

17 Participation of Local Communities in Community-Based Tourism

Owen Gohori and Peet van der Merwe

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- ☐ To find out the extent of local people's involvement in the decision-making process in community-based tourism (CBT) projects,
- ☐ To establish how local people in Manicaland Province's CBT projects were involved in the execution of the projects,
- ☐ To ascertain the level of involvement of local people in Manicaland Province in sharing tourism revenues generated from CBT.

Introduction

Local communities' involvement in tourism has received much attention over the years. In developing countries, community-based tourism (CBT) projects in communal areas have been used to promote indigenous people's involvement in tourism. CBT is "*where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community*" (Worldwide Fund for Nature, 2001, p.2). CBT signifies a high degree of community involvement and aims to improve the participating communities' social, cultural, and economic wellbeing and the conservation of the natural environment (Kihima & Musila, 2019). It is considered a type of tourism management practice that produces high levels of involvement from local people (Brohman, 1996; Gutierrez, 2019). Indigenous people's recognition of the benefits of tourism initiatives may be improved by their participation in the planning and decision-making process (Ali et al., 2020).

The unpopularity of top-down approaches that failed to involve local people in tourism gave rise to CBT. It focuses on participatory approaches while emphasising environmental conservation and socioeconomic development (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Jaafar et al., 2020; Tolkach et al., 2013). The host communities are, therefore, an integral part of the CBT experience (Ernawati et al., 2017). One of the