

# **ResponsibleTourism**

“This is a vitally important book for academics, practitioners and policy makers. It eschews some of the formality of conventional academic publishing in order to strengthen and clarify the arguments about the concept of taking responsibility for tourism and its effects. The author uses his vast experience in this area to good effect, making a powerful argument about the ways in which we should manage and develop tourism and deal with this powerful force.

This volume represents a powerful and articulate argument about the issues resulting from tourism’s expansion into all parts of the world and presents a strong case about how we might manage the challenges which result from this development. It should be mandatory reading for all those interested in, studying, and producing policy relating to tourism development. It draws on the author’s vast experience in studying the effects of tourism on environments and peoples and expresses clearly his challenging views on appropriate management procedures.”

*Richard Butler, Professor Emeritus, Strathclyde Business School, Strathclyde University*

“Harold Goodwin’s book is a much-needed piece of research that goes to the heart of the development of what has become known as responsible tourism. It combines solid research and academic precision with the fluency and persuasion that make it an enlightening and absorbing read - of interest to the travelling public and research student alike.

That an increasing number of specialist travel companies now place such responsibility as an automatic part of the commercial process is, in no short measure, due to Goodwin’s thinking”.

*Richard Hearn, Chair (2005-6), Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), Founder director, Inntravel, Founder director, Village Ways*

“Krippendorf and now Goodwin are the architects of modern responsible tourism. A challenging and inspiring read that defines the agenda for the next decade”.

*Justin Francis CEO, [responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com)*

“In principle, the need for all stakeholders to adopt a more responsible approach to tourism is undeniable; in practice, however, the concept of responsible tourism remains highly contested. In this book, Harold Goodwin, who for many years has been at the vanguard of the responsible tourism movement, charts a clear path through the debate. Writing coherently, passionately and, at times, controversially, he presents a powerful argument in support in the case for responsible tourism, explaining its evolution, principles and objectives before exploring its practical implementation. The book is, therefore, a ‘must read’ for anyone with an interest in the responsible tourism debate and, more importantly, an interest in the future of tourism itself.”

*Richard Sharpley, Professor of Tourism & Development, University of Central Lancashire*

“Harold Goodwin takes us on a travelogue of a change agent who stumbled into an issue by following his delight in visiting foreign places and then learning about the complexity of the industry and what it means to take responsibility by being part of it. This fascinating story will be of interest to anyone who goes on holiday and cares about living responsibly. This humane book is also profoundly relevant to any industry, activity or academic discipline concerned about practical wisdom (what Aristotle called *phronesis*), the socially useful knowledge that helps us live sustainably on this beautiful planet”.

*Titus Alexander, Author and Head of Policy and Research, NovasScarman Group*



# **Responsible Tourism**

**Using tourism for sustainable  
development**

**Second edition**

**Harold Goodwin**

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## Foreword

In 1987 Jost Krippendorf wrote *The Holiday Makers – Understanding the Impact of Leisure and Travel*, the defining text of the Responsible Tourism movement. That text reflects the first 40 years of postwar tourism.

Now Harold Goodwin has stepped in to fill the space left by the ever-accelerating development of tourism and the Responsible Tourism movement, bringing us into the 21st century.

He has found the right formula for this work, by not seeking to supersede or replace Krippendorf. Goodwin charts the intervening development in learning, knowledge, experience and research – the great disappointments and missed opportunities, as well as the many reasons to be hopeful. The Responsible Tourism glass is more than half full.

Tourism's capacity for economic development in some of the world's poorest communities is certain. Our ability to manage tourism to deliver good outcomes for those in the host communities is the real question. The purpose of the Responsible Tourism movement is to help deliver those good outcomes – not to criticise or constrain – unless tourism is itself irresponsible.

Goodwin's practical approach clearly shows his unique background as an academic with considerable exposure to the worlds of industry, NGO and consultancy work. He has pulled off a master stroke in style – engaging the interested industry reader, students of tourism, Responsible Tourism and sustainability, as well as academics.

This text is a must for all those interested in a substantial but digestible summation of the state of Responsible Tourism. It reflects the author's complex make-up as academic, practitioner, campaigner and advocate for, and agent of, change.

It is a true academic work, but it is a practical one and one with a clear cause. I commend this text to industry and academia alike.

John de Vial

*Director, ABTA and FTO*

*Trustee, The Travel Foundation*

*Director, Travelife Sustainability System*

*Chair, Advisory Group, Leeds Metropolitan University, International Centre for Responsible Tourism*

*Member, Visit England, Sustainable Tourism Action Group, Steering Committee*

## Preface

*Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents.*

*It was loaned to you by your children.*

Proverb heard in Kenya

This is the story of a journey, my journey – a journey of discovery, though not a travelogue. I discovered travel later than many of my generation, first as a tourist then as a tour leader, but I became uneasy about how much tourists take and how little they contribute to the people and places they visit. Seeking answers, I became a tourism academic and discovered and explored Responsible Tourism. This book is about the journey and about a movement which is gathering strength. It has been written in the hope that you will respond and be encouraged by it. Responsible Tourism is not a negative approach, it is not about what you shouldn't do, it is about how we can make, and enjoy, real holidays. It is about how we can make better holidays for ourselves and for others, how we make better places for people to live in and for us, as travellers and tourists, to visit.

My father had travelled, like so many of his generation, for war. My first visit abroad was a day trip from Ramsgate to Boulogne and then the school trip to France. To my current students none of this counts as real travel; they have higher expectations and more experience. It was in the winter of 1979, when I was already 27, that I first travelled anywhere that our students might regard as exotic: I took a Thomson's package to Moscow and what was then Leningrad. Later, working in adult education, I was challenged by the people I taught to create an opportunity for them, and I discovered that I could travel anywhere in the world for free if I could persuade a group to travel with me. Tour leading in Siberia, India, Greece, Germany, Albania, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia and China followed, throughout the 1980s. I was having a great time in every vacation – summer, Easter and Christmas – travelling with interesting people to some of the world's most fascinating places, meeting doctors, trade unionists, political activists, historians and naturalists. As a group we were able to travel as we wished, and had the collective economic power to receive the special interest visits we requested, at least most of the time.

But I was uneasy. The ecotourism aphorism 'Leave only footprints, take only photographs' that we were encountering on our travels, often lovingly embroidered or hand-painted, seemed to me to be in truth a licence to exploit. Even as an entreaty or exhortation I thought it was misleading. The slogan

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is predicated on the assumption that these special environments are for free, that there is no reason to make a contribution to their maintenance nor to compensate local people for their loss of access to natural resources – whether they used them for hunting or gathering for the table, for building materials or for saleable raw materials like timber, honey or perfumes. Research which I undertook later at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, and to which we shall return, demonstrated that we were often not meeting the full cost of our visits, let alone contributing to the maintenance of the resource. We were enjoying it at a cost so low that our visits were being subsidised by locals who earned on average a fraction of what we did.

There is an inherent inequality in the tourism experience. As tourists we are *free-riders*<sup>1</sup>, rarely do we meet the full costs of our visits, we enjoy the natural and cultural heritage, the beaches and public squares, the buildings, museums and flora and fauna of the places we visit, most often without putting anything back. There are alternative forms of tourism, which are often assumed to be inherently superior to ‘normal’ or mass tourism – for example ecotourism or community-based tourism – but, as we shall see, there is often little or no evidence to back this up. When I discuss these alternatives with students, I am reminded of Gandhi, who, when asked what he thought about British civilisation, responded: ‘I think it would be a good idea’. Ecotourism and community-based tourism are tenacious and seductive ideas – they *are* good ideas – but the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The idea is not enough.

The development of Responsible Tourism as a movement has been a personal journey, but not one which I have felt in control of. Rather, a journey which has been undertaken with many different people, moving in a broadly similar direction. Over the last 15 years I have had the privilege to learn with a committed and often richly talented groups of learners on Masters courses at three universities; and to work with professionals in companies, governments, NGOs and in education around the world, many of whom have contributed to the development of the Responsible Tourism movement and to the ideas presented here. In a movement it is important that ideas are viral, that they are taken up and used, ownership is not as important as their application and the fruit they bear.

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1 Free-rider meaning someone who uses public transport without paying the fare, they benefit at the cost of those who do pay. The free-rider problem is how to reduce or eliminate it.

Responsible Tourism is a broad movement. The priorities and issues are different in different destinations and originating markets. The idea is simple, the principles only a little less so and yet the application is often complex and difficult, requiring as it does action by a wide variety of stakeholders, often with divergent interests and priorities. The idea of sustainability began to emerge in the 1960s. The publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 and the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* 10 years later caused controversy and made headlines in the Sunday papers, challenging as they did the scientific orthodoxy of the green revolution and the 19th- and 20th-century assumptions about the inevitability of human progress. The controversy continues. While, for some, awareness of the finite world leads them to place emphasis on the limits of growth, others, including many of those who remain unconvinced about the human contribution to climate change, are more sanguine about our ability as a species to solve the problems which we confront.

At the heart of sustainability is the idea of human life enduring. The concept is fundamentally anthropocentric; as a species we are very unlikely to destroy the earth, although we have the capacity to make it less habitable for ourselves and for other species. There is still no universally accepted definition of sustainability and certainly not one that can be used to measure our global performance. Global definitions are bound to be inadequate: the issues and the remedies are local, and there is no choice but to 'dig where you stand'. The Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This definition is profoundly unsatisfactory as it defines neither these 'needs', nor the constraints which might compromise the ability of our descendants to meet their own needs and which would preclude their sustainable development. To take but two examples: airlines are prone to being unreasonably optimistic about magic fuels which will dramatically reduce carbon emissions from flights and allow them to continue to grow; and environmentalists often ignore the importance of development to the world's poor and the developing countries in which they live. The Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 was about environment and development. The United Nations objective is sustainable development, not merely a green agenda.

At the heart of the problem of sustainability is its complexity. There is a triple bottom line: the challenge is economic, social and environmental. Yet we are still unable to define sustainability in a way that secures its attainment. There has been a widespread failure to accept responsibility for achieving

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sustainability. It has been all too easy for businesses, environmentalists, governments, all of us, to expect others to deal with it, to expect others to make sacrifices so that we can continue irresponsibly with our lives and our unsustainable patterns of consumption. Responsible Tourism emerged as a way of addressing this challenge. It poses the question: 'How can all forms of tourism be made more sustainable?' Its ambition is to tackle the mainstream: to engage tourists and to encourage them to change the way they travel; to engage the industry to encourage them to make sustainability part of the way they do business, to take responsibility and to mainstream sustainability into their business models, to challenge government to do what only it can.

My purpose in writing this book is to look at what has been done, to argue the case that some progress has been made and to encourage you to do more. There is much more to be done and it needs to be done faster. Our seeming inability to even begin to meet the challenge of the 'perfect storm' of climate change, peak oil, water shortages, food shortages and population growth – in short, our failure as a species to come to terms with the finite world, the spaceship,<sup>2</sup> on which we live – this is an account of efforts to address sustainability by encouraging consumers and producers to make changes and to take responsibility. Travelling in the Indus Valley and on the coast of northern Peru, where evidently great civilisations perished almost without trace,<sup>3</sup> it is difficult to escape the realisation that these civilisations too believed that they would endure and that they were wrong. I used to ponder how it was that the last tree was cut down on Easter Island; over the last ten years I have begun to understand. Individuals pursued their own self-interest, felling those trees to make a canoe, which, in a finite world like Easter Island, culminates in the destruction of the environment upon which their survival depended. This is also our situation. The 'tragedy of the commons' is a very human tragedy.

The work I will describe is only a beginning. Change does not come through top-down prescription. It comes when individuals work with others to identify local problems and priorities, and develop solutions which deliver in particular places. I hope that the experiences shared here will inspire you to engage and to make your contribution. Tackling tourism's polluting effects,

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2 Buckminster Fuller published an *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* in 1969.

3 "All civilisations, so far, have decayed and died, however magnificent they have been in their glory, however difficult it is to believe that they can vanish and be replaced by desert or jungle" Zeldin 1998: 47–48. Fernandez-Armesto argues that all civilisations have in common: "their programmes for the systematic refashioning of nature" (2000:18). In that perhaps is the seed of their demise. Will our industrial civilisation be different?

and its dependence on fossil fuels are the major challenges, but there are others too. There is so much more to do and we are running out of time.

Responsible Tourism originated in the work of Jost Krippendorf who, in his seminal text, *The Holiday Makers*, called for 'rebellious tourists and rebellious locals'. Will you heed the call? Will you be part of the solution or remain part of the problem, irresponsibly exacerbating it?

The text has been revised to include some of the major issues which have emerged since 2011: child protection, volunteering abroad, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, shared value, slum tourism, animal welfare and the consequences of disintermediation. As the challenges of maintaining economic growth and extending the benefits of development to a rapidly growing global population push against the boundaries of our planet's finite resources, issues of resilience come to the fore. We should not forget that the future will be what we, collectively, make it.

*Harold Goodwin*

*Faversham, March 2011 and August 2016*

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*Dedicated to the memory of  
Jost Krippendorf  
who understood the significance of responsibility  
and called for  
'rebellious tourists and rebellious locals'.*

## Acknowledgements

The ideas and arguments presented here have been voiced and honed, provoked and informed by discussions and arguments with owners, managers and workers in tourism businesses in many countries in the developing and developed world, with communities affected by tourism, with policy makers and government officials, with ICRT associates and students, colleagues and friends too numerous to mention. Many people have contributed to the development of the ideas presented here; some may hear the echoes, others may not realise the contribution they have made. To learn through teaching engaged and experienced students is a privilege.

A small number of friends and colleagues have read all the chapters and found weaknesses and errors which they have generously spent time giving advice on strengthening and correcting: Justin Francis, Richard Hearn, Max Leonard, Kate Stefanko, John de Vial, and Caroline Warburton. Others have read parts and provided valuable criticism or evidence: Titus Alexander, Jane Ashton, Jo Baddeley, Manda Brookman, Xavier Font, Jason Freezer, Sallie Grayson, Nicole Haeusler, Ruth Holroyd, Heidi Keyser, Kylie McCabe, Sean Owen, Andreas Walmsley and Alison White. The responsibility for any weaknesses of argument or errors of fact is mine alone.

Finally I would like to thank Tim Goodfellow and Sally North who are as passionate as I am, to communicate these ideas. Goodfellow is a 21st-century publisher.

This second edition benefits from a further five years of the World Travel Market's Responsible Tourism programme which is at WTM Africa and Latin America, Arabian Travel Mart and in London, where there are 2000 participants in the programme.

Rebecca Armstrong proof-read this second edition; the responsibility for any weaknesses of argument or errors of fact is mine alone.

There are web pages associated with this book where you will find further resources; access them at <http://haroldgoodwin.info/rt/>

## Abbreviations and acronyms

ABTA	Association of British Travel Agents (The Travel Association)
AITO	Association of Independent Tour Operators
ATOL	Air Travel Organiser's Licence
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BID	Business Improvement District
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK
DEAT	Department for Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DFID	Department for International Development
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICCT	International Council on Clean Transportation
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
ICRT	International Centre for Responsible Tourism
IHG	Intercontinental Hotels Group
ICRT	International Centre for Responsible Tourism
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LOST	Local Option Sales Tax
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NFDC	New Forest District Council
NTB	National Tourist Board

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P2P	Peer to Peer or Person to Person
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
PPT	Pro-poor tourism
RevPar	Revenue Per Available Room
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TALC	Tourism Area Life Cycle
TAT	Transient Accommodation Tax
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
TNZ	Tourism New Zealand
TOFT	Tour Operators for Tigers
TOMM	Tourism Optimisation Management Model
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the 1992 Rio Earth Summit)
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WAP	World Animal Protection
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission )
WEF	World Economic Forum
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

