

# Unexploited tourism potential

**POTENTIAL:** Aruu Falls, which attracts more than 100 visitors per month, is one of northern Uganda's lowly exploited tourism potential.

A flood cascades off a still set of rocks before rapidly pouring into various enclaves in Agago District.

This is Aruu Falls that flows through Agago District into Lapaya village in Pader District.

The falls are located eight kilometres from Aruu Trading Centre marked by a Aruu Falls Campsite, a major stop point for tourists.

At the campsite, the sound of the distant roaring falls whirs through the air as water pours into the seven enclaves of Wang Okyis, Lacey, Okello Gem, Kyanga, Lanya Kweya, Akweyo and Awilo Yaa.

According to locals, Aruu Falls draws its waters from River Agago that flows through Agago and Pader districts.

Imposing rocks, arranged into a series of steps form the platform on which water beautifully rolls into different formations before splashing into about seven tributaries to pour into the seven enclaves.

Lapaya village in search of water and pasture. They had also escaped tribal conflict. The Jo P'Kongo people occupied the banks of the enclaves around the falls and this can be seen from stone cuttings and artefacts carved on different rocks.

It is believed that the original inhabitants of Lapaya village were washed away by water because they had built houses in and around water ways.

"The water levels increased suddenly and washed many of them away. No survivor is known but some people say that a woman and a certain man who had been away on different errands, survived," Vincent Nyeke, an elder in Lapaya says.

The scenic beauty of the falls has been a tourist attraction feature for both local and international visitors.

**Tourist attraction**

At the campsite, visitors relax on camping, hiking, fishing and swimming and bird watching. The more daring ones dive into the water to swim while others warm themselves around bonfire points as the sun begins to set.

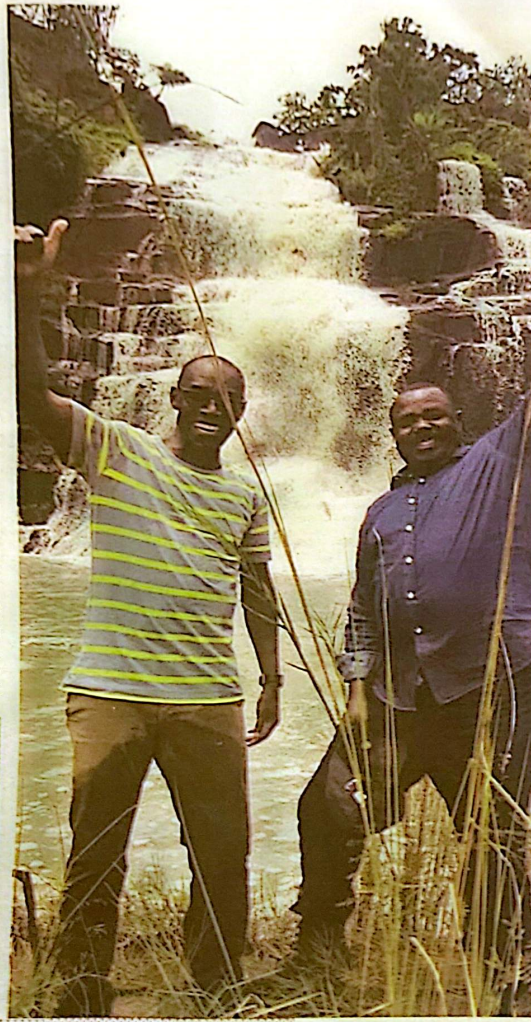
Others draw fun from camping, hiking, fishing and swimming and bird watching.

According to Sylvia Atim, the caretaker of Aruu Falls, the falls have been instrumental in propping fast-paced growth in both tourism and human settlements.

The falls, Atim says, are one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in northern Uganda.

However, she adds government has not invested enough to exploit the potential of the falls.

"Aruu Falls are quite mesmerizing. Tourists from near and far come here to appreciate God's creation. Government should exploit the po-



Naivo Dloya and deputy Speaker of Parliament Jacobo Oulanyah pose in front of a section of Aruu Falls.

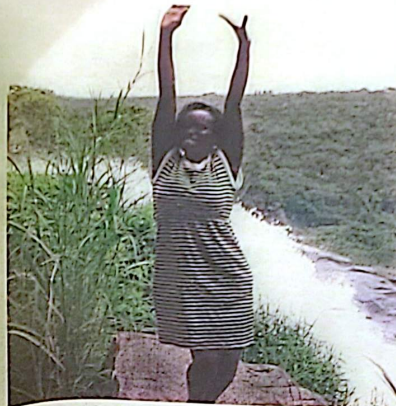
**FRES STRUCTURE AND OTHER CHARGES**

	Domestic	International
Adult	Shs5,000	\$5 (Foreigners)
Motorcycles	Shs1,000	\$5 (Foreigners)
Saloon cars	Shs2,000	\$5 (Foreigners)
Mini and buses (private)	Shs5,000	\$10 (Foreigners)
Tour company cars	Shs5,000	\$10 (Foreigners)
Buses and lorries	Shs10,000	\$20 (Foreigners)
Safari tent (single)	Shs25,000	\$15 (per person)
Camping (own tent)	Shs10,000	\$10 (per person)

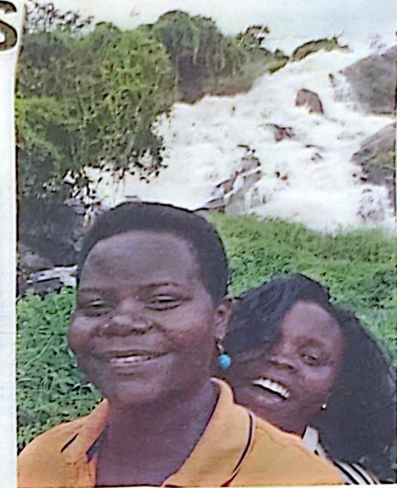
A story is told that the enclave around Aruu Falls had been inhabited by the Jo P'Kongo, who had migrated from Orwa and settled at



# at Aruu Falls



A woman poses in front of the falls.



Aruu Falls has seven enclaves flowing through Agago and Pader districts.

tential that lies within them," she says. The falls, she says, have a monthly visitor number of more than 100 people who come from within and outside Uganda. "Students and pupils visit the falls for learning purposes. Some just come around for the fun while other tourists come to relax," Atim says. Godfrey Oringa Largo, the Pader Dis-

**100**

THE NUMBER OF VISITORS FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE UGANDA THAT VISIT ARUU FALLS ON A MONTHLY BASIS

trict chairperson, believes Aruu Falls is a major tourist attraction that Ugandans must appreciate.

The district, he says, has plans to develop it into a more attractive tourist site to improve tourism and the district's revenue.

According to Winnie Lawoko-Olwe, the vice chairperson of the Acholi Tourism Cluster, Aruu Falls have been identified in the region as a tourist potential and "there are plans to engage surrounding communities to chart a way through which they can be developed".

"We have engaged the district to have in place a budget that we can use to make better plans for Aruu Falls," Olwe says. The development, she says, will be conducted through a public-private partnership.

Compiled by Cissy Makumbi, Caroline Ayugi & Josline Adru



A man takes a selfie at one of the enclaves of Aruu Falls.

If I had to be somewhere in Uganda right now, it would definitely be...



**KARAMOJA:** I would want to visit the Karamoja sub-region. It has a beautiful landscape. I would also want to experience the semi-wild in the wild to see animals. I also love how people in the region dress as well as getting a deeper understanding of the region's main economic activities. **EMMANUEL WAMBOZZO, TEACHER.**



**KASESE:** I have always heard about Kasese sub-region. I would love to see a number of tourist attractions in the region such as Mountain Rwenzori and Queen Elizabeth National Park. The hill landscape offers a beautiful and scenic environment that would be good for relaxing. **BRIAN SSENKUNGU, SOCIAL WORKER**



**MBALE:** The eastern district is a mountainous stretch that presents chilling and relaxing scenery. It has a lot of green and diverse culture among them include the Akadjo one of Uganda's most popular dances. Also worthy experience is Malwa, one of the main food region. **SOLOMON BBALE, TR**



**SSESE ISLANDS:** The islands stand out as a major relief with white sand beaches, honeymoon and vacation lots of green and primate delicacy for any visitor to **CHRISTINE MIREMBE, II**

Compiled by Godfrey