

Assessing community needs in relation to rural tourism potential in South Africa: a case study of Ndwedwe Municipality

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Abstract

Ndwedwe Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal is regarded as one of the poorest Municipalities in the province. Ndwedwe lacks basic infrastructure and services. It is a mainly rural Municipality with Ndwedwe Town as the primary node. The Municipality has expansive natural areas, substantial agricultural potential and a rich cultural heritage. The Municipality's Integrated Development Plan and Ndwedwe Town Development Business Plan highlight its tourism potential. This study examined community needs and economic livelihood options within the Municipality. One aspect under consideration was tourism-related aspects. This included examining current levels of participation in tourism-related activities among household members, willingness to participate in tourism activities (including the types of tourism activities preferred), tourism potential within Ndwedwe (including existing infrastructure and services and well as tourism products) and challenges faced in relation to promoting tourism in Ndwedwe. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 400 households in Ndwedwe. Given that Ndwedwe Municipality has 27 576 households, 400 households provide sufficient statistical rigour at the 95% confident interval. A random sampling approach was adopted. Surveys were supplemented with key informant interviews. The main findings indicate that very few residents were currently benefiting from tourist activities, which were limited in any event. However, there was a substantial desire to participate in tourism activities which included providing products and services. Some of the main tourism products identified were conservation, adventure, cultural and agricultural tourism. The key challenges faced were access to tourism markets, lack of infrastructure and services and inadequate tourism skills to invest in tourism enterprises.

Key words: Rural, tourism, Ndwedwe (KwaZulu-Natal), livelihoods, South Africa

Introduction

Ghasemi and Hamzah (2014) assert that tourism is currently the world's largest industry and the fastest growing sector of the market. Rural tourism in particular is regarded as a critical part of overall development where potential exists with Caalders (2003) asserting that development in rural areas may be achieved through rural services provision and rural tourism. Furthermore, Briedenhann and Wickens (2004: 71) state that "rural tourism is increasingly viewed as a panacea, increasing the economic viability of marginalised areas, stimulating social regeneration and improving the living conditions of rural communities". The potential socio-economic impacts of rural tourism in South Africa specifically, have received increased attention in the literature (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Rogerson, 2014; 2015). Moric (2013) notes that rural tourism can bring economic and social benefits to local communities. Specifically, Viljoen and Tlabela (2007) note that rural tourism is important for rural development not only because of the financial gains but also by creating much-needed new jobs in developing contexts (including South Africa) which add vitality to a traditionally poor economy. Hernandez, Suarez-Vega and Jimenez (2015) state that rural areas provide unique opportunities to attract tourists by

establishing connections between rural areas and their cultural, historic, ethnic and geographical roots.

Despite the increasing literature on rural tourism, there are very few studies that examine tourism potential in rural areas that currently do not have tourism investments. Particularly, community perceptions about tourism in these types of rural areas are lacking with many studies focusing on existing tourism products or activities. Furthermore, many studies focus on community perceptions and/ or benefits from being in close proximity to major tourism attractions such as conservation areas or tourist resorts. Thus, this case study attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge on rural tourism by assessing community needs and economic livelihood options within the Ndwedwe Municipality with a specific focus on tourism potential and other tourism-related aspects. Demographic and household characteristics are considered in relation to aspects such as age, gender, educational levels, employment rates and livelihood strategies. Furthermore, household access to services is also discussed. Current levels of participation in tourism-related activities among household members as well as willingness to participate in tourism activities (including the types of tourism activities preferred) are also discussed. Additionally, tourism potential (both in relation to positive and negative aspects) within Ndwedwe and challenges faced in relation to promoting tourism in Ndwedwe are examined. Level of skills at the household and community level as well as development were assessed as part of this study. The research also presents recommendations and notes where caution should be exercised for future tourism based development initiatives.

Ndwedwe Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal is a useful and important case study as it is classified as one of the poorest Municipalities in the province and lacks basic infrastructure and services (Statistics South Africa [SSA], 2011). It is a mainly rural Municipality with a primary node which is Ndwedwe Town. The Municipality has expansive natural areas, substantial agricultural potential and a rich cultural heritage with the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan and Ndwedwe Town Development Business Plan highlighting its tourism potential. Specifically, the Ndwedwe Municipality shows significant agriculture and tourism potential which is not as yet realised (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014).

The rest of the article is structured in four sections. The first section provides a brief literature review of key rural tourism issues. This is followed by an overview of the adopted methodological approach, including a background to the case study and methods used for data collection. The third section presents and discusses key research findings. Finally, concluding remarks are forwarded.

Literature review

Ezeuduji and Rid (2011 cited in Ezeuduji, 2015: 213) define rural tourism as encompassing visits by tourists to rural areas to experience the cultural and natural environment of the local populations as part of the strategies within the management portfolio of sustainable rural development. According to Briedenhann and Wickens (2004), rural tourism was presented as the catalyst for development in rural areas to promote development and increase job creation opportunities. Positive impacts linked to promoting rural tourism is associated with local economic development which is also associated with diversifying rural livelihoods and its reliance on agricultural activities in particular as stated by Moric (2013) and Tranchekeo (2015). Visser and Hoogendoorn (2015) highlight that, more generally, diversification in tourism has

become widespread. In particular, Ghasemi and Hamzah (2014), Mahmoudi, Haghsetan and Maleki (2011) and Rogerson (2014: 215) summarise the main benefits of rural tourism as:

- Create much-needed jobs for people
- Develop social, cultural and educational values
- Make full use of tourism resources in rural areas to adjust and improve rural industrial structures
- Extend the agricultural industrial chain
- Develop rural tourism services non-agricultural employment
- Increase the incomes of farmers and create more market opportunities for farmers
- Create a better economic base for the new rural construction
- Promote regional development

Visser and Hoogendoorn (2015: 116) argue that in South Africa, small towns “are, by and large, champions of the transition from agricultural service centres to bustling rural tourism destinations”. Furthermore, Pillay and Rogerson (2013) indicate the importance of leveraging of tourism’s potential for backward linkages is critical for enhancing local impacts in developing countries in relation to promoting food supply chains among tourism accommodation providers in the coastal region of KwaZulu-Natal. This, they argue, will strengthen pro-poor linkages in rural areas. They further, however, identify several barriers to achieving pro-poor linkages which include the inability to provide consistent supplies, unreliability and mistrust of suppliers, lack of skills and investment capital, transport logistics and lack of awareness of potential suppliers.

Disadvantages associated with rural tourism are also noted in the literature as indicated by Fairer-Wessels (2016). These include socio-cultural, economic and environmental negative impacts. Furthermore, Farahani and Mirani (2015) assert that the seasonal nature of rural tourism can create vulnerability. Sharpley and Telfer (2014) indicate that the rural tourism operators have a weak market consciousness and awareness, and similarly, more established tour operators are not aware of rural tourism products. Linked to this, Sharpley and Telfer (2014) assert that there are low quality tourism products which result in difficulties in marketing these products and destinations. Chambers (2014) also notes that as a result of the lack of human resource development in rural areas, a key challenge in promoting rural tourism is developing appropriate knowledge and skills as well as enabling local communities to participate meaningfully in tourism development. This can result in many community members not benefitting from rural tourism activities or even conflict and contestation when limited benefits such as employment are created. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2008: 1) states that “community involvement in tourism has been widely supported as being essential for sustainability. The positives of this form of tourism are community ownership, livelihood security, minimal leakages and backward linkages and efficient conflict resolution”. Fairer-Wessels (2016) states that rural communities in South Africa have not been active stakeholders in tourism development, and communities residing in close proximity to tourist destinations have remained impoverished. Fairer-Wessels (2016) further states that sustainable development (and sustainable tourism) have generally been a challenge in South African rural areas.

In rural tourism, the focus tends to be on natural and cultural-based tourism products or assets. Saarinen and Rogerson (2015) indicate that cultural tourism is highlighted as one of the most important development opportunities for Africa. Hoggart, Black and Buller (1995) argue that rural areas that sustain their economies with natural resources help in boosting the tax base that

helps sustain local businesses. However, Bennett (2009) cautions that those rural communities that rely on their natural resources for subsistence-based and income generating activities have had declining economies as a result of out-migration of younger working-age groups resulting in a reduction in the tax base. As discussed later, Ndwedwe typifies this trend with a substantial proportion of the younger, working class population seeking educational and employment opportunities in urban areas. Saarinen and Rogerson (2015: 208) warn that cultural tourism tends to be undermined in Southern Africa because there is “a strong domination of nature and wildlife orientated tourism products focusing on the ‘Big 5’ and nature experiences in an imagined pristine wilderness without human presence and interference”. This suggests that in rural areas key tourism products can compete with each other.

Methodological approach

Background to case study

The Ndwedwe Local Municipality covers an area of 1153 km² with a population of approximately 140 820 people (SSA, 2011). The Municipality has a main economic node (Ndwedwe Town) which has a single mixed use node with social, local government facilities (a municipal building, civic centre, police station, post office, community clinic and Elangeni College), transport links and commercial activities. The business activity is situated adjacent the local taxi rank and acts as the major node of activity in the area. There is one main street (P100) activity. There is a substantial reliance on public transport in the form of taxis. There are a large number of gravel roads in the area with the P100 being the only tarred road. The P100 is the main access road which provides the link between Ndwedwe and the northern Durban suburbs. Ndwedwe is also in close proximity to the King Shaka International Airport (35 km) and adjacent commercial and industrial developments which are occurring in close proximity to the airport, regarded as an important growth point in the provincial economy. The area surrounding the main Town is predominantly owned by the traditional authority and characterised by low density residential patterns.

Ndwedwe is in close proximity to locations with high tourism demand and potential. Specifically, eThekweni Municipality to the south is the third largest tourist destination in South Africa. Additionally, areas in KwaZulu-Natal in relatively close proximity to Ndwedwe have major ecotourism and beach tourism destinations. Ndwedwe Local Municipality has remained substantially underdeveloped, disadvantaged and poor with the Municipality consisting of poor black communities whose livelihoods depend on subsistence farming (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014). In relation to Ndwedwe’s Spatial Development Framework, the future development of Ndwedwe Municipality is heavily dependent on the implementation of its nodal, high-impact development projects aimed at unlocking the growth potential of the area (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014). Ndwedwe’s Spatial Development Framework also identifies high priority areas in terms of resource allocation which includes nodal development, Dube Trade Port linked business opportunities as well as five tourism and five agricultural projects (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014). In relation to tourism development priorities, the key projects for future implementation are Nsuze battlefield (Bhambatha Rebellion Route), KwaLoshe eco-tourism, Nhlankakazi Mountain, Nhlankakazi game reserve and the Johnny Makhathini Museum (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014). Other natural areas identified in the Spatial Development Framework are Ndikimba Rocks, Mlwandle Camp site, and Gudwini, Mdibini and Ozwathini Caves. The projects reflect assertions in the literature that rural tourism tends to focus on natural or cultural products. Ndwedwe has a diversity of fauna (including reptiles, birds and

mammals) and flora which range from vulnerable to critically endangered which supports the need for conservation, adding to Ndwedwe's ecotourism potential (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014). This is particularly important since Ndwedwe has several areas that have the potential to be conservation areas however, the Municipality does not currently have any proclaimed protected areas.

Methods

A household questionnaire/ survey was used to establish the demographic profile of households, service and infrastructural needs and concerns, and development needs and priorities. Questions pertaining to tourism potential and the willingness to engage in or develop tourism-related activities in Ndwedwe were included in the survey instrument. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The latter permitted an exploration of qualitative responses while the closed-ended questions resulted in the collection of quantitative data. Four hundred (400) households in Ndwedwe Municipality were interviewed by trained fieldworkers. Face-to-face interviews were conducted. Given that Ndwedwe Municipality has 27 576 households (SSA, 2011), 400 households provided sufficient statistical rigour at the 95% confident interval. A spatially-based random sampling approach was used to select the 400 households. Households were identified as points on a map and the points were used to randomly select 400 households. This ensured that households within the denser areas such as Ndwedwe Town and more remote households were also chosen. Interviews were conducted with an adult member of the household. The data was inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and analysed thematically. In addition to the household survey, a focus group discussion was conducted to complement the quantitative data with qualitative information. The focus group participants were purposively chosen to reflect socio-economic (age and gender) and geographical (across Ndwedwe) differences. The main results from the data collected are presented next.

Results

This section discusses the key research findings in relation to three thematic areas. The first provides an overview of the demographic profile of survey respondents and household profiles. This is followed by an examination of tourism potential. Finally, issues pertaining to skill levels and development are discussed.

Demographic and household profile

The average household size was 4 persons and ranged from 1 to 12 persons. The average age of the respondents was 51.4 years and ranged from 22 to 90 years. Furthermore, most household members were under 15 years and over 60 years which is typical of many rural areas in South Africa. Limited educational and employment opportunities within many rural areas of South Africa results in the rural-urban migration of the youth and working adult population in pursuit of opportunities. This is an important aspect to consider and should inform future initiatives that aim to create livelihood and income generating opportunities within Ndwedwe and more importantly, aim to reduce out-migration, retain skills and promote economic growth. The reasons for the high levels of unemployment in the community, according to the focus group participants, were as a result of a lack of opportunities in the area, limited financial resources to support local businesses and lack of funds to invest in skills development

and training. Tourism development, as outlined in the literature review section earlier, can be important in rural areas.

In terms of the gender of the respondents, the majority were female (61%) while 39% were male. In terms of all household members, while the percentage of females were lower (55.4%), they were in the majority compared to males (44.6%). Most respondents were either married (40.3%) or single (45.5%). The rest were separated (4.8%), widowed (6.5%) or cohabitating (3%). Levels of formal education were noted to be low within Ndwedwe with only a few of the adult household members having completed matric or having post-matric qualifications (26.79%). Additionally, only a few household members had taken education or literacy classes for adults. From the education level results and the primary and secondary schooling infrastructure available in the area, a positive trend is that in recent years (especially post-apartheid) access to this level of educational facilities has improved. However, of concern is the level of access to post-secondary education which greatly impacts on the skill levels in the area, including in relation to tourism training and development. During the focus group discussion this limitation was also highlighted, especially in terms of developing entrepreneurial and business skills. The educational challenges are also highlighted by Ndwedwe's Integrated Development Plan (Ndwedwe Municipality, 2014) which indicates that this could be a setback for development especially considering the nature of projects that are being proposed in this municipality such as tourism.

A noteworthy finding is that a significant proportion of the respondents (47%) stated that they were unemployed and furthermore, 41.9% of the adult household members were deemed to be unemployed. There is also underemployment in Ndwedwe with some of the respondents (5%) stating that they were employed on a part-time basis. The unemployment rate in Ndwedwe is relatively high and reflects the development challenges and poverty levels in the community which were underscored during the focus group discussion. This is also linked to the high reliance on grants and pensions. Specifically, 81% of the respondents stated that member/s of the household accessed pensions or grants. The main types of pensions or grants accessed were child grants (52.5%), old age pensions (35.8%), disability grants (11.8%) and foster care grants (4.3%) which some households accessing multiple grants. Grants and pensions are important in rural municipalities and are indicative of poverty in these areas. The reliance on grants and pensions were also highlighted during the focus group discussion. Furthermore, close to a third of the respondents (30.5%) indicated that member/s of the household have access to outside remittances (excluding grants). Only a small proportion indicated self-employed (7% among the respondents and 2.8% for all household members). There was keen interest generally among some of the survey respondents and focus group participants to start new businesses which is seen as important for economic development in Ndwedwe.

The poverty levels in Ndwedwe is also reinforced in relation to services and infrastructure at the household and community levels. Most households either had tap water in the dwelling (42.8%) or tap water on site (43.5%). This was followed by public taps (17.5%) and accessing river from a stream/ river/ dam (9.5%). Multiple sources of water was evident those who access water from a stream/ river/ dam used this for agricultural purposes. Furthermore, improved water facilities were in Ndwedwe Town and surrounds. Most respondents (77.8%) indicated that the household used a pit latrine. This was followed by a flush toilet inside the dwelling (17.3%), chemical toilet (8%) and flush toilet on site (6.25%). More than two-thirds of the households (mostly in Ndwedwe Town and surrounds) had access to electricity from public supply. However, almost all supplemented their use of electricity with cheaper sources of energy to reduce costs. For

example, additional sources such as candles (87.3%), fuelwood (59%), paraffin (43.5%) and gas (30%) were used by respondents to meet their energy needs. There was no formal waste removal system in Ndwedwe Municipality. Most respondents (72.5%) stated that household waste was dumped near the home. This was followed by buried (35%) and burnt (18%). These are unsustainable and unhealthy waste management practices. However, this does create an opportunity for job creation through the establishment of a Municipal waste removal and management system. Furthermore, given the current energy profiles and the lack of a formal domestic waste management system, there is opportunity to investigate alternate and more environmentally friendly green technologies that can generate energy from waste to service the residential sector and boost economic activities.

Tourism potential

There is low current involvement in tourism activities with only 1.5% of the respondents stating that someone in the household was involved in tourism-related activities (two as vendors selling in craft markets and one each stating backpacking, driver in a taxi business who sometimes services tourists as clients, making of traditional clothes and working in tourism for the Municipality). During the focus group discussion one of the participants stated that he/ she owned an accommodation establishment, although outside the Ndwedwe area. An additional 3.5% of the respondents stated that they were engaged in craft-making as a livelihood strategy but this was for local consumption and was not targeted at tourists. This was also done on a temporary basis and was not a full-time job. Self-employment (especially in the informal and SMME sector) can be well placed to create sustainable livelihoods and increase jobs in poorer areas which includes tourism-related activities.

The majority of respondents (65.3%) and focus group participants indicated that Ndwedwe had high tourism potential because of the environmental and cultural assets in the community as well as its location in relation to major tourism destinations and infrastructure in KwaZulu-Natal. Specifically, key tourism destinations and infrastructure identified were beaches, game reserves/ conservation areas (especially Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Park and isiMangiliso Wetland Park (a United Nations world heritage site), mountains, the King Shaka International Airport and Zulu cultural locations/ events). The neighbouring proximity to eThekweni Municipality/ Durban (KwaZulu-Natal's and one of South Africa's main tourist destinations) was also identified.

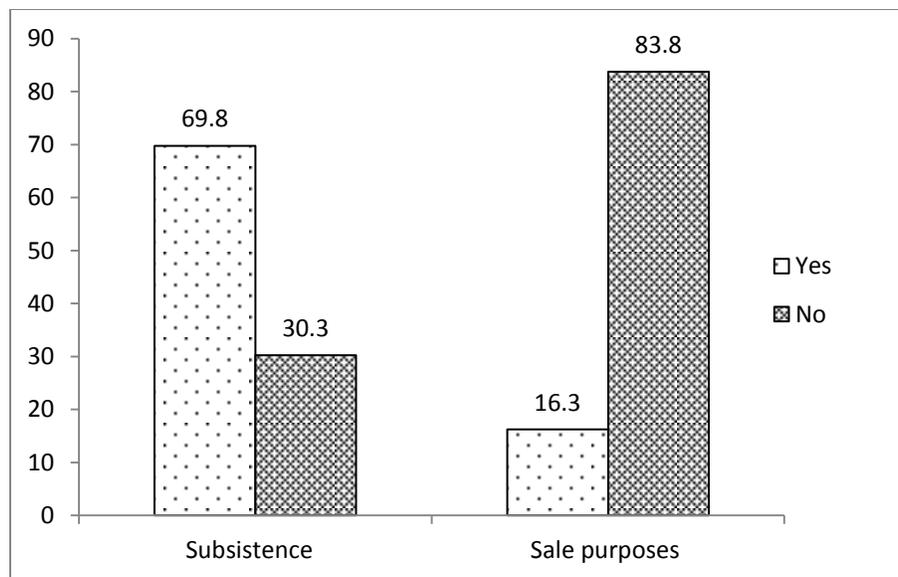
Most of the respondents (60.5%) identified tourism potential in the area as tourism products (Zulu arts and crafts, provision of accommodation for tourists and tourism destinations within Ndwedwe which included the Nhlankazi forest, caves and mountains) or direct tourism services (tour guides and operators specifically). The main responses were linked to the natural features (attractive sceneries, mountains and forests). The Nhlankazi forest in particular was also identified by the focus group. Bennett (2009) asserts that natural resources in rural areas are key tourism, agricultural, forestry and mining assets which Ndwedwe has. However, it is important to note that some of the focus group participants specifically stated that the locations in the mountains and forests were sacred and they were concerned that tourism will not respect the local culture. Additionally, Ndwedwe Municipality displays potential for tourism through infrastructure and cultural aspects including Zulu culture and traditions, agricultural practices that are rooted in local traditions, and historical and religious sites. Hiking and horse riding potential were also identified by respondents and the focus group. Cultural and adventure-

based events were also identified by the respondents. This line of thinking is similar to that of Ezeuduji (2015: 212) who argues that:

Event-based rural tourism in which locals can stage events for tourists that will lead to establishing unique rural tourism experience is an emergent strategy that could create a balance between implementing bottom-up values (local values and community ownership) and the need to utilise top-down resources (national governments and not-for-profit organisations as partners in terms of business training and initial financing).

A few (3.5% of the survey respondents and discussed during the focus group) also saw the links between Ndwedwe's agricultural potential and ability to be a food provider to the multitude of tourist establishments and facilities in neighbouring areas. The majority of respondents (69.8%) stated that household member/s engage in crop production for subsistence purposes (Figure 1). Significantly fewer respondents (16.3%) stated that household member/s engage in crop production for sale purposes. The results indicate that crop production is widespread in Ndwedwe Municipality. It was observed that crop production took place in Ndwedwe Town and outside areas. However, the plot sizes in the northern wards were much larger and it was observed during the data collection visits that there was substantial land available in these areas for crop production and grazing. This observation was confirmed during the focus group discussion that land for agricultural production and other investments (including tourism infrastructure such as accommodation establishments) was available.

Figure 1: If member/s engage in crop production for subsistence or sale (n=400, in %)



Among members who indicated that the household did not engage in crop production for subsistence or sale purposes, only a minority (28.1%) wanted to engage in crop production in the future for subsistence purposes but the majority (70.8%) wanted to engage in crop production for sale purposes. The results also indicate that only a few respondents identified lack of land (10.2%) or insufficient time (3.07%) as reasons for them not engaging in agricultural production for sale purposes even though they desired to do so. The main reasons forwarded were inadequate markets (35.2%), insufficient income (21.4%) and lack of skills (14.7%). This

indicates that members would participate at an increased level in crop production if there was an economic demand and this can be linked to tourism. The above discussion clearly indicates that for rural tourism to thrive in rural areas there is a need to link with existing skills and potential such as agricultural production in the case of Ndwedwe. This discussion links closely with the assertions made by Ghasemi and Hamzah (2014) that for rural tourism to be sustainable and have widespread impacts it needs to extend agricultural activities and increase the income of farmers. Furthermore, Pillay and Rogerson (2013: 50) argue that procurement by the accommodation sector in particular “is considered to offer high potential for engaging with groups of smaller, local and disadvantaged entrepreneurs as suppliers”. However, this is not easy to achieve as indicated by Berno (2011: 90) who states that “there is no simple formula for increasing the use of local agricultural products in the tourism industry”.

Close to a third of the respondents (32.5%) stated that someone in the household would like to be involved in tourism-related activities. Among those respondents who stated that someone in the household would like to participate in a tourism-related activity, most specified a tour guide. The rest of the responses related to working in established tourism sites, selling crafts or hosting visitors. Close to half of the respondents (49.5%) indicated reasons why Ndwedwe does not have tourism potential (this includes some of the respondents who provided reasons why Ndwedwe has tourism potential suggesting that respondents felt that Ndwedwe has both positive and negative tourism attributes). The main reasons were poor services/ facilities (25.8%), no tourism products/ attractions (12.3%) and land/ area is not well developed (8.3%). The other reasons identified by fewer respondents (less than 3%) included lack of marketing, insufficient hotels/ accommodation establishments, limited shopping facilities, not easily accessible, not appealing/ attractive and insufficient money to develop tourism. The issues were generally reinforced when respondents were asked to identify the factors that prevented Ndwedwe Municipality from attracting investment and tourism into the area. The main factors identified were lack of marketing (52.8%), poor services (50.3%) and specifically poor transport networks in the area (24%). These factors were also highlighted during the focus group discussion and are similar to those identified by Pillay and Rogerson (2013).

Skills level and development

Hall and Page (2002) indicate that human resource development is a critical component that needs to be addressed in the early stage of tourist development. Table 1 below illustrates that various skills are used and exist but some are unused at the household level in Ndwedwe, albeit at a relatively low level for most of the skill types encapsulated. Unsurprisingly, given the discussion in the previous section, the skill level identified by respondents that is mostly used is agriculture (56.3%). Construction (17.8% used and 19.8% unused), transport (14.3% used and 8% unused), arts and culture (18.3% used and 25% unused), education (7.5% used and 2.3% unused), administration (6.8% used and 4.3% unused) and sales and marketing (5% used and 0.8% unused) skills were the other main skills identified by the respondents. Tourism was the least identified (2% used and 12% unused). It is interesting to note that both in relation to tourism-related skills and arts and culture, more respondents stated that they had the skills but it was unused, 12% and 25%, respectively. This highlights potential untapped skills in these areas.

Many respondents indicated that they desired to develop and improve skills in all the areas mentioned. The main areas were agriculture (38.3%), tourism-related (34%), arts and culture (30.8%), construction (30%), administration (23.8%), transport (22.8%) and sales and marketing

(18.3%). All these areas can contribute directly and indirectly to tourism-related activities as discussed in relation to agricultural potential for commercial purposes. Administration and sales and marketing are crucial tourism skills. As indicated earlier, there is an interest to provide tourism transport and operator services. Additionally, construction will be an important skill set to improve existing and build new infrastructure in the area which is critical to economic growth, including tourism activities. During the focus group discussion these skills were also highlighted. It was interesting that the focus of the discussion was more on starting businesses in these areas. Furthermore, they also stressed the importance of developing cooperatives in construction, tourism, and the arts and culture sectors.

In terms of tourism-related skills, the main areas identified were getting involved in tourism businesses, tourist guides or security personnel and to study tourism. Becoming tourist guides has great potential since many of the projects supported by the Municipality and the respondents are linked to natural and cultural features, and therefore local community members are more likely to have the necessary knowledge about relevant background and history. A few respondents (3.5%) also stated that they would like to establish a game reserve which was also supported by the focus group participants. In terms of arts and culture skills, the main areas identified were bead-making, wood art, painting, sewing traditional clothing and pottery as well as sales and marketing of traditional products, getting formal certificates and financing for crafting. The lack of existing tourism-related skills despite the desire to engage in tourism activities indicate that if tourism projects are to succeed and be sustainable, people in Ndwedwe need to be empowered and trained.

Table 1: Desire to improve skills at the household level (in %, n=400)

	Used	Unused	None	Desire to develop/ improve
Construction (plumbing, tiling, electrical, brick-laying, painting, etc.)	17.8	9.8	72.5	30
Agriculture	56.3	4.8	38.8	38.3
Tourism-related (eg. guides)	12.5	2	85.5	34
Arts and culture (beading, crafting, painting, pottery, etc.)	18.3	25	56.3	30.8
Transport (eg. drivers)	14.3	8	77.8	22.8
Educators	7.5	2.3	90.3	13
Administration (typing, record keeping, finance, etc.)	6.8	4.3	88.8	23.8
Sales and marketing	5	.8	94.3	18.8

Among those who would like to engage in tourism-related and arts and culture livelihood strategies, the reasons forwarded that prevent respondents from currently doing so are presented in Table 2. The main reasons were insufficient income/ funds, no customers/ markets and lack of skills. Other reasons forwarded were no jobs available, insufficient time, location of homestead and ill health.

Table 2: Reasons for not participating in tourism-related and arts and culture activities

	Tourism-related activities (n=144)	Arts and culture (n=124)
Insufficient income/ funds	31.3	83.16
No customers/ markets	73.6	60.5
Insufficient time	8.3	7.3
Insufficient infrastructure	17.34	8.1
Location of homestead	8.3	2.4
Lack of skills	59	23.4
No jobs available	15.3	10.5
Ill health	-	1.6

Conclusion

The high unemployment rates together with a young population with a high dependency ratio and relatively low skills base suggest that in order to develop tourism and other income generating activities in the area there is a need for improvements in the post-school training facilities in appropriate potential growth sectors. Additionally, strategies need to be developed to include low and semi-skilled workforce in tourism-related development projects. Given the interest in cultural tourism (including craft and arts production), the establishment of cooperatives to improve economies of scale need to consider including the implementation of marketing strategies such as website development.

There is sufficient land available in Ndwedwe for tourism investments and value-added tourism activities such as tourist accommodation and recreational areas, craft production and agricultural activities (such as processing) to respond to tourism demands in the region. As indicated earlier, the neighbouring municipalities are some of the main tourism locations in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa more generally. The findings indicated that there was a desire among the respondents to engage in small-scale commercial agricultural activities and craft production as income generating activities. This may require training and intervention in relation to types of crops and crafts that the tourism industry in the region would purchase. Furthermore, quality control standards and checks need to be in place to ensure a sustainable market of such products. It is important to note that caution needs to be exercised in relation to the development of tourism investments and projects (especially those that will require land) to ensure that the commercialisation of these enterprises do not displace existing smallholders and subsistence farmers but incorporate them into these ventures. Furthermore, female farmers and community members in particular should not be undermined which tends to occur when agricultural and other activities become profit-making enterprises.

It is important to note, however, that a few respondents and focus group participants expressed a desire to develop a game park with accommodation facilities in Ndwedwe. It is imperative that a proper market analysis be undertaken to assess the feasibility and viability of such a venture in Ndwedwe. Major tourist investments in rural areas which lack the physical infrastructure (such as transport networks and services) and marketing skills to successfully compete tend to fail. There is also a need for infrastructural investments in Ndwedwe. Specifically, transport networks are required to strengthen nodal linkages with Ndwedwe Town being the primary node and other secondary nodes, especially in the North, as well as with tourist destinations within the region. The transport networks will also encourage increased usage of services and facilities and investments in other livelihood and income generating activities.

While there may be tourism potential in the area and a desire among some of the residents to pursue tourism-related income generating activities, further research is required to assess the following:

- The feasibility and viability of current and potential tourism products
- Linkages with tourism products in neighbouring Municipalities (especially ecotourism and cultural tourism products which seem to be present, albeit minimally, in Ndwedwe Municipality)
- The environmental impacts and implications

- Tourism demand (for example, it may be more appropriate to develop rural tourism products such as village home stays and target domestic markets such as urban schools for excursions)

The above discussion clearly indicates that for Ndwedwe to pursue opportunities to support tourism activities there needs to be substantial investments by the Municipality in terms of infrastructural and service development as well as investments in skills and training. Additionally, financial resources are required for specific tourism investments. However, Cloke's (2013) assertion that the low tax base of rural areas makes it difficult for these rural areas to generate enough resources to finance their own development is relevant in the case of Ndwedwe as well. Thus, the local government would need to leverage resources from external sources and attempt to leverage public and private sector funding and investments.

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