would be trained on financial capital sourcing, diversification of revenue streams, financial safety nets and appropriate budgeting of income got.

Strategize ecotourism as a top-notch income source: To guide ecotourism developments in the three beaches, in line with the National Tourism Plan, the County Government of Kisumu has to develop a financial implementation framework for co-management of ecotourism projects on beaches. The framework should set out guiding principles for a transparent model for assessing and approving proposals for ecotourism projects in the beaches. Any proposed ecotourism projects should have environmental, social and financial benefits and costs that need to be considered, and that assessment needs to occur within the context of the governing legislative provisions, with emphasis on the community as the top beneficiaries.

Forge global-wide strategic networks and Private Partnerships (PPP): To establish global-wide strategic networks for enhanced sustainable ecotourism planning, an effective PPP needed to be formulated. This would be used as a platform for strengthening the county government of Kisumu ecotourism department, establishment of transparent and participatory mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in decision-making, and partnerships between the state actors, non-state actors, the local community and the internal community for strategic networking reasons. All these actors would then provide a framework for developing appropriate ideas that would be for progressive governance of ecotourism planning in Kisumu County.

Patent and market indigenous knowledge and eco-innovations: Limited marketing opportunities was cited as a challenge. A number of innovations were unique to the ecotourism groups in Kisumu County. These innovations with identified partners be packaged and branded as high quality, unique eco-innovations. The County Government of Kisumu would then help the to market their products through its department of tourism.

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