

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE OBUDU MOUNTAIN RACE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Obudu Mountain Race is the only mountain running race in Nigeria. It was conceived as a marketing tool to increase tourists flow to the Obudu Mountain Resort and Cross River State in general. It is generally believed that one current that drives the success of events tourism is the role of host organizations. And of particular interest is the role of the host community in the organization and management of events. This concern is imperative because of the dynamics of community involvement in event organization. The success and sustainability of the Obudu Mountain Race to a large extent depends on the level of community awareness and involvement in the organization of the event. This has motivated the authors to carry out an exploratory research with a view to determining the extent to which the Obudu Mountain Resort Support Communities (OMRSCs) are involved in the organization and management of the Obudu Mountain Race. In depth interviews were done on community leaders who served as informant. Data were collected from six communities' representatives. The result shows that: communities are fairly aware of the existence and history of the event, communities had positive perception of the event and destination attributes, communities were not involved in decision making concerning the organization and management of the event, communities are cognizant of the expected benefits derivable from the staging of the mountain race.

Key Words: Mountain race, sport tourism, community involvement, community participation community perception, tourism impacts

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Cross River State, under the leadership of Mr. Donald Duke introduced the Obudu Mountain Race (OMR) as a destination attraction. It was conceptualized as one of the vehicles to drive world attention to one Obudu Cattle Ranch which has been renamed and branded as Obudu Mountain Resort. The Obudu Mountain Race is an endurance running event. It is the only mountain running race in Nigeria. It is an 11km run from the bottom of the mountain to the top (uphill only) on a large single course (well tired winding road) for all runners. The race is endorsed by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and World Mountain Running Association (WMRA). It is an annual event which holds in November. The first edition was held in 2005. The race has been held four times. It is reported by popular media as the world's richest mountain running race. The prizes money of US\$ 50,000 is the highest in the world. The event has attracted so many international athletes and world champions. The 4th edition of the Obudu Mountain Race took place on the 29TH November, 2008.

Events have dual functions; they perform a social role or act as stimulus for other social activities such as tourism (Shone and Parry, 2008). Apart from its role as a destination marketing strategy, the staging of events has other intangible and intangible benefits. The tangibles include the economic benefits, the emergence of infrastructure and facilities in the destination. The intangibles are destination image and resident pride and cultural exchanges. The aforementioned are the benefits that are generally associated with events and by extension event tourism (Shone and Parry, 2008). A crucial element in the creation of an event is the understanding of the event environment. The context in which an event takes place is a major determinant of its success (Bowdin et al, 2008). Therefore an analysis of event the stakeholders are very important in this regards.

Because of the popularity of event as destination marketing tool and the resulting economic and societal benefits, there has been a tremendous growth of interest by individuals and groups in the society. Bowdin et al (2008) identify three major categories of host organizations involved in event organization and management. This includes; government sector, corporate sector and community sector. The nature of the host organization determines the management structure of the event organization. If the host is from the corporate sector; it is likely to be a company, corporate or industry association who employs the host event manager. If the host is from the government sector, the host organization is likely to be a government employed event manager or contractor. If the host is from the community sector, the host organization is more likely to be a club, society or committee.

Many researchers (Getz, 2005; Goldblatt & Perry, 2000; Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules & Ali, 2002) recognize the importance of the host community being involved in and “owning” the event which in turn emits positive messages to visitors. When community members participate in event staged in that community, they act as advocate on behalf of the event potential participants. These include residents, traders, lobby groups, and public authorities such as council, police, fire and ambulance services. It is believed that host communities have past experience of different events, therefore the event managers can draw on the rich pool of knowledge to ensure the success of an event. Bowdin et al (2008) gave example of two high profile events that failed because of the negative publicity generated by local authorities that claimed the area would not be able to cope with the anticipated large influx of visitors. These include: the Lizard Festival at a cost of £1.5 million and Total Eclipse Festival which led to the bankruptcy of the event organizer. The event failed because of the negative publicity generated by local authorities that claimed the area would not be able to cope with the anticipated large influx of visitors. This negative publicity was escalated by the media.

Heath and Wall (1992) observe that problems of cooperation and coordination between Local Government area (LGA) and Destination Management Organization (DMOs) can be overcome or minimized by seeking a consensus between stakeholders on mission statement, objectives and strategies for the destination as part of a participative management approach. Prideaux and Cooper (2002) assert that without cooperation between LGAs, DMOs and other organizations that directly or indirectly affect tourism, little substantive progress may be made. Event managers are expected to have an appreciation of the broad trends or forces acting on the wide community as these will determine the operating environment of the event. The Obudu Mountain Race is organized by the Cross River State Government. The Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee is Sir William Archibong. The event organization and management is supervised by the Department of Event Management in the Office of the Governor. The community is one of the major stakeholders. Therefore, disposition of the host community is very important in determining the success of and the sustainability of the Obudu Mountain Race. This is imperative since the tourism resource is in the communities and owned by the communities.

The role of the community in the success of event organization and management in recent times has become the subject of discourse among event scholars and practitioners. It is in recognition of this that after the third edition of the Obudu Mountain Race, it became expedient that an assessment of the level of community awareness, involvement and participation be carried out to ascertain the sustainability and viability of the sport tourism event. This has necessitated the current study. The result of this study would influence the event organization, management and marketing of the Obudu Mountain Race.

Specific objectives of the study

- a. To investigate the level of community awareness of the organization of the Obudu Mountain Race.
- b. To determine community perception of event organization, services, infrastructure and facilities adequacy.
- c. To measure community attitude toward the Obudu Mountain Race.
- d. The measure community perception of the impact of the Obudu Mountain Race on host community.
- e. To determine the level of community involvement in the organization of the Obudu Mountain Race.
- f. To investigate community aspiration and sustainability of the Mountain Race
- g. To make recommendations with the view of contributing to improvement in the quality of event organization and management, thereby ensuring viability and sustainability.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Nature and scope of sport tourism

Up-to-date, there is still taxonomical and definitional difficulty in the understanding of sport tourism. However, much progress has been made in that regard. This is because there is an emerging scholarly interest in sport tourism which reflects to some extent a growing awareness within the leisure industry that sport and tourism products have complementary features (Ritchie and Adair, 2002). A review of extant literature shows the elements, relationships and impacts of sport tourism. According to Gibson (1998), sport tourism “includes travel to participate in a passive (e.g. sports events and sports museums) or active sport holiday (e.g. scuba, cycling, golf), and it may involve instances where either sport or tourism is the dominant activity or reason for travel”. Standevan and Deknop (1999: 12) defines sport tourism as “all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locality”. Two motivations for participation in sport tourism are indicated in this definition: business and leisure. Mountain running is a sporting activity. According to the Secretary of World Mountain Running Association (WMRA) (Gozzelino, 2009:1) mountain running is “a type of athletics, is not climbing or similar activities; it is first of all running, not inside a stadium, not only in a field, but on the mountain”. The history of mountain running pre-dates modern track and field, road and cross country. Records have it that the first official mountain running event known as Fell Race took place in England in the 19th century.

Community involvement and participation in sport tourism

There are conceptual models that facilitate the understanding of the phenomenology of community participation in the context of development (Tosun, 2002; Pretty, 1995; Tosun, 1999). Tosun (2006:494) defines community participation as “a term that allows people, citizens or a host community participates in their affairs at different levels; local, regional or national”. Tosun (2006) suggested a three form typology of community participation specifically in tourism: spontaneous participation, induced participation and coercive participation.

Spontaneous community participation emphasizes the provision of full managerial responsibility and authority to the host community. The induced community participation refers to one where the host community has a voice regarding tourism development process and has opportunity to hear and to be heard. It is top-down approach, a passive and indirect form of community participation most commonly found in developing countries in which host communities only endorse and may participate in implementation of tourism development issues or decision made for them rather by them. The community is often involved partly in the decision making process and has no power to ensure that its views are considered for implementation, especially by other powerful interest groups such as government bodies, multi-national companies and international tour operators. In the coercive community participation, the host community is not as fully involved in decision making process as it is in induced participation. Here some decisions are made specifically “to meet basic needs of host community so as to avoid potential socio-political risks for tourist and tourism development (Tosun, 2006).

Community involvement should not be limited to only a few members of the community such as leaders or elites. Ottong and Bassey (2009:58) assert that, “it should cut across all segments of the community. This will prevent alienation thereby stimulating the sense of belongingness and the spirit of cooperation among community members”.

Importance of community involvement and participation in sport tourism

Kibicho (2003) in his study found that in Kenya’s coastal tourism, community participation provided a linkage between local community involvement in tourism activities and their support for its development. Vincent and Thompson (2002) assert that sustainable tourism development cannot be achieved without community support. The proponents of community tourism believe that community participation seeks to improve the welfare of the local community. It also helps the event managers to win the support of the community in conservation of tourism resources. It can be seen that community participation is inevitable and imperative for tourism development. This is because most tourist attractions lie within local communities or in the vicinities and in most cases co-exists side by side with the communities. Secondly, tourism happens in the community, since they are the ones who often bear the negative impacts of tourism and sometimes even form part of the tourism products and experiences that visitors seek (Kibicho, 2003; Havel, 1996; Scheyvens, Li, 2005, Tosun, 2000). The benefit of community participation is seen as it ensure the protection of tourism products and services through effective collaborative management of the industry towards a more community driven planning approach that guarantees strong community support for successful tourism development (Tosun, 2000).

This forms the nexus that links sustainable tourism and community participation.

Barriers to community participation in tourism development

Factors that prevent effective involvement and participation in tourism industry according to (Tosun, 2000, Manyara & Jones, 2007; Cole, 2006) include:

1. Limited enthusiasm toward the industry thereby resulting in little benefits that trickle down to grass-roots and local communities (manyara & Jones, 2007).
2. Operational limitation. Centralization of the public administration of tourism development, lack of coordination between involved partners and lack of information made available to the local people of the tourist destination as attributed to, but not limited to, insufficient data and poor dissemination of information. Under this condition, low public involvement in the tourism development process is obvious and people are not wee-informed.
3. Structural limitation. Limited capacity of the poor to effectively handle development. Apathy to take part in matters beyond the immediate family domain can be partly attributed to many years or centuries of exclusion from socio-cultural, economic and political affairs. A low level of awareness of such issues stops the poor from demanding that these needs be accommodated by the institute which serves them.
4. Other barriers include:
 - Lack of ownership, capital, skills, knowledge and resources (Cole, 2006)
 - Apart from skills and knowledge, Manyara and Jones (2007) added knowledge, ownership of tourism resources, elitism, empowerment, leak of revenue, partnership, access to tourists, transparency on the benefits sharing and lack of an appropriate policy framework to support the development of community initiatives.

Residents' involvement in tourism will depend on how individuals within a host community take part in any tourism activity taking place within their locality either as participants, volunteers or rendering services for money. Ap (1992) suggests that members of the host community who have businesses or employment interests in the tourism sector will be generally more positively disposed to tourism because the benefits outweigh costs associated with increased tourist activity. On the other hand, residents who are not involved in tourism will not derive any substantial benefits from the event activity, and will be more inclined to hold negative perceptions (Brougham & Butler 1981; Pizam, Milman & King 1994).

Involvement in tourism could be meaningful if residents within a community perceive the impacts of tourism on the region as a whole rather than being a function of personal benefits and costs of an individual resident (Faulkner & Tideswell 1997). Fredline and Faulkner (1998) also suggest that individuals should put group interests ahead of their own personal interest, but appreciate the benefits this industry brings to the community in general.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study Area

The Obudu Mountain Resort is one of the loveliest and wonderful places in the world because of its topography. The Resort was describe by a foreigner as "Obudu is Nigeria's best kept secret". It's recognition national and internationally has increased as it offers both leisure and business tourism experience. The Resort is seated at altitude 1,575.76m above sea level. Temperature levels vary with the season. In the months of November to January the temperature range is 26° c to 32°c. In the months of June to September the temperature level is 4° c to 10°. The destination is hosted by a group of villages administratively called, the Obudu Mountain Resort Support Communities (OMRSC). The communities are divided into two blocks. The first block are those communities located at the top of the mountain (Balegete, Boggo, Old Ikwette and Kottele; Apandu, and Kigol). The second block consist of those communities that are host to the Resort's ancillary infrastructure and facilities such as the Bebi Airstrip, the Utanga Safari Lodges and the Water park (Utanga, Bebi 1, Bebi 2 and Bebi 3 and new Ikwette). The communities are mainly agriarian and hunters who depend on what the land and forest offers.

Research Design

The exploratory research was used in this study. Owing to the nature of exploratory inquiry and process investigation, the methodological property of qualitative research was deemed appropriate to this study (Creswell, 2003; Reily and Love; Walle, 1997). The general objective in exploratory research is to gain insight and ideas. It seeks to discover new information about a phenomenon, problem or opportunity.

The qualitative studies aim to describe and explain patterns of relationship and interactions through the reality constructed by the individuals taking part in the research process (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This information can later be stated as hypothesis. The phenomenology of community involvement in sport tourism is an emerging one. This makes the choice of exploratory design necessary. The qualitatively research design prescribed by Babbie (1998) was employed by the researchers to obtain a depth of understanding from the respondents' perspective.

Sampling design

The six communities on the top of the mountain were used for this study. These communities include: Belegete, Kotele, Boggo, Apandu, Old Ikwete and Kigol. The community leaders of each of the communities were identified and used as representatives and key informants.

Data collection methods

Data was collected through in-depth interview with community leaders in six communities. A semi-structure questionnaire was used to guide the interview. Six field workers sat down with the community leaders just after the event to get their opinion about the event since its inception in 2005. Two members of each community were interviewed (community head, and its assistance). This was to get a wider opinion of what each community leader and assistance feels about the event and its impact within the community. The instrument was divided into seven sections: the general idea of the Obudu Mountain Race; community perception of event organization, services provided, infrastructural and facilities adequacy; community involvement; the impact of the event; event management; community expectation of event, and sustainability of event.

The community leaders' were asked to discussed the general idea of the race by probing them to find out if they are aware of who the initiator of the event , how many times the event has been held, and sponsorship of the event since its inception. The second section of the questionnaire probed the leaders on areas of organization of the event focusing on the adequacy of facilities, refreshment areas, and availability of food and attitude of residents towards the event. The third section dwells with the community involvement in terms of the organization and marketing of the event and how community will like to be involved in the event in future.

The fourth section was involved with the impact of the event in terms of development within the community linked o hosting of the event within the area. The fifth section deal with the management of the event in the areas of the community leader meeting with the event organizers, the present of local organizing office within the community and presence of contact person in case there is a need to past across a message. The sixth section was based on the expectation of the community leaders from the event based on their aspirations and the extent to which their aspirations have been met and what should be done to facilitate their achievement of their expectations. The last section deals with the sustainability of the event.

The administration of the instrument took place of the main event and specifically during the reception. Each community leader and assistant was interviewed by a trained interviewer. The statements from the community leaders were recorded on a writing pad. The average time for the entire interview was 90 minutes.

Data analysis

The statements elicited from the community leaders were analyzed. The analysis followed the qualitative data guideline prescribed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The data was categorized and sorted into themes based on 'look-alikes'.

RESULT OF FINDINGS

Community level of awareness

The level of community awareness of event organization was found to be high among community leaders. Community leaders could remember the initiator of the Obudu Mountain Race four years four years ago. This is the fourth edition of the Obudu Mountain Race. The Obudu Mountain Race was initiated by the erstwhile Governor of the State, Mr. Donald Duke in 2005. The communities were also knowledgeable of the runway of the race. The Race is an eleven kilometer Race on the Obudu Mountain Resort Road. The take-off point of the Race was the bottom-hill and the finish point was a point in front of the reception of the Obudu Mountain Resort Hotel.

Community perception of the Obudu Mountain Race

Organization of event

All the community leaders recognized that the Government of Cross River State was the main organizer of the event. On the quality of organization, the chief of Kotele Community asserts that the organization was perfect; the community leaders of Boggo and Old Ikwette said that the event was well organized. The community leaders of Balagete and Apandu said the event was a welcome development.

The attraction power of event

Majority of the community leaders observed that the Obudu Mountain Race, 2008 was very attractive and has attracted so many people (Apandu, Kigol, Balagete, Boggo and Old Ikwette). According to the community leader of Boggo, “the event has attracted other foreign countries” while that of Old Ikwette said, “it attracted people especially those of Senator Liyel Imoke”. Only the community leader of Kotele said “the event did not attract enough people”.

Adequacy of facilities

The community leaders of Appandu, Boggo, Old Ikwette and Kigol were of the view that infrastructure and facilities for the event were adequate. The Obudu Mountain Resort Road was well tarred; the finish point barricade was in place, the presence of accommodation establishments and parking facilities, etc. According to the community leader of Old Ikwette, “infrastructure is very good”. He however, observed that, “the startup point at the bottom hill is not good because there is no toilet”. The community leaders of Kotele and Balagete also view the infrastructure and facilities as being slightly inadequate.

Availability of food and refreshment

The community leaders of Kotele, Apandu, Boggo, Kigol, and Old Ikwette assert that there was adequate food and refreshment at the event arena during the event. According to the community leader Boggo, “there is good care of the people by the State Government”. The community leader of Old Ikwette said that, “funds were provided by His Excellency, the Governor who cater for food”. The community leader of Balagete had a contrary view. He observed that the food and refreshment was not adequate.

Attitude of residents toward the Obudu Mountain Race

All the community leaders assert that there was a cordial relationship between the event organizers and the communities that constitute the Obudu Mountain Resort Support Communities. The community leader of Old Ikwette said that, “attitude of the people is very good”. The community leader of Kotele said, “It is cordial”.

Community Involvement

Community involvement in event organization and management

The community leaders were not unanimous on the level of community involvement in event organization. The community leader of Kotele said, “before now there was no community involvement, but this year to some extent”. Other comments that depicted the level of community participation were:

“the community is not involved in organization and marketing of event”(Apandu community)

“the community is involved in the organization” (Boggo community)

“the community is not involved in organization and marketing” (Kigol community)

“community is involved especially as athletes” (Balagete community)

The role of community in staging event

The community leaders expressed varying level of community participation and the role they have played in the organization of the Obudu Mountain Race 2008. The leaders of Appandu, balagete, Old Ikwette, and Kigol assert that the communities were not involved and so they not play any role. While those of Kotele, Boggo said the communities were somewhat involved and so played some role. Two of the community leaders responded as follows:

“complemented the event by taking part in the race and as volunteers” (Kotele community).

“we only got the announcement through media. No community notification before the event” (Appandu community).

How community will like to be involved in future edition of event

The host communities showed enthusiasm and willingness to be involved in the organization of future editions of the Obudu Mountain Race. According to the community leader of Kigol, “the community should be involved in the Local Organization Committee (LOC).

Impacts of the event on community

All the community leaders acknowledge that the staging of the Mountain Race has some positive impact on the host communities.

“Our children and community are exposed to the world, we sell food and drinks, we have international experiences in organizing event like this” (Kotele community)

“it brings educational development, cultural development, peace and harmony” (Boggo community)

“the community has improved by this events because visitors from all work of life visit the Mountain Resort; people are involved in selling their products; interact with other people of the society; there are physical changes in the communities and the people have developed their culture and dances” (Kigol community).

“Educational benefits and encourages our children to be fit for sports” (Old Ikwette community).

Event management

Meeting with organizers of event

Majority of the community leaders said that the host communities and the organizers of the event did not hold regular meetings before the event. This was demonstrated by the responses:

“it was poor; not given the opportunity to take part in the organization. Most organizers are brought from outside the community” (Kotele community).

“the community meets with the organizers” (Boggo community)

“the community don’t meet with the organizers” (Kigol community).

“ there are no meetings with organizers” (Old Ikwette).

The presence of local office at the place of event and contact person/liaison

The community leaders unequivocally said there was no local office of the event at the Obudu Mountain Resort, the venue of the event. On the presence of a liaison or contact person, the community leaders identified the community leaders as unofficial contact persons.

Community Expectations

Community aspirations

It was found that communities have varying expectation from the staging of the Obudu Mountain Race. These were expressed as follows:

“the event to touch the lives of our people” (Kotele community).

“to produce world champions in mountain race and bring development to the community” (Appandu community).

“education” (Boggo community).

“there should be community empowerment” (Balagete community)

“scholarship, grant loans create roads, build schools and hospitals” (Kigol).

Extent to which community expectation has been met

All the community leaders were unanimous on the fact the event expectation has not been met. On what should be done to facilitate the attainment of community aspirations, the community leaders suggested the following:

“ people should be train and engaged in the management of the event” (Kotele);

“grant scholarship to the youths” (Appandu)

“government should fund the event “(Boggo)

“ involve the community in all events” (Kigol)

“ inclusion of our youth in event (Balagete)”.

Sustainability of Event

The community leaders were asked to suggest actions that will bring about sustainability of the event. Series of actions were raised by the community leaders which include:

“sensitization of the host communities so that they are willing to do all within their power to sustain it; we also support in the security of the area; encourage our children to be friendly to the athletes and officials of the event” (Kotele community).

“ sustain the event by providing security and cheaper accommodation for visitors” (Appandu community).

“Donation of land for the event” (Boggo community)

“Prevent bush burning and stealing during the Mountain Race and maintain peace in the communities” (Kigol community).

“vigilancy on the part of the community on available infrastructure, assist in accommodating visitors through the provision of cheaper accommodation and to be hospitable” (Balagete community).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The host communities of the Obudu Mountain Race are the Mountain Resort Support Communities comprising of Kotele, Apandu, Baggo, Kigol, Balagete and Old Ikwette. The community level of community awareness about Mountain Race was fair as the community representatives could say who the organizers of the event are, when the event first started and the place of event. Awareness is a cognitive component of human behavior. Because the event tourism happen in their communities, it is possible for them to know what goes on around their domain. Perception refers to the various human processes by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into meaningful and coherent picture of the world (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Perception occurs when stimuli are registered by one of our five senses: vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch (Hoyer and Macinnis, 1997). On the community perception of event, majority of the communities feel that the event organization was good; facilities and infrastructure were of reasonable standard, and that Government provided adequate food and drinks for participants. It was also affirmed that the communities had positive attitude toward the Mountain Race. Although the community leaders were locals, they have a mind frame upon which they were able to express their views on the event environment and the relationship between the organizers of the event and the host communities. The pre-event activities at the Mountain Resort have prominence and concrete stimuli that cannot escape the attention of the host communities.

The study clearly revealed that the level of community involvement and participation in event organization was very low. The literature on this discourse shows that community participation in event is dependent on two pillars; the locus of the host organization (Bowdin et al, 2008) and the extent to which the community is involved in decision making and the possession of authority to implement decision (Tosun, 2000 and Tosun, 2006). Since the host organization of the Obudu Mountain Race is the Cross River State Government, according to Bowdin et al (2008), the event managers are likely to be government employees. This is true of the Obudu Mountain Race event. The organization of the event was supervised by the Event Management Department in the Governor's Office. The event was organized by a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) constituted by the Government. The coercive typology of community participation has relevance here. The level of community involvement and participation in event organization of the Obudu Mountain Race is at its lowest ebb. This is because at the moment, the communities are not fully involved in the decision making process. All the Mountain Resort Support Communities are represented in the LOC by one person. In this way, the community can only hear, but cannot be heard. Secondly, some of the decisions that are made specifically to meet the community needs are made to “avoid potential socio-political risks that would jeopardize the image of the event, the ideas were not generated or by sponsored by the communities (Tosun, 2006).

The importance of community involvement in event tourism cannot be over emphasized because of its benefits (Kibicho, 2003). It is interesting to note that the hosts communities are aware of the attendant benefits their involvement in the event planning and implementation will be bring to the area and the continual staging of the race at the Resort. Some of the benefits recognized by the communities include; event to touch the lives of the people, to produce world champions in mountain race, bring development to the community, community education, community empowerment, scholarship, grant loans, create roads, build schools and hospitals, etc. These aspirations are supported by the popular views of proponents of community participation who adumbrates its potentials to improve the welfare of the local communities (Vincent and Thompson, 2000). Community participation is an imperative in ensuring sustainable event tourism development at the Mountain Resort. Since the event happens in the communities, the communities have measure ways they think the event could be sustained. This agrees with the Local Agenda 21 Protocol. Some of the communities' sustainability strategies include; sensitization of the host communities on benefits of staging the event so that they are willing to do all within their power to sustain it, support in the security of the area, encourage the locals to be friendly to the athletes and officials of the event, sustain the event by providing security, cheaper accommodation for visitors, donation of land for the event, prevent bush burning and stealing during the Mountain Race and maintain peace in the communities, vigilance on the part of the community on available infrastructure, and to be hospitable.

CONCLUSION

To ensure community involvement and to safeguard local cultures, sustainable tourism development should therefore involve all stakeholders in tourism development at all appropriate levels, facilitate the development of tourism services that are planned, managed and reviewed by the host community in line with the Local Agenda 21 Protocol, ensure that tourism revenue stays in the host communities to enhance livelihoods and generate a profitable source of income, empower and motivate local groups to direct cross-cultural exchange in the way they wish and adopt practices which conserve, protect and preserve the environment. The specific recommendations are:

1. Since the communities' level of awareness of event was found to be fairly high and the perception of quality of event organization and management was just average, the imperative is for the host organization (that is, the Government) to have a paradigm shift by changing the management structure from the top-bottom structure to the bottom-top structure (spontaneous community participation). In the former, decisions about the community relations, event organization and management are decided by the Government who is the main event organizer (coercive community participation). The latter is a normative model of community participation which prescribes fully community participation in event tourism decision making and implementation. At the moment only one community member from the entire Obudu Mountain Resort Support Communities and who incidentally is an employee of the State Department of Tourism and currently serving as the Government Liaison at the Mountain Resort is in the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).
2. In order to participate effectively, members of the community should be effectively mobilized in order to ensure involvement. This is because people are involved in what they know and are aware of and hard what they do not know. Effort should therefore be made to promote community awareness about the benefits to the Obudu Mountain Resort Support Communities, the attendant negative consequences and strategies to prevent the negative cost of hosting event.
3. The functions of the LOC should be redefined to make room for effective community participation. The LOC should handle the advertisement of invitation to athletes, screening of athletes, invitation of professional technical partners, recruitment of volunteers and ad hoc staff for the event organization and also handle the provision of lodges to all invited persons.
4. The community should work with the State Tourism Bureau to create activities and experiences for visitors and tourists during the event. At the moment there is a gap in that regard. The event was a one day event; the children race took place in the morning, followed by the female and the male categories. There were no special events and animations at the Resort to engage the visitors before and after the races. The stream of tourism economic benefits that accrues to host communities is underpinned by the emergence of entrepreneurship and value chain distribution.

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