

ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT IN COSTA RICA

- Case study of communities in transition (John Newcomb, 24 February)

If information and knowledge are central to democracy, they are the conditions for development - Kofi Annan

Successful growth and regeneration projects must have community involvement in the design and planning
Effective community engagement is an integral part of development & genuine community & stakeholder engagement can reap rewards.

From *Costa Rica Rural Tourism Association (ACTUAR)*:

Characteristics that should define rural community tourism:

- 1 - Integrates natural beauty and daily life of rural communities.
- 2 - Promotes productive sustainable practices in tourism.
- 3 - Adapts to rural life, preserves uniqueness and welcoming, relaxed, rustic atmosphere that characterize rural areas.
- 4 - Maintained by local initiative and participation, and strengthens the local organizations, which may be some families or community as a whole.
- 5 - Integrates local populace in this economic activity, distributes benefits fairly, and supplements farming or other income.
- 6 - Promotes land ownership by local population.

Community-based rural tourism should have positive impact economically, socially & environmentally (Triple Bottom Line):

- Favours local development & strengthens community organizations
- Supplements & diversifies sources of income for farming, fishing & indigenous families
- Develops local entrepreneurial capacity
- Reduces migration to the cities & sale of farmland to foreigners
- Values & thus helps to preserve local culture
- Encourages active participation of women
- Promotes conservation & formation of community forest & marine reserves
- Allows local families to fairly & sustainably exploit their human & natural resources

Community-based *Sustainable Development* meshes the three important areas of life:

- Social
- Economy
- Environment

