

Degree Final Project

**Communication plan
and rebranding
for
KIGOMA ECO-TOURISM**

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ABSTRACT

Kigoma EcoCultural Tourism is a tourism office led by Elisabeth Kitungano Philipo. This Final Degree Project consists of the elaboration of a communication plan, as well as the rebranding for the tourism office of Kigoma, Tanzania. To this end, research has been carried out to contextualize the situation of women entrepreneurs, specifically on tourism sector, as well as terms such as the brand definition and branding or the design of a communication plan. Thanks to these references, it is intended to achieve a better positioning of the tourism office in the tourism environment and lay the foundations for the future communication of the Kigoma tourism office.

Keywords: [EN] Communication plan, Kigoma tourism, branding, women empowerment, entrepreneur

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Franco, M. (2023) *Kigoma Map used on Duhamabi photography exposition.*
[Infographic].

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1 INTRODUCTION

This work comes from the opportunity given to me by the University of Girona as a 4th-year student to travel to Kigoma, Tanzania, along Dra. Sílvia Espinosa and Dra. Konstantina Zerva. The visit to Tanzania served as the foundation for a cooperation exploration project alongside the counterpart of UdG in Tanzania, Karibia. The project aimed to identify interesting initiatives in which the University of Girona could collaborate, whether through training, volunteering, or material assistance. As a student, I was part of the exploration group and I developed tasks related to video and picture taking.

Once visited the land of Kigoma personally and had known several of the projects presented by KARIBIA, the reason for this work took an important turn when knowing **Elisabeth Kitungano Philipo**, the woman who leads Kigoma's only tourism office. Philipo's story tells how a woman from a remote village can graduate from university and become an entrepreneur while helping her communities through her tourism office. The latest study by the World Tourism Organization (2019) has revealed that entrepreneurship activities led by women help them greatly to become actively **self-employed and economically and socially sustainable**, thus they can support themselves without the need for a man role. Moreover, women's entrepreneurship activities in the tourism sector result in empowering not only women themselves but also their families and communities. (Çiçek, Zencir, & Kozak, 2017)

Her spirit of entrepreneurship and leadership was very moving to me. In her tourism office saw the perfect opportunity to **put into practice the knowledge** acquired during my studies and help her in the creation of a communication plan and a rebranding of her tourism office to create more engaging and professional communication as well as bring worldwide exposure to catch the attention to potential tourists.

It is important to mention that in this work, a real client will be taking part in it and her necessities will be the base for the briefing. Moreover, because of the real-timing procedure of this work, requirements of the briefing will be carried out as well as a dependence on the low season of tourists visiting the city. As the client is a tourism office whose communication is mainly done online, the director Elisabeth Kitungano, required training regarding the use of CANVA and Instagram. For this reason, guides explaining how to use both platforms were created. (See Annex. For documents)

This brings us to the purpose of this work which at its end should answer the following question: Which communication and branding actions should be taken to improve the online and offline visibility of Kigoma's tourism office?

2 OBJECTIVES

To successfully achieve the goal of this work, the **main objective** will be to create a communication plan and a rebranding of Kigoma's tourism office.

Secondary objectives are determined to help to measure and analyze the results more accurately.

1. Improve tourism office online and offline presence.

Which actions should be taken to attract more audiences through the tourism office's platforms?

2. Improve the visual corporate identity of the tourism office

Which actions should be taken to improve the visual corporate identity?

3. Creation of a buyer persona


How can a buyer persona be identified?

Despite working with a real client who has a need to fulfill, there was no given briefing.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Communication plan

To establish the bases of the project it is essential to define what a communication plan is, and what use it has within a tourism organization, or in this case, what use it would be given in the tourism office of Kigoma.

Cristina Aced (2013, p. 179) defines the communication plan as “the roadmap where the communication of the organization must be managed strategically and that must include all levels of communication and all possible supports”. Aced points to the different levels of audiences, from directives to stakeholders. 

Following the author's concept, it is added that the communication plan must clearly define the communication objectives as well as have in mind the importance of "readjusting the strategy in case of not obtaining the desired results." (Aced, 2013, p. 179) Authors who define communication plans also use strategic communication plan synonymously, as referred by García Falcón (1987, p. 49).

Despite the definition mentioned above, Eva Santana (2021, p. 58) warns that the actions taken in the communication plan should not be confused with marketing actions, which are focused on selling and increasing economic benefits rather than reputation growth.

3.1.1 Structure of a communication plan

Following a clear structure is key for the good use of the communication plan by all internal and external audiences, from managers to participants. Although the authors agree with a more or less similar definition regarding the term “communication plan”, there are several opinions about the structures it should have.

1. Research

Before designing the communication plan, it is important to know the organization, in this case, the tourism office, by core, their competence as well as their public. (Santana, 2021, p. 9)

The needs of the tourism office, the strengths and weaknesses as well as the causes of the current problems or deficiencies that the tourism office's communication has must be clearly defined.

Therefore, when carrying out the research, everything related to the organization should be analyzed, including what is related to their competence as well as investigate the target audience. Investigation techniques are divided into **qualitative** and **quantitative**. The **qualitative** ones offer unique quality data, in-depth, which is helpful to analyze specific problems or research.

The **quantitative** ones on the other hand offer much more superficial data but have greater scope. (Santana, 2021, p. 15)

The most popular investigation technique is the **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threads)** analysis recommended by Aced (2013) and also by Santana (2021, p. 26). The **SWOT** analysis will allow the tourism office to detect communication strengths and weaknesses as well as its opportunities and threads. (Aced, 2013, p. 185)

Moreover, **investigation techniques** such as the **customer journey**, which simulates the process of, in this case, a tourist looking for the service offered by the tourism office, or the **content analysis** of the tourism office's social networks or website can also be helpful to detect existing communication problems in the tourism office. (Santana, 2021, p. 17)

2. Actions

Once the research has been carried out and the (Steffens & Cadiat, 2016) problems and opportunities of the tourism office have been identified, goals and objectives must be set to solve these problems. According to Xifra y Lalueza (2009), cited by Aced (2013, p. 191), **goals** are broader and more abstract while the **objectives** are more specific and can be measured.

As mentioned by Oliveira (2017, pp. 188-200) and Steffens and Cadiat, (2016) the objectives set must be **SMART**; specific, measurable, accessible, realistic, and temporary. Once the objectives are set, a **strategy** must be defined. A different strategy may be defined for each objective, and more than one strategy may be required to achieve each objective. (Aced, 2013, p. 194)

3. Communication

Once the actions are defined, it is time to execute the communication actions to reach the goals and accomplish the objectives.

Aced (2013, p. 195) organizes this phase into three parts:

- **The definition of messages:** The message should be short and concise. It can be written as a slogan to make it easier to remember. Here the organization must define the tone and style in which the messages will be transmitted.
- **The selection of actions:** The actions should be derived from the objectives and as well as the opportunities identified in the research phase. Techniques can be a press release, sending newsletters, presenting the tourism office in a newspaper, creating an advertisement for TV...
- **The programming of the actions to be carried out:** Once the previous steps have been fixed, the last thing to carry out is the programming. In this part, a calendar should be created in order to keep track of every action being carried out. It must define who will be taking care of the actions, as a community manager, or how their platforms should be managed.

4. Evaluation

Finally, the evaluation process takes place. A comparison must be established between the objectives determined and the results obtained, in order to draw conclusions and lessons that allow feedback on the entire decision-making process (Marca, 2017) cited by Oliveira (2017). KPI or Key point indicators must be defined beforehand in order to allow the tourism office to analyze the evolution of the actions. (Aced, 2013, p. 201)

Moreover, Santana (2021, p. 58) adds to the communication plan strategy the following division that can clearly be related to the execution process mentioned above:

The creative strategy is where the message is defined by the reason the organization uses that message and should answer the question “why?” as well as how the organization communicates that message. Which tone is going to be used? Formal or informal?...

The media strategy is where the organization must think about where the message is going to be published, and when is going to be displayed. It also includes how many publics are going to be impacted by the message, and how much is going to cost to communicate the message. The media strategy is conditioned by the briefing.

3.2 The design of a brand

3.2.1 Branding

Once the concept of what a brand is and what is the basis for a brand to succeed, it is important to shortly define what **branding** is before getting deeper into **rebranding**.

Capriotti (2009, p. 11) defines branding as the management process a brand does to create and maintain relevant links with its audiences. Moreover, branding is the mission of creating, communicating, and **enhancing brand value**, whether tangible and relational, intangible and emotional. Branding must be aligned with the image and identity to represent what the brand aspires to be. For branding, it is essential to generate **awareness**, recommend the brand and constantly repeat messages to the target audience of the brand. (Tello, 2022, p. 17) Furthermore, Chiaravalle & Findlay define **branding is a circular process** that involves certain actions such as Product definition, positioning, promise presentation, persistence, and perception analysis. (2007, p. 15)

3.2.2 Rebranding

Early academic papers on rebranding were Berry's (1988), cited by Merrilees and Miller (2008), and summaries of Ogilvy and Mather's brand revitalization program. So, the concept of rebranding can be easily confused with the term brand revitalization.

Rebranding is associated with the strategy of changing not only the visual identity of a brand but also its values while revitalization is associated with the updating of some of the parts of the brand such as its identities in order to make them more contemporary, or more competitive. (Chiaravalle & Findlay, 2007, p. 281)

Before carrying out any revitalization, an investigation and research of what are the current issues that are facing should be carried out. In order to determine such issues, a list of steps to follow is suggested: (p. 289)

1. First of all, a brand audit should be carried out to **review the actual brand**.
2. Secondly, determine how far **the changes** to the current brand or organization have to go.
3. Lastly, new goals, **objectives**, strategies, and measuring indicators (KPIs) should be determined after analyzing the results of the current strategy.

Once carried out the brand audit, there are a few actions to have in mind, depending on how much the organization would like to change. To prepare for a brand or organization revitalization, the authors propose a model of four steps that will help determine how much the brand has to update: (pp. 287-288)

1. Assess **how much the identity has to change**
2. Determine **which brand identity aspects contribute the most value** to the brand so as to know which aspects must be protected before carrying out the revitalization.
3. Invest in the counsel of a good brand designer.
4. Adopt a **revitalized brand strategy** that can represent your brand vision for at least 10 years.

To facilitate the process of rebranding or revitalizing a brand, Merrilees and Miller (2008) defined five principles to focus on while doing so: **Principles 1, 2, and 3** refer to the process of revising the vision, **Principle 4** to attaining internal support or "buy-in" to the new vision, and **Principles 5 and 6** to implementing the new corporate brand strategy.

3.2.3 City Branding

According to Anholt (2006), city branding can be defined as "a strategic process of creating and maintaining a favorable identity for a place that **captures its unique values**, culture, and characteristics while also reflecting the aspirations of its residents and stakeholders" (p. 41).

City branding involves creating a brand identity that **differentiates the city from its competitors** and communicates its unique selling proposition to the target audience (Kavaratzis, 2004). The brand identity should reflect the city's history, culture, natural attractions, architecture, and other attributes that make it distinctive. Effective city branding requires the involvement of various stakeholders, including city officials, tourism boards, business organizations, and residents (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2005).

Moreover, city branding requires the promotion of **cultural activities** and human development within the community, and mega-events are seen as a means of achieving this goal. Such events are regarded as cultural capital, leaving a lasting impression on citizens long after their conclusion. (Dastgerdi & De Luca, 2019). The authors add that the initial step towards creating a compelling city brand in cultural activities is to acknowledge the strengths of the location and involve citizens in shaping the city's image.

3.2.4 Ecotourism as part of city branding

As a method of promoting sustainable development, ecotourism has become a **prominent focus worldwide**. It involves traveling to natural areas that are relatively untouched or free from contamination with the aim of studying, appreciating, and enjoying the scenery, as well as the flora and fauna found in these areas and any cultural artifacts that may exist (Anderson, 2009; Fennel 2001; Ceballas-Lascurain 1983) cited by (Pasape, Anderson, & Lindi, 2017).

Anderson (2010) cited by (Pasape, Anderson, & Lindi, 2017) posited that **ecotourism is responsible for approximately 90% of the tourism in Tanzania**, meaning that most of the country's tourism activities rely on ecotourism attractions. Ecotourism has numerous economic benefits, including employment and trade opportunities (Jusko, 1994) cited by (Pasape, Anderson, & Lindi, 2017), while also contributing to social development by promoting education and increasing income levels.

Moreover, Anderson (2009) cited by (Pasape, Anderson, & Lindi, 2017) stated that for an attraction to be considered ecotourism-oriented, its primary focus should be on the natural environment, with cultural elements serving as secondary components. Furthermore, the interaction between tourists and the environmental attraction should be rooted in education, ensuring that visitors learn and appreciate the need for ecotourism to be sustainable in terms of the environment, society, and economy.

3.2.5 Buyer Persona

To achieve these objectives, it is crucial to understand and develop the buyer persona as they will ultimately evaluate the improvements that will be implemented in the tourism office, and are the ultimate target that is intended to be reached.

Investigator Nasra Kara researched and detailed the profiles of over 450 tourists arriving in Tanzania in her article "Demographic Factors and Preference for Travel Activities among Tourists in Tanzania" (2016). Based on her research, an early buyer persona will be defined.

The buyer persona that travels to Tanzania is typically between the ages of 18-30, predominantly male and married. They have received a university degree or higher education, and are currently employed with a family of three or more children. The majority of buyer personas are from Oceania, although there is also a significant number of tourists from Europe. Finally, the monthly salary of the buyer persona ranges between \$3000 to \$5000.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Communication plan for Kigoma's ECO TOURISM office

To address this section of the project and create the communication plan for the Kigoma tourism office, the **RACE model** structure (Marston, 1963) and the guidelines established by Eva Santana in her book "El plan de comunicación paso a paso" (2021) will be followed. Moreover, recommendations found in author Cristina's Aced book "Relaciones públicas 2.0" (2013) will also be used.

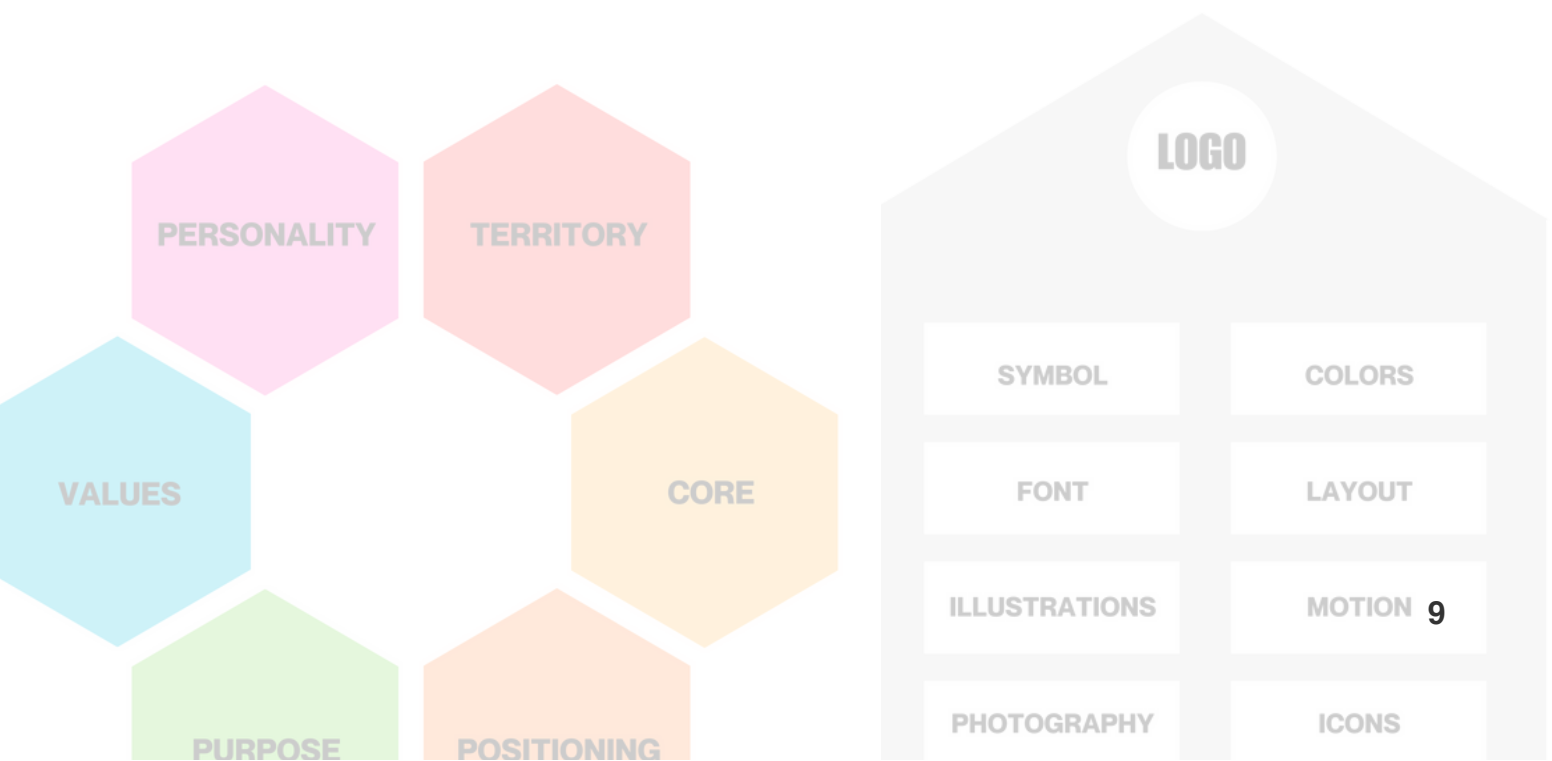
Furthermore, in order to obtain quality information and determine the qualities of Kigoma's tourism office, **qualitative data** collection will be carried out through an **interview** with Elisabeth Kitungano Philipo, its director.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the eco-tourism market, direct and indirect competitors must be defined. For this task, the methodology to follow will be using a customer journey strategy by searching keywords on Google browsers related to the ecotourism sector. Depending on the results and the main companies displayed when searching the keywords, the competitors will be selected. The **keywords** that will be worked on will be "eco-tourism Kigoma" and "Kigoma tourism" "Kigoma tours" as they are the niche of the tourism office as well as its name.

Finally, and thanks to the visit made to Kigoma, the research method called "**participant observation**" was also used, where the researcher visits the desired place of investigation to conduct ethnological studies. This type of study collects data in a logbook; in the case of this work, information was **collected in audio-visual** format through the taking of photographs and videos. This research adds significant value to the collected information since it is first-hand information that was gathered in the field, without intermediaries.

4.2 Rebranding for Kigoma's ECO TOURISM office

To redesign a strong brand with a modern concept the use of the book "The Branding Method" by Carolina Tello, published in 2022, will be followed. The approach given by Tello to the branding method is fresh and vast. Among the 25 practices, or drives as she calls them, presented in her book, only 2 of them will be strictly applied to this section of the work. Moreover, the principles established by Merrilees & Miller (2008) will be followed in order to revitalize a strong brand.

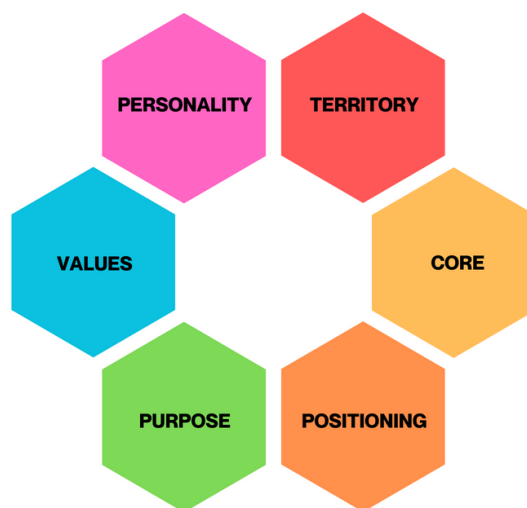


4.2.1 The brand flower: The 6 brands dimensions

“In this driver, we will deepen in the heart core of our brand” (Tello, 2022, p. 127)

To work on the essence of the tourism office, we will use THE BRAND FLOWER tool. This tool delves into the core of the brand to define the essentials with which it must be built and defined.

THE BRAND FLOWER: THE 6 BRANDS DIMENSIONS



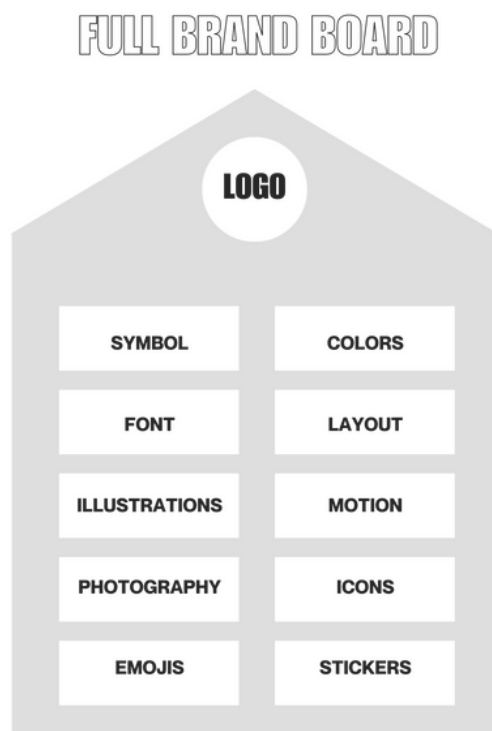
Infographic 2. The Brand Flower method representation.
Font: Own elaboration based on Tello's book (The Branding Method, 2022, p. 127)

This tool is divided into 6 dimensions:

1. **Territory:** It's the conceptual space in which the tourism office competes against travel agencies and similar tourism offices that could offer the same experiences.
2. **Core:** This is the heart of the tourism office, what makes them unique, and stays true to their goals.
3. **Positioning:** It is what sets us apart from the rest and defines who we are.
4. **Purpose:** How we are going to impact the lives of our tourists, is the company's commitment.
5. **Values:** The principles that move the brand and in which they believe. They are the ideals on which the brand, or in this case, the tourism agency, is based to create its communication and identity.
6. **Personality:** It is the attitude towards the world, how we want our tourists to perceive us.

This method is suitable for brand description because it addresses its identity both internally and externally, applying all the factors that must be strategically addressed for solid and competitive brand creation. Moreover, being a visual reference, the director of Kigoma Ecocultural Tourism will be able to clearly recognize the sections and definitions without needing technical knowledge or previous studies in the field of branding.

4.2.2 The full brand board



To define the visual universe of a brand, Tello (2022, pp. 220-221) presents the tool “full brand board” with the aim to visualize and organize the main ideas before carrying out a visual rebranding.

The board includes the needed items used to describe and define the visual dimension of the brand. The items will be useful for the creation and development of the revitalization of the tourism office look and feel as well as the brand book.

Some aspects such as the motion and stickers might not be as known as others in Tanzania, as their use is not as relevant as the rest of the sections of the board. Despite this fact, the brand focus is on international tourism and therefore people who are more familiarized with the use of motion graphics and stickers.

Drawing. The Full Brand Board method representation.
Font: Own elaboration based on Tello's book (The Branding Method, 2022, p. 221)

Logo: A visual representation of a brand that combines symbols, colors, and fonts to create a distinctive and recognizable identity.

Symbol: A graphical element or image that represents a concept, idea, or brand identity, often used alongside a logo for added recognition.

Font: A specific typeface used consistently in branding materials to convey the brand's personality and enhance readability.

Illustrations: Visual representations created to enhance brand messaging and communicate complex ideas in a creative and engaging manner.

Photography: Images captured through the lens that showcase products, people, or environments, helping to create a visual narrative for the brand.

Emojis: Small graphical icons used in digital communication to convey emotions or add a touch of personality and playfulness to brand messaging.

Colors: The carefully chosen hues that represent emotions, and associations, and create a visual identity for a brand. The colors must be carefully chosen to represent the brand identity and values.

Layout: The arrangement and organization of visual elements such as text, images, and graphics within a design, ensuring clarity and visual hierarchy. Mostly used on social media, in specific, Instagram platform.

Motion: The incorporation of animated elements, such as videos or interactive graphics, to bring the brand to life and create dynamic visual experiences.

Icons: Simple graphical representations used to represent concepts, actions, or features, providing visual cues and enhancing usability in digital interfaces.

Stickers: Custom-designed graphics or labels that can be used in digital or physical spaces to promote a brand, product, or event, often adding a fun and interactive element.

The justification for why this method will be used is that it encompasses all the strategic graphic and design elements that a brand must have to present itself to the world and be competitive against its competitors. Moreover, this method is visual and easy to understand, as it aims to be used as a reference for future administrators of the tourism office communication. Thanks to its visual appearance, the knowledge requires to understand each of the items is rather straightforward.

5 RESULTS

5.1 COMMUNICATION PLAN

5.1.1 Research

5.1.1.1 The organization:

Firstly, with regards to Kigoma Eco-Cultural Tourism, it is a tourism office located in Kigoma, Tanzania that is dedicated to the expansion of culture and empowerment of the most disadvantaged communities in the Kigoma region through sustainable tourism.

During the interview held with Elisabeth Kitungano (See Annex 8.1), she explained that the idea originated from the recognition of the abundant heritage resources present in Kigoma that were left underutilized. Despite the presence of cultural and natural treasures, the director observed that the local communities were not reaping benefits, while external companies were capitalizing on these resources.

The office was started back in 2019, despite the idea was born in 2018 when Kitungano's younger brother encountered two visitors from France who were wandering through the streets, seeking an authentic experience with the local communities. Unfortunately, there was no one available to provide them with information. Recognizing the opportunity, Kitungano's younger brother approached the visitors and asked about their interests.

Regarding the mission, vision, and values, they are defined on their website:

Mission

The mission of Kigoma Eco-cultural tourism is to curate custom tours and exciting experiences people will remember for a lifetime.

Vision

The vision is to grow as a tourism office among its competitors and external tourism companies in Kigoma in order to offer its tourists better experiences at better prices. Additionally, they would also like to expand their activities and tours to provide unique and unforgettable experiences.

Values

Kigoma Eco-cultural tourism emphasizes the value of culture and nature preservation offered in their tours. Additionally, the tourism office is committed to the socio-economic empowerment of communities located far from the city, especially women with low or no education who have to support their families. Kigoma Eco-cultural tourism stands out for providing tourists with immersive and authentic experiences closely related to Kigoma's society.

In order to understand better the situation of the tourism office, their online platforms were analyzed and data was collected along with the writing of a conclusion. The analysis of the platforms was also represented in tables (See Annex 8.2) in order to improve the visual appearance of the data.

KigomaEcoCultural Tourism



Instagram (See Table 1, Annex 8.2)

The Instagram account was created back in 2019. The account has a decent number of followers with over 600, and shares visually appealing content related to tours and cultural activities. The tone used on the Instagram account is friendly and has several sentences with the purpose of getting the attraction of its viewers. Despite the approachable tone, it's recommended the use of more icons and stickers to make it more visually appealing.



Facebook (See Table 2, Annex 8.2)

As the Instagram account, Facebook was created back in 2019, when the tourism office opened. Regarding KigomaEcoTourism account, it has a strong **level of engagement** from its followers. The emphasis on sharing pictures of tourists, their experiences, and interactions with the local community contributes to the high engagement levels. It's important to mention that despite the engagement being greater than on Instagram, the pictures and posts are very similar, using on some occasions even the same text which could lead in the repetition of content.



Website (See Table 3, Annex 8.2)

Regarding the website, Kigoma Eco Cultural Tourism displayed two different websites, the analyzed one was <https://www.kigomaecotours.com> as it's the most complete and well organized. The issue with having two different websites is that future tourists can be confused, therefore the engagement might differ. Despite this fact, the analysis did not include internal data but focused on user experience and content analysis which conclude in the lack of a visually appealing website, as the director already mentioned in the interview. Despite the great content posted on both Facebook and Instagram, the website barely shares any content nor has **any valuable posts** other than prices for the tours.

5.1.1.2 Competitors:

As explained in the Methodology part of this work, the competitors were found after researching using keywords such as "eco-tourism Kigoma" and "Kigoma tourism" "Kigoma tours". The research and analysis carried out include tourism offices that offer similar tourism products or services (direct competitors) and those that target the same customers but with different offerings (indirect competitors).

5.1.1.2.1 Direct competitors:

MAJI makubwa Eco-tourism project

The office belongs to the tourism sector, specifically the ecotourism sector in the Kigoma area. Despite being their direct competitor because of also belong to the ecotourism sector, this tourism office is no longer in operation, and their social media accounts stopped being updated in 2019.

Moreover, this tourism office is mostly related to diving experiences and does not offer any tourism or cultural activities. Nevertheless, it still appears as the first search result on Google. The office does not have a website nor other social media profiles asides from the Facebook page so the analysis of its channels will only be carried out on its Facebook page.

Facebook (See Table 4, Annex 8.2)

Based on the information provided on the Facebook page, it is evident that the page's content and engagement are lacking. The page primarily showcases pictures of diving experiences, but the overall quality of the information displayed is poor. Despite having a decent number of likes, the page has a low number of pictures and has not been updated since 2017.

Moreover, there are pictures of the organization's logo, which doesn't provide much value to potential tourists. The infrequent posting frequency indicates that the page is inactive and no longer providing updates. This lack of updates may explain the low engagement and limited information about activities on the page. Furthermore, the page only has one review, suggesting minimal user engagement and feedback.

5.1.1.2.2 Indirect competitors:

AfricanMecca Tours

The first indirect competitor, meaning belonging to the tourism sector in the Kigoma region but not to the ecotourism sector. This tourism agency is located in the United States despite organizing tours and excursions throughout Africa. The tourism agency has over 500 reviews on its social media and a community of over 5,000 people on Facebook. Furthermore, it is the first search result on Google with the terms "Kigoma tours". Following the method applied previously, a channel analysis will be carried out for this tourism office.

Instagram (See Table 5, Annex 8.2)

AfricanMeccaSafari's Instagram page provides up-to-date and interesting content for future travelers, showcasing safari experiences, hotels, and travel adventures. The page is regularly updated with a variety of visual content, including pictures, videos, and reels. Although engagement is low, the page offers relevant information about accommodations and has an attractive Instagram description with links to their other social media platforms.

Facebook (See Table 6, Annex 8.2)

AfricanMecca Safaris, Tours & Beach Vacations Facebook page offers interesting and relevant information for future travelers. It provides updates on relevant events in the safari destinations and showcases pictures of hotels, travel experiences, and animals. The content is well organized, regularly posted, and includes a variety of pictures, videos, and reels.

Although the content quality is high, the page experiences low engagement in terms of interactions and reviews. However, it continues to provide valuable and updated information about accommodations, sustainability, and education, appealing to travelers seeking relevant details.

Website (See Table 7, Annex 8.2)

The AfricanMecca Safaris, Tours & Beach Vacations website provides the relevant and informative content about their services, tours, and offerings. The website features numerous call-to-action buttons that allow visitors to easily contact a safari expert, book tours, or request information. The website showcases a variety of pictures, videos, and reels depicting hotels, travel experiences, and animals.

Additionally, the website includes a history of the tourism office, along with reviews from previous tourists and displayed awards. The website's design incorporates corporate colors and logos, making it easily recognizable and consistent with its other social media platforms.

5.1.1.2 Indirect competitors:

AfricanMecca Tours

Twitter (See Table 6, Annex 8.2)

AfricanMecca's Twitter page serves as a platform for sharing relevant information about their services, tours, and accommodations. With a substantial follower count of 3,611, the page effectively showcases its logo and maintains a consistent visual identity across social media platforms. The regular posting of diverse content, including pictures, videos, and reels, keeps followers engaged and informed about the latest offerings and updates.

While engagement levels may be modest, the page's advocacy for sustainability and education, evident through posts on national/world days like World Water Day, aligns with the growing interest in responsible tourism.

5.1.1.3 Audience

In any communication plan, it is essential to detail the target audience to whom we will direct our tourism office communication. This audience is nothing more than a small demographic, socioeconomic, and behavioral sample of a group of people to whom we will direct ourselves and who will be our future tourists.

Based on the guidelines outlined in the theoretical framework according to tourists traveling to Tanzania, we can begin to detail our target audience.

Therefore, with this initial description of the audience we will address, it is proposed three different buyer persona profiles. These ideal tourist prototypes will allow the tourism office to psychologically know the different groups that represent the brand, from which we can obtain qualitative data and similar behaviors from other audiences or followers.

5.1.1.3.1 Buyer persona



Sarah Thompson

Description: A 32-year-old single woman from the United States who works as a freelance writer. Sarah is a feminist woman, passionate about sustainable living and eco-friendly travel. She's also worried about woman's situation in African countries and contributes to an NGO that helps develop women's communities in poor regions. She is interested in exploring new cultures and immersing herself in nature. She heard about Kigoma in a Youtube recommendation video.

Interests: Collaborating with local communities, yoga, empowerment of African women, trying local cuisine, learning about indigenous communities and their way of life.

Expectations: Sarah expects a unique and authentic travel experience that allows her to connect with nature and local communities in a sustainable way.

Personal Situation: Sarah earns an annual income of \$60,000 and has no dependents.

5.1.1.3.1 Buyer persona

Mark and Emily Cooper



Description: Mark (45) and Emily (42) are a married couple from Sydney, who are seeking a unique and meaningful vacation experience. They are looking for an ecotourism trip that allows them to connect with Tanzania's culture, nature, and people. They have a high annual income from their jobs as lawyers. They know about Kigoma because a friend traveled to Gombe and recommended them the village.



Interests: Cultural immersion, nature walks, historical sites, responsible travel.

Challenges: Mark and Emily are concerned about the impact of tourism on local communities and want to make sure their trip supports local development and conservation efforts.

Expectations: Mark and Emily want to experience Tanzania's cultural and natural attractions in an authentic and sustainable way. They expect the tour agency to offer opportunities to interact with local communities, stay in eco-friendly accommodations, and support conservation and community development initiatives. They also expect to get tours around historical sites where relevant events took place.

Personal Situation: They have 2 children that will stay with their grandparents during the trip. They earn a combined annual income of AUD \$250,000.

Erik Anderson



Description: Erik is a single 35-year-old Danish adventure seeker who is looking for a challenging and exciting ecotourism experience in Tanzania. He wants to push his limits and experience the thrill of outdoor activities in a unique natural setting. Erik is single and has a high annual income from his job as a YouTuber content creator.

Interests: Hiking, interacting with chimpanzees, exploring local markets, learning about indigenous cultures.

Challenges: Erik wants to experience the thrill of adventure without compromising safety or environmental sustainability.

Expectations: John wants a high-adrenaline, authentic, and sustainable experience in Tanzania. He expects the tour agency to offer activities that are challenging, but safe and environmentally responsible. He also expects knowledgeable guides who can offer cultural and environmental insights.

Personal situation: As he works creating content for YouTube he is also looking for potential locations where he can set for a while and work remotely.

As explained in the theoretical framework, the importance of buyer persona is basic when creating a communication campaign as the exemplified customers are the main target of the tourism office. The buyer's persona created must be in the center of the projected and future activities of Kigoma's tourism office in order to achieve good communication results.

5.1.1.4 Customer journey

A customer journey is an important tool that could allow the tourism office to understand their tourists' experience and behavior throughout their interactions when looking for a tourism office. By mapping out the tourist journey, the tourism office can identify pain points and opportunities to improve the tourist experience, ultimately leading to increased tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

The customer journey of a tourist trying to find an eco-cultural travel agency in Kigoma, Tanzania can be exemplified in the following stages:

1. Awareness: At this stage, the customer becomes aware of their desire to travel to Tanzania and specifically to the Kigoma region. The tourist at this point might have seen Kigoma or Tanzania in an advertisement, in a picture of a friend on social media, or in a newspaper.

2. Research: The tourist starts to research eco-cultural travel agencies in Tanzania or even in their country of origin. They may search online, read travel blogs, or ask for recommendations from friends and family. The customer will look for information such as the agency's reputation, the types of tours offered, and the cost of the activities or the value it's offered within them.

3. Consideration: The customer narrows down their options and considers the various eco-cultural tourism offices or agencies that offer the type of tourism they are looking for. In this case, Kigoma has only one tourism office so the other options might be traveling agencies outside of Kigoma or even outside of Tanzania. They may compare the services, the cost, and the reviews from other customers. The customer may also reach out to the agency directly to ask questions or get more information. This point is where reviews from past tourists are crucial to attract possible tourists as validation from other people will make them feel safe about booking with a certain travel office.

5. Booking: The customer decides on an eco-cultural travel agency and proceeds to book their tour. This may involve submitting a deposit or payment in full. If the customer may have further questions or concerns to address before finalizing the booking, it's important that the tourism office has an accessible way of contact through different channels such WhatsApp, a chat on their website, or social media.

5.1.1.5 SWOT




Based on the **SWOT information** (see Table 9, Annex 8.3), the conclusions drawn focus on the strengths and opportunities while mitigating weaknesses and threats with the following recommendations as improving marketing efforts and raising awareness among eco-tourism by highlighting unique cultural experiences and addressing concerns regarding online content quality. Moreover, it's important to enhance the online presence and visibility by implementing effective social media strategies, improving website SEO, and ensuring consistent branding across different platforms.

Furthermore, relay on the knowledge and expertise of local people to provide exceptional and informative experiences for tourists, emphasizing the advantages of traveling with knowledgeable guides. This follows collaboration with local accommodations and transport providers to improve the overall visitor experience, ensuring a wide range of options at different price points and improving access to the region. Once drawing conclusions from the SWOT, the actions must be defined following the focus on strengths and opportunities.

5.1.2 Actions

Once the research has been already conducted and the weakness and threats of the tourism office have been identified, objectives must be set.


5.1.2.1 Objectives:

-  **Objective 1:** Improve tourism office online and offline presence by 20% among their target in a period of 6 months.
-  **Objective 2:** Increase Kigoma's EcoCultural Tourism social media engagement by 30% over a period of 12 months.
-  **Objective 3:** Improve the visual corporate identity of the tourism office in a period of 12 months.

5.1.3 Communication

The definition of messages: Kigoma's Ecocultural Tourism office has a very clear message and intention toward the public. They want tourists to experience immersive tours that will last in their memory forever and create unforgettable activities that they will remember in their lifetime. This leads to the definition of **short messages focused on the importance and awareness of cultural activities** within Kigoma's population as well as the recognition and divulgation of their culture and history from an educative point.

The selection of actions: The actions will be related to the objectives previously mentioned in the "objectives" sections of the communication plan. Therefore, each objective will have its own set of individual actions.

-  **Objective 1:** Improve tourism office online and offline presence by 20% among their target in a period of 6 months.

ONLINE

- **Creation of visual guides on the Instagram and Canva platforms (See Annex 8.9):**

These guides aim to improve the knowledge of Kigoma EcoCultural's director, Elisabeth Kitungano, about online platforms to be able to manage Instagram correctly, as well as design posts, calendars, and other relevant information that can be used as content on their social networks. In addition, CANVA also allows the creation of videos and content that would improve the positioning of the tourism office's Instagram thanks to its potential within the Instagram algorithm.

Visual guides are useful thanks to their visual learning format, where the language barrier is reduced and they can be distributed among partners of the Tourism Office with lower levels of education and still be practical and provide basic learning on the platforms.

- **Creation of content proposals** (See Annex 8.10): An Instagram Feed proposal will be made where value-added content will be added, such as information about the culture of the Tourism Office, its values, who is behind the Tourism Office, and telling the stories of these people. In this case, the main story that should be developed would be that of its director, Elisabeth Kitungano. The type of content that will be posted and its format (picture, video, or reels) will be described in the publication calendar.
- Beyond proposals on social networks, **the redesign of the website** (See Annex 8.5) **and the creation of a Blog** (See Annex 8.8) on its website will also be made to improve its positioning within search engines, especially Google positioning. The redesign of the website to be cohesive through the rest of the platforms as well as the blog section will bring great value to the website's SEO (Search Engine Optimization) through the use of keywords and content related to the searches that users make before traveling to Tanzania.

Some topics proposed for the website blog could be:

- What information should I know before traveling to Kigoma?
- Can I drink water without a worry in Kigoma?
- Vaccines and medical certificates for traveling on a safari in Tanzania
- Explanation of the different activities carried out by the Tourism Office.

OFFLINE

- **The positioning of an eye-catching sign at the entrance of the tourism office** clearly displays the name and the services provided by the office. However, this action would require a budget for a sign and paint, which the tourism office may not be able to afford.
- To achieve **organic offline positioning without the need for a budget**, the tourism office could collaborate with local businesses, such as restaurants or hotels. The collaboration could involve the tourism office offering its online audience through its social media platforms or blog posts (such as "best restaurant to go to in Kigoma" or "best places to stay in Kigoma"). In exchange, local businesses could recommend the tourism office to their customers or inform local people to collaborate with the office by providing tourist activities (such as tour guides or food preparation).
- Moreover, and as a result of the observant participation carried out through the visit to Kigoma, a **poster** (See Annex 8.6) on the outside of Kigoma's airport hall would be very accurate for the purpose of the tourism office.
- In order to reach a wider range of tourists, it is also proposed to position **pamphlets** (See Annex 8.7) and a **poster** (See Annex 8.6) in a MUPI (*Mobilier Urbain pour l'information*) at the **airport in Dar Es Salaam**. This airport is the main one in the country, and passing through there is mandatory in order to travel to the rest of Tanzania. That is why it is also proposed, if printing and placement at the airport are possible, to place pamphlets advertising Kigoma and the services offered by the tourism office.



Objective 2: Increase Kigoma's EcoCultural Tourism social media engagement by 30% over a period of 12 months.

- Create an **automated message on social media platforms** so that when tourists or audiences interact with posts (whether through public comments or direct messages), a thank you message is sent with information on how to contact the tourism office for further information on activities.
- **Live:** A live stream could be conducted during relevant activities by Elisabeth Kitungano, the director, such as in the middle of a tour or receiving tourists. In the event that the necessary internet connection is not available to conduct a live stream, a video could be recorded and then compiled into a reel format.

- **Instagram survey:** A Q&A-style questionnaire could be conducted on Instagram, asking followers what kind of information they would like to know about Kigoma or what preparations need to be made before traveling to the region. Responses can be posted publicly in story format and then saved in a highlight, which also adds value to the Instagram profile.



Objective 3: Improve the visual corporate identity of the tourism office in a period of 12 months.

- To initiate the revitalization of the brand, the various tools described in the methodology will be used through the customization of the tourism office. Using **the tools mentioned in the methodology** (See Annex 8.4 and 8.5), a graphic design project will be undertaken to redesign the logo and color palette of the tourism office and achieve a consistent look and feel across all social media platforms.
- Specific actions to be taken will include the creation of a **brandbook** (See Annex 8.5) with specific style guidelines, as well as an explanation of the chosen options. Additionally, different templates will be created to assist the tourism office in presenting the information. Furthermore, specific photo editing parameters will be established to achieve a uniform look and feel across all aspects of the brand. (See Annex 8.5)



Actual logo



Logo proposal (See Annex 8.5)

- Regarding social media, a minimum of **2 posts should be shared to announce the new brand image** so that the agency's target audiences are notified and made aware of the change, and do not mistake it for a different tourism office or content they are no longer interested in. Additionally, informing audiences about a brand image change can generate curiosity and increase their interest in the tourism office.

Because the communication plan is for a real client, the deliverance of the actions must be set before the high season starts in order to accomplish the objectives and be able to reach a bigger number of tourists. The information regarding high and low seasons has been provided by Kigoma's Ecocultural Tourism office director, Elisabeth Kitungano.

In order to achieve the set objectives, it is important to **organize the content expected to be published** on social media. Therefore, with the aim of planning content proposals and being able to adjust them to an appropriate timeline, a 6-month planning calendar will be created (See Annex 8.10), indicating the following parameters:

Posting days: Since there is no analysis of the tourism office's social media analytics, the chosen posting days will be selected based on the recommendations of the social media platforms.

Posting objective: To gain more followers, inform existing followers, influence their decisions, recommend products or activities, etc.

Posting format: In the form of static photographs, animated photographs (GIF), videos, or text.

5.1.4 Evaluation

Next, in the evaluation, the KPIs that would be used to analyze the achievement of the objectives will be detailed. Different KPIs will be detailed for each action corresponding to each despite some actions are related to more than one objective, but the KPIs to measure them are different since these are based on the final objective and not on the action itself.

5.1.4.1 KPI or Key point indicators:



Objective 1: Improve tourism office online and offline presence by 20% among their target in a period of 6 months.

ONLINE

- **Creation of visual guides on the Instagram and Canva platforms**
 - **The number of publications done following** the visual guidelines given to the director.
 - **Creation of content proposal.**
 - **The number of interactions:** likes, reactions, and comments on the publications after the implementation of the communication plan.
- Reach the increase** of the account based on the posts created after the implementation of the communication plan.

Creation of a Blog on its website will also be made to improve its positioning within search engines, especially Google positioning.

- The total number of **clicks** and **visits** on the website link displayed on the browser.
- The total number of **readings** on the blog publications.
- **Position** of the Kigoma tourism office website on Google's browser.

OFFLINE

- **The positioning of an eye-catching sign at the entrance of the tourism office.**
 - The number of **tourists who stopped** at the sign and entered the office.
 - The number of **pictures of the sign** displayed on social media or Google reviews by tourists.
- **Poster on the outside of Kigoma's airport hall.**
 - The number of **tourists that contacted or reached out** to the tourism office through the poster.
- **Pamphlets at the airport in Dar Es Salaam**
 - Number of pamphlets left at the airport at the end of each month.

In order to archive more qualified data about the knowledge of tourists of the tourism office, a survey could be given through an offline or online form, asking them how they know about the tourism office.



Objective 2: Increase Kigoma's EcoCultural Tourism social media engagement by 30% over a period of 12 months.

- **Create an automated message.**
 - The number of customers who asked for more information or booked through the conversation.
- **Live stream.**
 - The number of impressions, views, and comments left on the live stream.
- **Instagram survey.**
 - The number of impressions and views on the survey story.
 - The number of questions asked.

5.1.4 Evaluation



Objective 3: Improve the visual corporate identity of the tourism office in a period of 12 months.

- Percentage of the target audience who are **familiar with the Kigoma EcoCultural Tourism logo**, by conducting surveys or tracking online mentions.
- Measuring the likelihood of **tourists to recommend** the Kigoma EcoCultural Tourism to other tourists, by conducting surveys or tracking customer feedback.

The decision to exclude **budget** considerations from the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the tourist office is based on the goal of prioritizing the **natural growth of the office's reputation**. This means focusing on developing strengths and utilizing available resources instead of relying heavily on money. Moreover, by **emphasizing organic growth**, the office aims to build a strong reputation by offering genuine experiences and interactions. This approach involves making the most of the region's unique cultural and natural heritage, as well as the knowledge of local communities. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations and long-term growth are expected to result from these efforts.

However, for those **actions that do require an economic cost**, it is expected that it will be minimal or subsidized by local NGOs that can help the tourism office. Additionally, the price of the different proposals that require an expense (poster printing, flyers, paint for signs, etc.) varies depending on the countries, and there are no specific data on potential suppliers in Kigoma.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Finally, once the final degree work is completed, a reflection will be made on what has been learned and mentioned in this project. The purpose of creating a solid communication plan for the Kigoma Tourism Office, Kigoma EcoCultural Office, comes from the need of its director, Elisabeth Kitungano Philipo, to communicate the activities and actions carried out by her tourism office.

In this project, three objectives were set out to be achieved through extensive research and implementation, as well as the actual travel to the location.

Recalling the objectives mentioned at the beginning of the work, the intention was to accomplish the following objectives

The main objective was to create a communication plan and a rebranding of Kigoma's tourism office. Secondary objectives were:

1. Improve tourism office online and offline presence.

Which actions should be taken to attract more audiences through the tourism office's platforms?

2. Improve the visual corporate identity of the tourism office

Which actions should be taken to improve the visual corporate identity?

3. Creation of a buyer persona

How can a buyer persona be identified?

In relation to the primary and secondary objectives, the development and execution of a comprehensive communication plan for the EcoCultural Tourism Office have been successfully carried out. The communication plan has been carefully designed to focus on the specific needs and goals of the office. It englobes various essential components, such as identifying and assessing target audiences, formulating resonant key messages, selecting suitable communication channels, and creating engaging content to effectively convey the desired information.

Additionally, the rebranding of the EcoCultural Tourism Office has been undertaken as part of the second objective. This involved a thorough evaluation of the current brand identity, including visual elements, messaging, and overall perception. A strategic plan for rebranding has been formulated based on the analysis, aiming to develop a refreshed brand image that aligns with the office's values, vision, and objectives. The goal of this rebranding effort is to enhance visibility, recognition, and reputation among the target audience, fostering increased engagement and participation.

Both the **communication plan and rebranding** of the EcoCultural Tourism Office have been carried out and must be implemented once the finishing of project.

Despite the absence of new data or statistics on social media, it can be confirmed that the objective of creating a new identity and defining the buyer persona has been successfully accomplished. However, without data, it cannot be definitively verified whether the created corporate identity contributes to increasing the brand's presence and positioning, fostering differentiation from competitors, creating a brand image, generating brand recall, and establishing connections and experiences. Nonetheless, one could argue that the mere act of creating this identity sets the stage for achieving these objectives. As explained in the theoretical section of the project, the creation of a strong and powerful corporate identity plays a crucial role in shaping the brand's perception, consideration, and emotional associations.

In essence, this project can be seen as an **ongoing endeavor rather than a completed task**. The implementation of the identity is a continuous process, as the management of the brand itself, as it requires periodic attention. As such, Kigoma EcoCultural Tourism has emerged as a brand with a fresh and distinctive identity, that can be **competitive in the tourism** sector and support the local communities of Kigoma in a positive way.

Last but not least, it's important to mention that the impact of this communication plan aims to grow further than just creating a brand and improving the communication of Kigoma EcoCultural Tourism, as it aims to **help the local people from Kigoma**.

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