

# Progress in Responsible Tourism

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Editors: Harold Goodwin and Xavier Font



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## Editorial

This edition of Progress in Responsible Tourism reflects the broad agenda required in taking responsibility for tourism. The articles and papers include a survey of the child protection issues that arise in tourism; the challenges of township tourism in South Africa and of sustainable destination management in England, the final paper looking at the opportunities that the emerging Sustainable Development Goals might mean for tourism.

Miedema & Winchenbach in their review of Calabash's experience of operating township tours in Port Elizabeth argue that the question is not if township tours are responsible, "but how they can be organised responsibly and what needs to be done to create mutual social and economic benefits for all stakeholders." The lessons learnt are enlightening, it is still a work in progress but demonstrates that tourism can be used to create economic opportunities for economically poor people. However, these benefits are often unevenly distributed and relationships with outbound operators can be problematic.

In 2014 the World Responsible Tourism Awards again revealed a wealth of good practices. The judges look for examples that demonstrate the taking responsibility for making tourism more sustainable across the triple bottom line, addressing economic, social and environmental issues. We look for businesses with a track record and credible evidence. We look for new and novel approaches, replicability and an appropriately local focus. Our world is a diverse place; responsibility will be exercised differently in different places. Through the Awards we seek to showcase best practises, inspire and challenge others to do more. If you know of businesses which you think are as good as or better than this year's winners then encourage them to nominate themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Scheyvens's report of the symposium we organised on tourism businesses and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals reflects on the language of responsibility, CSR, corporate community development and corporate social obligations in the context of inequality, the challenges of working with governments in destinations, reporting and the business case for acting on more responsible and sustainable ways.

When we first began to address the issues of child protection issues questions we asked, by senior industry figures, about why we needed to address these issues when The Code had been adopted by so many businesses. The agenda is broad ranging over child labour, the sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, the safety of young people

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/>

travelling abroad on a gap year, and the issues of child abuse and neglect that arise in outbound families. ECPAT International are now reviewing The Code which some recognise has been no panacea, a declaration of intent is not the same thing as taking effective action to prevent tourism facilities being used by paedophiles. Following a series of panels at World Travel Market shows in London, Cape Town and Sao Paulo, the main “debate” on World Responsible Tourism Day in November 2014 was on child protection. Save the Children, the National Society for the Protection of Children, the UK Border Agency and industry representatives from the UK, Netherlands and Indo-China participated: an agenda for the industry emerged. The “debate” is available on-line and the paper reproduced here summarises the conclusions of that debate. Clearly the industry can, and should do more. One of the priorities in the light of new research on the creation of orphans to meet the demand for orphanage tourism is for the industry to stop creating demand for orphans, which separates children from their families and exposes them to abuse.

The advice from Save the Children and the National Society for the Protection of Children is clear: the industry should not be facilitating visits to orphanages, many of which have been established to meet the needs of tourists not of children. Most of those in orphanages in the orphanage tourist destinations are not orphans. It is not just volunteering in orphanages that is a problem – visits to orphanages risk creating orphans too p- for the same reason – tourism provides a cash incentive to establish orphanages, orphanages need orphans; demand creates supply.

Verstraete selected orphanages for her research in Cambodia which were least likely to have non-orphans in residence, even most of these failed to respond to her enquiries. Only one Cambodian and eight foreigners participated in her research. She summarises her findings : “the negative impacts of visitors in orphanages included being disruptive for the daily operations and the risk of causing or worsening the children’s psychological traumas. The positive impact was the financial benefits.” The language changes, orphanages are now called residential care centres – they are still a tourism trap – the only way that destinations and tourism businesses can avoid “guilt by association” is not to engage directly with orphanages or residential care centres. There are plenty of reputable charities focused on providing support to keep children in their families.

UNICEF’s advice is blunt and unequivocal; tourists should refrain from visiting and donating to residential care facilities. They should volunteer or donate to programmes that support and promote family and community-based care, reintegration of children into family and community-based care, and provision of social services to vulnerable children and their families within a community setting and which prevent family separation. It is time for the industry to comply with this advice and to cease encouraging the creation of orphans.

In 2010 the new coalition government made significant changes to tourism policy, many Destination Management Organisations lost their funding and sustainability became a

very low priority, VisitEngland had adopted Wise Growth as part of its strategy prior to the publication of the new government's policy. The four case studies presented here were undertaken in 2012-13, intended to support Wise Growth Action Plans, but this was not a government priority and remains unfunded. The four case studies were undertaken collaboratively with destination managers and focussed on the identifiable contribution of Destination Management Organisations to enhancing the sustainability of the destination. The four case studies – Durham, Manchester, New Forest, Newquay – were selected to be representative of English destinations and in anticipation that they were good examples of Wise Growth. It is for the reader to determine whether this is or is not the case, every effort was made not miss anything being done by the DMO to promote sustainability.

These case studies are followed by three reflections on the first day of the 8th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in April 2014 when the case studies were discussed and there was a series of presentations on tourism in English destinations. The reflections are by Martin Brackenbury whose international destination management experience stretches back over 40 years, Manda Brookman who is robustly committed to the principles and practise of sustainability and Jason Freezer Head of Destination Management at VisitEngland, each of which reflections we anticipate that you will find thought provoking.

*Prof Harold Goodwin, Manchester Metropolitan University, and  
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# The Dilemma of Fair Shares in Township Tourism – A Case Study from Port Elizabeth

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## Keywords:

Poverty Tourism, Township Tourism, Stakeholder Engagement, Port Elizabeth, Small Tour Operators

## Abstract

Increasingly customers are looking for more authentic experiences whilst on holiday. They want to meet 'real' people and places and are interested in unique experiences, often without sacrificing the convenience and safety of an organised tour. Township tourism is a globally growing market, yet a controversially discussed topic in regards to ethics and economic and social benefits for township people. Often it is claimed that guided township tours only stress the gap between the rich and the poor and are reinforcing prejudices through voyeurism, whilst providing little or no benefits for host communities<sup>2</sup>. Others discuss township tourism as a potential way for channelling tourist money into deprived communities and bridging social and economic discrepancies through educational yet leisurely excursions.

However, this paper argues that the question should not be *if* township tours are responsible, but *how* they can be organised responsibly and what needs to be done to create mutual social and economic benefits for all stakeholders. Applying a case study approach, this paper discusses the dilemma of fair share in township excursions of Calabash Tours, a privately owned small tour operator in Port Elizabeth (PE)/South Africa, from a local perspective. Further, the ethics of township tourism as well as internal and external power relations that influence local benefits will be investigated. Finally, the paper will conclude with what lessons can be learnt from Calabash's experiences and highlight further areas of research. This article has been co-written by the owner and founder of Calabash Tours and an independent consultant who worked with Calabash Tours in March 2014, with the intention of contributing to the existing knowledge about township tourism and poverty alleviation. Hopefully it will also be providing some useful guidance for tourism practitioners working in this field.

<sup>2</sup> Scheyvens, (2002)

## Introduction

Today, poverty tourism is one of the fastest growing niche tourism products, particularly in the Global South, with Favelas in Brazil<sup>3</sup>, Slums in India<sup>4</sup> and Townships in South Africa<sup>5</sup>, representing the most visited urban slums. Most tourists arguably perceive townships, slums and favelas as too dangerous to visit individually; however, being able to enter an unsafe place through an organised tour is partly what makes it attractive and potentially even adds to the social standing of the visitor<sup>6</sup>. For other tourists, it is the do-good factor in visiting a social hotspot and possibly donating to one of the charitable projects that motivates them to participate. Tourists' quest for the 'authentic' and increasingly extreme or extraordinary travel experiences are expected to continue<sup>7</sup>. There are no exact numbers on township tourism, but estimates are 1 million per year globally<sup>8</sup>. With a sophisticated touristic infrastructure, for example in Soweto/South Africa<sup>9</sup>, a township has been turned into a mainstream tourism product rather than a niche<sup>10</sup>.

Over the last decade, a considerable number of academic writers have discussed poverty tourism as a controversial topic. The majority of academics investigated the morals and ethics of poverty tourism, others focused on tourist motivation and experience and on the perspective of tour operators. The majority of the findings indicated that economic gain is unevenly distributed in favour of external agents, namely the tour companies who are running such 'poverty tours'. The local perspective is rather unknown. However, the little research that has been done indicates that local people try to gain commercial control but struggle based on language barriers, transport logistics and a lack of business knowledge and investment capital<sup>11</sup>. Thus they often play a more passive role rather than being decision makers. Almost all authors researching slum tourism recognise the uneven power relations between slum tourism stakeholders.

In their elaborate literature review on township tourism research, Frenzel and Koens<sup>12</sup> demanded that future research should focus on value creation and should attempt to assess slum tourism's potential for contributing towards poverty alleviation. At the same time, such approaches are useful in reminding us how slum tourism, and in fact any tourism, is intrinsically an economic process, in which various global and local actors are involved. Frenzel and Koens further suggest paying attention to local perspectives, on how the slum tourism chain is organised and, in particular, in which ways local busi-

<sup>3</sup> Freire-Medeiros, B. (2009)

<sup>4</sup> Meschkank, J. (2010)

<sup>5</sup> Rolfes, M. (2010); Rolfes, M., Steinbrink, M. & Uhl, C. (2009)

<sup>6</sup> Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (2008)

<sup>7</sup> Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (2008); Steinbrink, M. (2012)

<sup>8</sup> Steinbrink, M. (2012)

<sup>9</sup> Rolfes, M. (2010)

<sup>10</sup> With rapidly growing urbanisation worldwide, particularly in the global South, slums are only expected to increase, adding new 'destinations' to the ever growing slum tourism market in a concerning way.

<sup>11</sup> Freire-Medeiros, B. (2009)

<sup>12</sup> Frenzel, F. and Koens, K. (2012)

nesses can participate and co-operate, which could help to better understand the impact slum tourism has on local communities. This paper aims to contribute to the discussion by analysing the ways in which local tour operators can provide benefits for township people.

## Favelas, Slums and Townships

Despite the common nominators of poverty tours, there are distinct differences, particularly regarding the origin of those slums. Whereas most urban slums, for example Rochina in Rio started as informal settlements by socially and economically deprived residents, the South African townships were established for ethnic and racial reasons under the apartheid system. Thus, poverty was forced on black South Africans who were denied a place in apartheid white African society and economy. According to Steinbrink<sup>13</sup>, township tourism in South Africa started in the mid-1990s, when mainly politically interested tourists wanted to see Nelson Mandela's House. Shortly afterwards commercial township tours were established, turning South Africa into "the hotspot of international slum tourism"<sup>14</sup>. Estimates are 300-400,000 township tourists in Cape Town alone, which equals 25% of international visitors to the city.<sup>15</sup>

Some academics highlight ethical concerns in township tourism. For example, Urry and Larsen<sup>16</sup> argue that harm could be caused by 'gazing' upon township inhabitants, which might have the notion of a zoo visit rather than a positive experience for local people creating an asymmetrical power relation. However, Maoz<sup>17</sup> rightly observed that hosts and tourists gaze at each other, which he coined the 'mutual gaze'<sup>18</sup> between gazers and gazees. Looking at it in this way, the tourists can equally turn into the caged ones or as Maoz calls it "the mad behind the bars"<sup>19</sup>, thus township inhabitants are not merely powerless or passive. The main difference might be that tourists are mainly arrogantly unaware of this gaze, feeling unobserved and free in the foreign terrain they are moving in<sup>20</sup>. The advent of camera phones has also had an impact on the relationship of local communities who now have camera lenses which can be pointed back. Tourists are historically the one taking photographs of local people. Interestingly, it is more and more common to see local people photographing tourists.

Some authors propose educating tourists and hosts as a means to facilitate cross-cultural

13 Steinbrink, M. (2012)

14 Steinbrink, M. (2012)

15 Melik, J (2012) Slum tourism: Patronising or social enlightenment? [Online] Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19546792> [Accessed 13 October 2014].

16 Urry, J. and Larsen, J. (2011)

17 Maoz, D. (2006)

18 Maoz, D. (2006:221)

19 Maoz, D. (2006:221)

20 *ibid.*

understanding<sup>21</sup>. In his seminal work, Krippendorf<sup>22</sup> stressed that host communities need to be informed about the risks of tourism activities, which is recognised at the core of Responsible Tourism literature and practice today.

## **Township tourism for poverty alleviation?**

South Africa's tourism policy envisages creating wealth and reducing poverty through responsible tourism activities, which puts emphasis on the role of small businesses in local economic development<sup>23</sup>. Goodwin<sup>24</sup> stressed that tourism is intrinsically a business which needs to produce profits as a critical component to be sustainable. The same applies to poverty tourism, which often fails to produce local economic benefits, social mobility or improved living conditions for slum dwellers.<sup>25</sup> Most slum tours are developed by outsiders for international tourists and their primary goal is to maximise profit.<sup>26</sup> Only a few agents are committed to poverty alleviation, charitable giving and support social projects, which tourists wrongly assume is automatically part of the purpose of slum tours. For tourism activities and enterprises to be sustainable in destinations, local communities must participate in decision making and own the solutions.<sup>27</sup> Calabash Tours, whose operations are the focus of this paper, are committed to fair trade in tourism, are certified in this regard and understand development as a participatory process.

Koens'<sup>28</sup> innovative research on small tourism business development in South African townships highlights not only the intra-township constraints, such as mistrust and competition, for black owned business development, but also point towards the power imbalance due to market dominance by mostly white owned tour operators. External agents' dominance was also confirmed in Frisch's<sup>29</sup> paper, who found limited participation of the township population in his research in Rio de Janeiro. Frisch and Koens both depict this as a constraint to locally owned township enterprise development, particularly in regards to South Africa's tourism policy, which explicitly supports black owned enterprises.

However, Ashley *et al.*<sup>30</sup> propose that tourism can reduce poverty and vulnerability through facilitating access to markets, developing skills and education and increasing demand for products produced by the poor. Pro poor tourism (PPT) aims to incorporate poor into economic markets by utilising existing structures and linkages or creating new

21 Krippendorf, J. (1987); Goodwin, H. (2011)

22 Krippendorf, J. (1987)

23 Republic of South Africa (2011)

24 Goodwin, H. (2006)

25 Freire-Medeiros, B. (2009); Koens, K. (2012)

26 Duerr, E. (2012)

27 Sofield, T. H. B. (2003)

28 Koens, K. (2012)

29 Frisch, T. (2012)

30 Ashley *et al.* (2001:41)

ones<sup>31</sup>, which is what Calabash Tours aims to achieve<sup>32</sup>. The particular strength of PPT is to recognise the transformational power of linkages between marginalised groups and established tourism businesses. Supporting and encouraging local people to offer their crafts and products to tourists would provide economic benefits, but also strengthen non-economic aspects such as pride and social capital building opportunities<sup>33</sup>.

*The following section investigate township tourism in Port Elizabeth, which so far has experienced limited attention in township research.*

## Township Tourism in PE

The city of Port Elizabeth is one of the largest cities in South Africa, located in the Eastern Cape Province, where it forms part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. Port Elizabeth has a population of 1.4 million inhabitants, 75% of whom live in townships which are clustered north and west of the city centre as an apartheid system legacy. Most tourists visit Port Elizabeth as part of a guided tour by an international tour operator or follow a pre-booked self-drive itinerary. Whilst there are no statistics available about tourist spending on excursions or which areas of Port Elizabeth they visit, it is evident that most tourists either visit the nearby Addo Elephant Park, or explore the area around the Donkin Memorial in the Port Elizabeth city centre, and the beachfront. Township Tours have been running commercially since the early 1990's after the ending of the Apartheid.

## Introducing Calabash Tours

Calabash Tours, a small locally owned tour operator, was founded in 1997, with the vision to use tourism as a means of empowerment and economic development in local townships. Currently Calabash Tours handles between 3,000-5,000 tourists per year, who visit PE townships. Calabash conducts tour guiding as a hop on service for national and international tour operators, as well as with their own vehicles for FITs.

Calabash Tour's two signature excursions, "The Real City Tour"<sup>34</sup> and "Shebeen Tour"<sup>35</sup>, have run successfully for over a decade and created a wealth of opportunities for local people. They are a good example of how a small tourism business can have positive economic impacts on township livelihoods and can foster mutual understanding and respect between hosts and tourists.

The tours are accredited with Fair Trade Tourism<sup>36</sup> since 2004, and display adherence to the following principals:

31 Ashley *et al.* (2001)

32 These linkages are particularly beneficial in townships where education levels are low and tourism business knowledge is limited, as otherwise businesses might fail due to insufficient services or inadequate business practices.

33 Ashley *et al.* (2006)

34 <http://www.calabashtours.co.za/tours/real-city-tour.html>

35 <http://www.calabashtours.co.za/tours/shebeen.html>

36 <http://www.fairtrade.travel/>

## Fair share

All participants involved in a tourism activity should get their fair share of the income, in direct proportion to their contribution to the activity.

## Fair say

All participants involved in a tourism activity should have the right and opportunity to participate in decisions that concern them.

## Respect

Both host and visitor should have respect for human rights, culture and environment. This includes:

- Safe working conditions and practices
- Protection of young workers
- Promoting gender equality
- Understanding and tolerance of socio-cultural norms
- Reducing consumption of water and energy, as well as reducing, reusing and recycling waste
- Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources
- HIV/AIDS awareness

## Reliability

The services delivered to tourists should be reliable and consistent. Basic safety and security for both host and visitor should be assured.

## Transparency

Tourism businesses should establish mechanisms of accountability. These include that:

- Ownership of tourism businesses must be clearly defined
- Employees and other participants should be able to access information that concerns them
- Sharing of profits, benefits and losses must be transparent
- Sustainability

The tourism businesses should strive to be sustainable. This includes:

- Increased knowledge through capacity-building
- Improved use of available resources through networking and partnerships
- Economic viability through responsible use of resources
- Reduction of leakage through local purchasing and employment
- Support to historically disadvantaged entrepreneurs

Calabash Tours has been recognized locally and internationally with various awards: In 2003 Calabash was awarded the **Imvelo Responsible Tourism Award**, in the category Best Social Involvement. In 2004 they won the prestigious **International Responsible**

**Tourism Award at the World Travel Market**, being chosen joint overall winner of the competition, after winning the **Poverty Reduction Category**.

Calabash Tour guides are recruited from black townships in Port Elizabeth and trained by Calabash. They all still live there, which helps guests to better understand township life. The guides currently own 30% of the company. While the socio historical route was the spine of the product, guides were encouraged to weave in aspects of their own life, history and culture.

In order to mitigate against the issues of “gaze” and “countergaze” as described before, the initial products that Calabash Tours developed were based on a social history of the city of Port Elizabeth. In 1990, Port Elizabeth became the first city to democratically elect a “transitional local council” duly elected by every citizen, including township residents. The apartheid boundaries of suburbs (white) and townships (black) were challenged, and the notion of One City was accepted. Thus, Calabash’s first tour and flagship product “The Real City Tour” was essentially a city tour. It tells the story of the arrival of white British Settlers into the area, the subsequent arrival of various Xhosa clans (75% of the local population), the first townships creation at the hand of the British Colonial authorities, the process of forced removals under apartheid, community resistance to Apartheid, and ultimately the efforts to create a new, democratic united city. It was a fascinating story, structured along a particular route that gives an overview of a city’s history. Using the social historical route as the basis, Calabash Tours attempted to get tourists who participated in their tours to understand the impact of Apartheid on city designs and (lack of) urban planning. The historical route also allowed an understanding to be developed as to the “bleak” look of townships, and the environmental impact of apartheid town planning. The tour is packed with information, leading to understanding, not only viewing.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

In order for the pro poor component to be realised in this tour, effective stakeholder engagement became critical. Stakeholders needed to be engaged on five key issues:

### **1 Consent to visit certain areas, or communities**

One of the key issues confronted within the stakeholder engagement is the level to which community consent is achieved and required. The Real City Tour covers an area of approximately 60 kilometres, and traverses various formal and informal settlements with an estimated population of 400 000 people. From whom then must consent be sought? Who exactly is the “community”? Is consent only required where tourists disembark from vehicles and walk – or must consent be sought from areas where public roads are used which run through the townships? Existing research provides no answer to this. In fact, it would appear that while much research has been undertaken on the experiences of tourists, very little is written from the perspective of community members themselves that could help answer the question.

Calabash and its local employees hold the view, that where visitors are disembarking from vehicles, and where the issue of privacy of households could be jeopardised, consent needed to be sought. This is because negative impacts are deemed higher in these circumstances. It was decided that consent did not need to be sought when public roads and public areas like memorials or sites of resistance were used. Where tours walk through an informal settlement, community engagement was sought, and resulted in an agreement that the company would sponsor a pre-school and feeding scheme for children, in return for access into the area. This way, the tours could provide mutual benefits.

## **2 Identification of existing businesses where new tourism related income streams could be generated**

The aspect of identifying existing businesses which could increase income from tourist spend was less fraught. It was a demand driven process, looking at tourist needs for food, accommodations, cultural performances, craft etc.

The challenge with supporting slum based businesses to enter into the tourism supply chain was mainly around overcoming the legacy of the fact that township residents had little or no experience of tourism, due to the fact that oppressive pass laws and Apartheid policies made it impossible for people to travel freely within their own country. In addition, South Africa had effectively been isolated for years as a result of the international boycott on South Africa. In order to make steps towards rectifying the situation, tremendous effort needed to be made by Calabash Tours to assist in the formalisation of township businesses. These issues fell into two categories, legal compliance and quality standards

This involved ensuring small township businesses had the required permits to serve food and alcohol. It meant supporting and encouraging local businesses to upgrade their facilities to ensure an acceptable standard for tourism, such as cleanliness in kitchens and appropriate toilet facilities. These upgrades were critical in order to ensure the products could be packaged with confidence and according to legal requirements of tour operators as part of the Real City Tour.

Another area that needed attention was the identification of increased revenue opportunities for those businesses.

Some of the smaller service providers had limited knowledge as to how they could leverage their products to increase income streams. These were mainly informal crafter suppliers and cultural performers. Not having experience of the potential target market, some crafters were making inappropriate products, such as big bulky sculptures or traditional beadwork with no "modern appeal". Through discussion and workshops based on feedback from customer comments, this was remedied. Furthermore, performers, who were paid to perform for tourists, were encouraged to record or film their activities, to allow for the sale of DVDs and CDs to tourists. This considerably

increased the possibility of increasing revenue.

### **3 Interaction with community crime forums to ensure the safety of tourists**

Involving stakeholders around the issues of crime and engaging with anticrime structures was initially straightforward. In the late 1990's civil society in South Africa was still fairly mobilised, and communities were used to dealing with crime themselves, as previously the police had been perceived as an enemy of the people, the enforcers of Apartheid Laws – and not as protectors. However, many community anti-crime forums demobilised post democracy. The impact of this demobilisation was not significant as criminality has had limited direct impact on the work of Calabash Tours within the townships. Police stations now have community policing structures, and Calabash has a good relationship with these structures. Tourist safety has resulted from community support for Calabash's work.

### **4 Engagement with schools in the community, to identify if schools could derive some level of benefit from tourism<sup>37</sup>**

The involvement of schools as a destination for tourists is debatable. The potential negative impacts are implicit, such as disruption to schooling or turning children into a spectacle. In addition it could give tourists access to vulnerable and trusting children. However, as with slum tourism, Calabash believes that it all depends on how it is done, and how it is managed. It has been the most successful area for Calabash tours for leveraging traveller's philanthropy. Literally millions of Rands of goods, services, and skilled hours of volunteer work, playing fields, libraries and other have been leveraged into poor township schools.

The starting point for all of Calabash's work was and remains understanding how potential negative impacts can be managed, which is particularly important when working with schools. In order to mitigate negative impacts Calabash has placed Memorandums of Understanding in place with schools. These were drawn up in consultation with schools, and are a reflection of mutual respect and discussion. They state that all visits must be with prior consent. Tourists must be guided at all times. Children should not "perform" for tourists. Parents must be involved in catering for tourists – so teachers are not removed from core functions.

The most important aspect is consent. It is based on an understanding that school governing bodies, principals, parents and teachers know what is best for their own communities, destinies and daily lives. Calabash sees its responsibility as pointing out potential negative impacts, and then leaving schools to deliberate and decide for themselves. Schools grapple with the balancing of the positive and negative impacts, on an informed basis. Some schools have opted to have a limited interaction based on these discussions. Others have embraced the programmes far more widely. In all cases, Calabash respected the decisions making power of each entity.

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<sup>37</sup> Township schools are woefully under resourced as a result of Bantu Education policies.

## 5. Engagement with the market – inbound tour operators.

One of the key challenges has been dealing with inbound tour operators. Calabash Tours made a strategic decision early on in its journey to sell its products to inbound operators. The reasoning was that once packaged, it would lead to the required volumes in order to remain financially viable, for both the company, and its community service providers. This was a sound strategy, but it did lead to some challenges.

A major challenge was that the inbound sector did not always understand Calabash's ethics and way of operating, and had very limited understanding of pro-poor tourism practices.

Examples of these disconnections were:

- Requests to shorten the tours:

The challenge here was, as explained above, that the tours follow particular routes, based upon a social history, with the intention to educate tourists, as opposed to simply "viewing" townships. The request to shorten itineraries was based on the packed programmes of some operators. Calabash at times had to decline business, as it was felt it would compromise the quality of the product, and increase the potential negative impacts.

- Unrealistic demands on community service providers:

Some inbound partners expected services from informal township businesses that were unrealistic in a township context. These expectations often challenged the "authenticity" of community service providers, where for example types of food and types of venues were expected to be modified to the point of losing all authenticity – and becoming tourist traps. If these modifications were made, the result would have been a decline in client satisfaction, and would ultimately lead to the product being replaced with another. The places would also have the potential of alienating local custom, and displace a local income stream with a sometimes fickle/seasonal tourism income stream. This is not a sustainable or desirable outcome. An easier route would have been to succumb to what was being requested by inbound tour operators. However, Calabash's view was this may lead to short term gain, but ultimately would result in the operator being part of an exploitative status quo – as opposed to the reason for being – a true agent of social change. The founders of Calabash Tours have fought to retain their vision – albeit in trying circumstances.

- Delayed payment:

Large inbound operators often do not distinguish between a large international hotel chain, and a small company like Calabash, and have a payment cycle of between 30 - 90 days. Community service providers can not carry the cost of business for that period, and Calabash has to pay within 7 days of invoice. If they fail to do that, they may find no food for clients, or performers not arriving due to not having transport money. This has at times placed tremendous strain on the Calabash Tours cash flow. To attempt

to change these payment cycles with large companies has so far proved futile. Here it becomes apparent how the power imbalance is strongly stacked in the favour of the supplier of clients – the large operators.

## **Lessons learnt**

Calabash Tours has identified some key issues and how to overcome them, and is continuously working to find ways to overcome remaining obstacles. However, it has also had failures, which provided good opportunities to learn and to focus on these issues in future:

- The over reliance on the inbound operators, who provided a constant tourist supply, has resulted in poor marketing efforts from Calabash to access independent travellers. Additionally, some of Calabash's community partners focussed too heavily on the tourist trade they provided access to, instead of maintaining another source of income, they became dependent. As a result, when tourism numbers declined as a result of global economic challenges, they were in financial difficulty. Calabash's advice has always been for them to retain a mix of local trade and international tourist trade; some neglected the local trade, and as a result are out of business.
- Calabash unintentionally generated a lot of jealousy in some communities among small businesses competing to be a part of their supply chain. Businesses that were now dealing with a lot of "white tourists" were seen as being "beholden" to Calabash Tours. In reality, often the "jealous businesses" were not able or willing to provide the kinds of services Calabash required, or over-priced themselves. Calabash managed this by having an open door policy – always eager to meet and hear from new service providers. They tended to be very direct in terms of whether they would work with someone or not, and would explain the reasons behind the decision. It is very important never to raise expectations beyond the realistic, and to say no if a product was not what they wanted.

## **Conclusion**

The current trends in tourism suggest that tourists are seeking more interaction, more exploration of other cultures, more experiences, emotional connection, intimacy and increased demand for "authenticity". This type of tourism demand can create a wealth of new opportunities for township and slum tourism products, but with it, will come an increased level of potential negative impacts. This paper explored some of the opportunities and challenges of a local township tour operator, which has been operating for more than a decade.

Calabash's vision is to be a mechanism for social change and poverty eradication, while displaying a model for township tourism that is ethical and profitable. Calabash

has achieved a part of its vision, in terms of creating economic opportunities in poor township communities. Several small businesses have become part of the tourism infrastructure of Port Elizabeth and have created jobs as a result. Several small businesses have now become legally compliant and are formalised. Effective, though not unchallenging, relationships have been forged with inbound tour operators. Relationships with communities have been built on mutual respect, and community relationships are good. Evidence of this is the welcome Calabash clients receive in communities, and the way communities have protected clients from crime. The use of Calabash Trust as a channel of travellers' philanthropy has seen the flow of millions of rands worth of goods, services and infrastructure into township schools and communities. Importantly the social history story of the black township residents of Port Elizabeth, who have suffered denigration of their history, culture and heritage for centuries, is being told to visitors, in a respectful and inclusive way.

However, it also became clear that the benefits from township tourism are often unevenly distributed based on global market forces, and ensuring fair share and fair say with local businesses can sometimes be a challenge. This case study reflected several issues discussed in academic discourse and in previous research on poverty tourism, and academic research has a role to play in continuing to highlight the contentious issues. However, a lack of publications from local perspectives remains. Most entrepreneurs are not writing up their experiences. Indeed, they tend to focus on the business of business, not the contentions of academic discourse. The Calabash Tours story is not unique, and several similar organisations exist around the globe – working in slums, whilst attempting to do this in an ethical and transformative way.

What is lacking currently, within the academic realm, is a focus on research which explores and reports community impacts, which concerns itself less with the tourist experience, or theoretical constructs around community and tourist exchanges, but rather gives clear voice to economically poor communities who engage in tourism. Future research should explore local people's perception of fair share in township tourism, which could help to advance knowledge on how to ensure local benefits in the vast growing field of poverty tourism.

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# The 2014 World Responsible Tourism Awards

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The 2014 World Responsible Tourism Awards attracted significantly more nominations from Africa and Latin America than in previous years and that is reflected in the winners. In the 11<sup>th</sup> year of the Awards we have extended their reach, in no small part due to the decisions made by World Travel Market to extend the Responsible Tourism Programme run at WTM London since 2007, to WTM Africa and WTM Latin America. The WTM London Responsible Tourism Programme, for the first time, extended over all four days of WTM and attracted over 2000 participants.

The annual reception held each year by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism and ResponsibleTravel.com was held at Excel for the first time, running straight on from the established WTM WRTD Networking event. We were able to announce their that regional World Responsible Tourism Awards events are being planned at WTM Africa in 2015 and WTM Latin America in 2016. The Awards will be run as part of the established World Responsible Tourism Awards, and will use the same tried and tested processes.<sup>38</sup>

## Box 1: The Panel of Judges 2014<sup>39</sup>

- Dr Harold Goodwin, Chair of Judges, Founder Director of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism
- Justin Francis, Founder and director of the Responsible Tourism Awards, CEO of responsibletravel.com
- Dr Rebecca Hawkins, Director of the Responsible Hospitality Partnership
- Debbie Hindle, Managing Director Four bgb
- Fiona Jeffery, Chairman of World Travel Market 2007-2013
- Simon Press, Senior Exhibition Director, World Travel Market (WTM)
- Lisa Scott, Travel Editor of the Metro Newspaper
- John de Vial, Director of the ICRT and ABTA
- Dr Matt Walpole Head of Ecosystem Assessment at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre for the United Nations Environment Programme
- Mark Watson CEO Tourism Concern
- Nikki White, Head of Destinations and Sustainability at ABTA

<sup>38</sup> This process was described in the Goodwin H (2014) *Progress in Responsible Tourism Vol 3(1)* published by Goodfellow and available online [http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/free\\_files/filePiRT31final.pdf](http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/free_files/filePiRT31final.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> More detail available online: [www.responsibletravel.com/awards/about/judges.htm](http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/about/judges.htm)

The Awards are not an accreditation scheme; we are not grading or certifying organisations as responsible. Rather we are looking for examples of exemplary practices in Responsible Tourism, which raise awareness of what is possible and of what can be achieved – examples which educate, inspire and challenge. We want the Awards to play a significant role in the sharing of stories about Responsible Tourism, about the positive difference it makes to local people and their natural and cultural environment and to the success of businesses which practice it. Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility to make tourism more sustainable, to enhance the positive impacts and reduce the negative, to use tourism to make better places for people to live and better places for people to visit; in that order. The judges can only consider those businesses and organisations which have been nominated come though the long listing screening which includes a web search and then, when sent a long questionnaire, take the time to complete and return it. The judges draw on the references and their own research and knowledge in reviewing the questionnaires and their recommendations are debated and tested by the full panel of judges over a day in September each year.

### **Box 2: What are the judges looking for?**

The judges look for examples of Responsible Tourism in practice that have some, or all, of the following characteristics:

- Demonstrate the application of Responsible Tourism in taking responsibility for making tourism more sustainable across the triple bottom line, addressing economic, social and environmental issues.
- Credible evidence of having exercised responsibility based on the questionnaires we send out to all those who make the long-list and the references that we take up. We also expect that their website is used to communicate their Responsible Tourism approach to consumers.
- Novelty –we want organisations with original ideas, innovative approaches to solving problems in sustainable tourism, and unique initiatives that drive the Responsible Tourism agenda forward.
- A track record – impact, proven results, demonstrable achievements illustrated with real data, well recorded metrics and detailed information about investment of time, effort and resources in Responsible Tourism initiatives. Viability – we look for established organisations and products which are attracting travellers and holidaymakers and which are likely to continue to do so.
- Replicability – practices and initiatives that are inspirational and have the potential to be applied elsewhere, adaptable concepts and ideas that could have an impact beyond their own business.
- Local focus – Responsible Tourism is not limited to a tick list of key requirements, we are interested in practices that address local issues and provide solutions with the local community in mind.

The judges are independent volunteers, they have no knowledge of the sponsorship arrangements and they are not recompensed for their time and effort in judging the Awards. To ensure the integrity of the Awards, initiatives which have involved the category sponsor are not recognised in the awards. Previous winners and highly commendeds are required to demonstrate that something significant has been achieved since the last time they were recognised in the Awards, it is particularly tough to win a second or third time. Category sponsors and the headline sponsor are precluded from being recognised for their work, the Awards are not influenced in any way by the sponsors.

This year we changed the language, we have dropped Highly Commended in favour of silver. So generally there is for each category ad Gold winner and one or two silvers. The judges are mindful of the standard which has been reached in previous year and the importance of maintaining a degree of comparability between the winners over a run of years, in a field where standards are rising significantly year on year.

### **Ones to Watch**

This year the judges discussed three new initiatives which they felt were worth watching, emerging stars. They are the kind of initiative which the judges are looking for but in each case there is not yet the evidence of impact that the judges expect to see.

**Abode, Bombay**<sup>40</sup> are seeking to redefine the luxury eco-hotel. They are building partnerships with local businesses and with people from 'less privileged backgrounds' to use locally authentic arts and crafts, developing an authentically local hotel supporting local manufacturers, skills and production techniques and wherever possible reusing wood and furniture. This new hotel has some exciting initiatives: the Lotus Taxi Service provided by women, some of whom, are single mothers, a positive contribution to a disadvantaged group and an enhanced experience for Abode's guests; selling BeFriend's handicrafts in the hotel shop, handicrafts produced by recovering alcoholics and women ostracised by their families; and Sundara which recycles soap through a women's co-operative benefiting the poor. The hotel only opened in 2013, the judges hope that in a year to two they will be nominated again and will have more detail on that these initiatives have achieved,

**Animal Welfare Policy ABTA, The Travel Association,**<sup>41</sup> has led the way by developing an animal welfare policy to help members "to assess and improve performance within the tourism supply chain" ABTA's work has been thorough and comprehensive, the judges expect that these guidelines will become the gold standard for animal welfare and tourism in future years. ABTA has worked with a wide range of NGOs and other experts to develop a set of seven guidelines on animal welfare including specific guidance on best practice in tourism, including animals, dolphins and elephants in captive environments, wildlife viewing, working animals and specific guidance on "Unacceptable and Dangerous Practices." This work, which sought the expertise of

<sup>40</sup> <http://abodeboutiquehotels.com/facilities>

<sup>41</sup> <http://abta.com/about-abta/raising-standards/animal-welfare>

Born Free and others, has taken several years to complete and the result is a comprehensive set of guidelines which deserve to be taken up and applied by governments, industry and travellers around the world. The judges hope to see businesses adopting and applying the guidelines, proving their potential to lead and change the industry for the better.

### **People's Choice for Responsible Tourism**

One of the purposes of these awards, perhaps our primary purpose, is to spread the idea of Responsible Tourism. We want to engage those involved in travel and tourism around the world, whether as producers or consumers, in debate about what makes for a better kind of tourism, in the words of the Cape Town Declaration<sup>42</sup> "making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit".

Last year's winners were placed on the Awards website and a public vote ensued. The winner of the people's vote was Nam Nern Night Safari, Lao PDR<sup>43</sup>. They won the Best for Responsible Wildlife Experiences category in 2013.

"The Nam Nern Night Safari has been designed to create direct incentives for conservation, it takes place in Nam Et – Phou Louey National Protected Area (NEPL) the last stronghold for tigers in Indo-China and the only place in the region where visitors can hope to seeing a tiger or its pugmarks is along the banks of the Nam Nern River. The Nam Nern Night Safari supports the conservation of tigers and their prey, as well as other wildlife, by placing a monetary value on tigers and other wildlife for local people. Each reported sighting of wildlife by a tourist results in financial reward for the villagers who live with the wildlife, including people who might otherwise poach. Since 2010 there have been 370 visitors in 142 groups, and the revenues have been shared by 1000+ families in the 14 surrounding villages. The village development fund generated \$2,860 this year, roughly \$200 per village, it has been used by villages to improve their well-being through small projects such as purchasing medicine for a village medicine bank, building a bathroom at a primary school, or purchasing benches for community meeting halls. Although the numbers are small the initiative has been very successful in increasing the number of wildlife sightings per boat – the sighting have doubled from an average of two per boat trip to four, and visitor satisfaction is high averaging 4.4 out of 5. The judges felt that this approach should be replicable and would contribute to creating a more positive relationship between local communities, wildlife and tourism."<sup>44</sup>

### **Best Animal Welfare Initiative**

#### **Gold: The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance**

The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance has successfully used tourism to fund sanctuaries for primates, birds and wild cats enabling them to provide environments

42 <http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html>

43

44 Goodwin H (2014) Progress in Responsible Tourism Vol 3(1):151-152

where previously abused wild animals, animals that cannot be returned to the wild, can be kept in captive protective habitats, able to live normal and healthy lives. They have campaigned against the practices of pet and play, they are educating their visitors about why these practices should be banned and demonstrating that attractions can be successful without exploiting animals.

The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance (SAASA) runs three sanctuaries with 150,000 visitors a year in the Cape. The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance has successfully used tourism to fund sanctuaries for primates, birds and wild cats enabling them to provide environments where previously abused wild animals, animals that cannot be returned to the wild, can be kept in captive protective habitats, able to live normal and healthy lives. Their work on the Eden Syndrome<sup>45</sup> has demonstrated that by careful management of keeper behaviour and stopping petting, it is possible to re-wild previously caged and/or human-imprinted wild animals to a point where they are effectively wild again in “multi-species, free-roaming sanctuaries”.

As one of their referees put it the “Alliance’s facilities (Birds of Eden, Monkeyland and Jukani Wildlife Sanctuary) lead the way in providing homes where previously abused animals and birds which aren’t suitable for release into their natural habitats are able to live out their lives in comfort and peace.” SAASA has campaigned against the practices of pet and play, which involve breeding or training animals or birds for human interaction; they are educating their visitors about why these practices should be banned; and demonstrating that attractions can be successful without exploiting animals. As one of the confidential referees pointed out, SAASA “will wisely use the publicity that it will generate to further its campaign to end animal abuse in the tourism and wildlife industries.”

This year there was no category for a campaigning organisation but had there been the South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance would have been a strong contender. Tony Blignaut’s personal account of their campaign is included here, with their permission

### **Box 3 Tackling the pet monkey trade in South Africa**

During the late 60’s and 70’s I was involved in overland safaris between Johannesburg and Nairobi, I did that for 9 years and during that period the biggest change I saw in African wildlife was the disappearance of the primates. In the early years there was an abundance of various primates right throughout Southern Africa, but with the advent of the “Bush Meat Trade” it got so bad that in 1976 when I did my last overland safari from Mombasa to Johannesburg, the first monkey we saw was shortly after crossing the border into then Rhodesia on route to Kariba to board the ferry to Mibizi. This was in stark contrast to the earlier safaris where primates were plentiful. It was also during these years that my good friends Anthony Rose and Karl Ammann were fighting the good fight trying to create awareness about the devastation of African wildlife in the

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.saasa.org.za/live/the-eden-syndrome./](http://www.saasa.org.za/live/the-eden-syndrome/)

bush meat trade. This whole saga left me with a burning desire to personally do something for primates, if I was ever financially in a position to do so.

Bush meat was not the only problem, as big a problem was a well establish primate breeding network of 8 major backyard breeders which developed in South Africa, and by 1996 it was almost impossible to find a pet shop in any major city or town that did not have either Capuchins, Lemurs, or Squirrel monkeys for sale to the general public. This breeding required that the baby monkeys get removed from their mothers soon after birth and are then hand reared in order to human imprint them for the pet trade. Bird breeding was as rife, although at that time my focus was still squarely on primates.

By 1996 I had already met Lara Mostert, and she was as concerned and as passionate about primates and their predicament, we were both "purists" totally against any trade in wildlife. There was a very high mortality rate amongst the pet monkey population, mainly due to stress and incorrect diet, that was also a concern, but what made it much worse is when one monkey died they would simply buy another, which inevitably suffered the same fate. It seemed to be a vicious circle and the whole time it just kept fuelling the breeding of more and more pet monkeys.

Yes we had a "blue print" for a the World's only multi-species free-roaming primate sanctuary, but in the backdrop of the booming trade in pet monkeys it seemed like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet wound, how could we have a sanctuary where all around us there was a booming trade in pet monkeys, we had to do more.

It was a drastic situation and it needed a drastic solution, and what followed over the following days, I still today have difficulty in absorbing, not because it was complex, as it was not, but its effectiveness was devastating.

After a lot of brainstorming, we decided to gather as much information about, who these breeders were, where they operated from, what monkeys they had and what the realistic market value was of everything they had. Armed with the exact location of every breeder and knowledge of their exact stock and the value, we made what was possibly one of the most difficult decisions a purist could ever make. In a three day campaign we split-up and visited every breeder individually and made each of them an offer they simply could not refuse, for everything they had – no exceptions. While we were cleaning out the breeders, we had friends and family cleaning out the pet shop stock. On the third and fourth day we secured any zoo surplus.

This sounds horrendous, but what it effectively did, was to wipe out the entire pet trade (in South Africa) in primates. The breeders sold their breeding stock thinking they would buy new stock from each other and carry on, but they were all in the same boat, there was no stock to buy. Not one of those breeders ever succeeded in getting back into production, the trade in Lemurs, Squirrel monkeys and Capuchins

effectively ended that day. Only the Marmoset and Tamarin breeders who we did not target, as we would not be able to keep miniature monkeys in our sanctuary, are still in business.

Those were the monkeys and lemurs that went through the very first Eden Syndrome process at Monkeyland, and today while many have died from natural causes, some still survive, but more importantly there are over 6 generations of free roaming progeny in our sanctuary that never have or ever will see the inside of a cage.

Source: personal communication from Tony Blignaut 23092014

### **Gold: World Animal Protection**

World Animal Protection<sup>46</sup> is committed to the principle that wild animals belong in the wild, “the only place they can lead full lives, exhibit their natural behaviours and be free from the deprivation and suffering inherent with captivity.” It has a long history of campaigning for the protection of animals stretching back to 1950. Their current compassionate travel campaign, running in Australia and the Netherlands, is focused on ending the exploitation of wild animals used for tourism and entertainment by bringing together key players in the tourism industry with governments, local stakeholders, tourists and WAP supporters. The initial focus of their campaign has focused on focusing on ending elephant rides and shows. In Australia Intrepid Travel has ended elephant rides and visits to elephant shows on all of its trips as a result of their partnership with WAP and a three-year assessment of the welfare of captive elephants at entertainment venues in Asia. In the Netherlands, over 15 Dutch tour operators have stopped offering elephant rides and shows and have supported World Animal Protection’s campaign. The first tour operator to do so was TUI Netherlands with its brands Arke, Holland International and KRAS.<sup>47</sup> Just short of 50,000 people have committed to never again take an elephant ride or watch elephants perform in a show.

In addition to campaigning for the industry to take responsibility and stop offering attractions and activities which exploit animals WAP have been raising awareness amongst travellers. (See Box 4.)

The judges recognised the strength of the strategic approach which WAP is taking to animal protection addressing both the public and travel organisers – their campaign about elephants is only a starting point. WAP hopes that being recognised in the World Responsible Tourism Awards will “help other organisations and stakeholders sit up, take notice and make decisions to change that will have the welfare of wild animals at their heart.”

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.worldanimalprotection.org/>

<sup>47</sup> The is a full list of Dutch brands backing the campaign online [http://www.worldanimalprotection.nl/Images/Olifanten\\_reisorganisaties\\_lijst\\_zonder\\_link\\_tcm19-41415.pdf](http://www.worldanimalprotection.nl/Images/Olifanten_reisorganisaties_lijst_zonder_link_tcm19-41415.pdf)

### Box 4: What to avoid

Before you travel, ask if your tour operator has a policy on animal protection – and encourage them to introduce one if they don't. And once you're away, help to protect animals by following these practical tips:

- Wild animals belong in the wild. If you do want to see animals when you travel, observe them in their natural habitat
- Avoid cockfights, bullfights and any festivals or celebrations that cause suffering to animals – culture isn't an excuse for cruelty
- Stay away from local cuisine made from wild or endangered animals – or made using inhumane methods
- Think carefully about visiting zoos. Many keep animals in poor conditions and allow tourist to handle animals – which causes unnecessary stress. Zoos that are serious about conservation should have humane breeding programmes, designed to release animals into the wild
- Avoid paying to have your photo taken with a wild animal. These animals are often taken from the wild, with adult animals sometimes killed in the process. It's also common for animals to be drugged or cruelly trained, or for them to have teeth removed, to prevent tourists being harmed
- Stay away from attractions involving captive marine mammals like whales and dolphins – these are unnatural and stressful for the animals
- Avoid souvenirs made from wild animals, including all fur, ivory, shells, sea-horses, teeth, rhino horn and turtle shell products
- Avoid riding wild animals, such as elephants. These animals are often captured from the wild, treated poorly and trained using inhumane methods.

Source: [www.worldanimalprotection.org.au/take-action/compassionate-travel-our-advice](http://www.worldanimalprotection.org.au/take-action/compassionate-travel-our-advice)

### Best Aviation Programme for Carbon Reduction

#### Gold: Thomson Airways

This was not a difficult decision in a field where no silvers were awarded. Thomson Airways<sup>48</sup>, as part of TUI, has adopted the same approach to sustainability as the rest of the group. They have accepted responsibility, set targets for carbon reduction, and then delivered on them. Over the past three years, Thomson has improved its airline carbon efficiency by 7.4%, achieving average carbon emissions of 69.5g per Revenue Passenger Kilometre (RPK). This has been achieved through a mixture of on-going efficiency planning, direct routings, adjusting maintenance regimes, adapting on-board operations to reduce weight carried, and investment in cutting edge aviation technology. They have demonstrated what can be achieved, using current approaches, to improve carbon

<sup>48</sup> [http://www.tuitravelplc.com/sustainability/priorities/carbon-management/carbon-management-overview#.U\\_3HeYdOXcs](http://www.tuitravelplc.com/sustainability/priorities/carbon-management/carbon-management-overview#.U_3HeYdOXcs)

efficiency. TUI has demonstrated that marginal gains in fuel efficiency deliver reduced carbon emissions now – they set short term targets and meet them.

#### **Box 5: TUI Travel Financial 12/13 Year is 1st October 2012 – 30th September 2013.**

INTENSITY (RELATIVE) METRIC TUI Travel airlines	gCO <sub>2</sub> /Revenue Passenger Km	gCO <sub>2e</sub> /Revenue Passenger Km
ArkeFly	73.6g	74.3g
Corsair	80.5g	81.4g
Jetairfly	73.9g	74.7g
Thomson Airways	69.5g	70.2g
TUIfly	65.5g	66.2g
TUIfly Nordic	63.1g	63.7g
TUI Travel airlines (average)	70.7g	71.4g

TUI is transparent in its reporting of carbon emissions across the group<sup>49</sup> Thomson has committed to monitor its environmental impacts, set targets, reduce pollution and embed sustainable development principles in the business practices of the airline and its supply chain. So they cut carbon emissions, minimise waste, reduce energy and paper consumption. As a company they have methodically and persistently applied the best operating practise to improve their performance year on year. TUI Travel airlines set a six year target to reduce absolute and relative carbon emissions by 6%, a target which it met two years early; it now aims to cut relative emissions by a further 3% by 2015.

#### **Best for Beach Tourism**

##### **Gold: Chole Mjini**

Anne & Jean de Villiers opened Chole Mjini<sup>50</sup> on Chole Island in the Mafia Island Marine Park (MIMP), Tanzania in 1993. The ambition was clear from the outset – they defined their aims:

- “To educate two generations of Chole children and to work with (through facilitation and fundraising) our community to build infrastructure and human capital for the Chole people to have the capacity to manage their future in a rapidly changing world.
- To create and sustain a lodge that provides a unique, environmentally conservative, and eye-opening holiday experience, whilst serving as the dynamo to make the primary aim possible.”

They describe the impact of their initiative thus:

“In 1993 there was only one person on Chole Island that had proceeded beyond primary school, one person in formal (salaried) employment and only one bicycle.

<sup>49</sup> The methodology is available on line <http://www.tuitravelplc.com/sites/default/files/attachments/TUI%20Airline%20Carbon%20Methodology%20and%20KPI%20Calculations%20-%20FY13.pdf> as is the Assurance Report by PWC [http://www.tuitravelplc.com/sites/default/files/attachments/PWC\\_final\\_independent\\_assurance\\_report\\_TUI\\_CO2\\_RPK.pdf](http://www.tuitravelplc.com/sites/default/files/attachments/PWC_final_independent_assurance_report_TUI_CO2_RPK.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> [www.cholemjini.com](http://www.cholemjini.com)

Together with the community and donors we built classrooms, teacher's housing, a small hospital, market, and a Woman's Centre. We raised funds for the construction and recurrent funding of a kindergarten, library, learning centre with computers. We have provided 164 Scholarships, already have eight University graduates, 94 Form 4 leavers, and have given many young people skills, like English and Computing, who now hold permanent jobs and are no longer dependent on the diminishing natural resources.

Our business ethos has made it possible for parents of children born in this remote community to keep their children healthy and plan for their education from kindergarten through to University.

Over twenty years we have helped the economy of Chole Island to grow from around \$15,000 per annum to at least \$150,000 per annum (measured in 2013), with tangible quantifiable indicators of wealth (such as cars, outboard engines, motorcycles, TV's and solar panels all earning income for their owners, more than 100 bicycles that take young people to and from school and to jobs). We measure our success by the number of people we have managed to uplift.

The viable business, UK-based charity, organizations on Chole Island that administer the donations, guest bed night levies and day visitor tickets ensure that continued development can be sustained".

They have established three democratic, nationally registered Chole societies to build capacity and ensure community participation in decision making and management of funds raised from bed-night levies, day-visitor tickets, Chole Mjini Trust and other donations; and facilitated studies of the anthropology, history and archaeology of Chole and of anaemia on the island

The local economic impact is considerable with have 26 full time staff and a further 20 seasonal. The health centre, kindergarten and learning centre, under the management of the Chole Societies, directly employ 15 and the lodge purchases locally seafood, fruits, rope and building materials for the hotel, employ local artisans in construction and local people to make curtains, cushions, mats, wall materials, and mosquito nets.

As one of their very respected industry referees, with long experience of Responsible Tourism in Africa put it "the lodge and team there are well worth the recognition - having long been one of the beach lodges with the most responsible tourism approach that I know in Africa....would make a first-rate winner for you, with really first-class environmental and social track record and credentials."<sup>51</sup>

The judges were impressed by what has been achieved over the last twenty years by a small tree lodge hotel that accommodates 500 guests a year. A commercial success, the hotel contributes approximately USD 18,000 per annum from the \$10 per night bed night levy paid to local societies, this combined with funds raised by the Chole Mjinia Trust

<sup>51</sup> Confidential reference

(\$48,000 in 2013) has enabled the running of a health centre, kindergarten and learning centre, under the management of Chole Societies; and the provision of education scholarships for secondary and tertiary study. They employ local staff, source locally and have worked to conserve wildlife, for example encouraging the Mafia District Council to introduce a \$10 per head fee for whale shark tourism.

#### **Silver: Casa de las Olas, Mexico**

Casa de las Olas<sup>52</sup> is a 5 suite, maximum 12 guests, property adjacent to the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef near Tulum in Mexico. Casa de las Olas has been operating since 2010 and attracts 600+ guests per year. The main house was designed 40 years ago, off grid and completely powered by solar the property relies on spring water and captured rain water for irrigation. Biodegradable cleaning materials, local produce, and employment for three local people, they contribute to school fees and provide pensions

James Greenfield describes their purpose thus “..my partner and I live in a little casita on this magical slice of paradise so we have the 15 second commute to take care of our guests, to eat well, live quietly and simply and truly enjoy this place and share it with good people... We are chasing lifestyle not money and have been having a great time doing it as we enjoy watching the rise of the sun over the Caribbean over the rise of our bank accounts. Our vision will remain the same: steward the land, take great care of our guests and be excellent to our employees.”

#### **Best City Hotel**

##### **Gold: Hotel Verde<sup>53</sup>, Cape Town**

Hotel Verde is located at Cape Town International Airport, with 145 rooms, it opened in 2013. In its first year of operation it attracted 21,000 guests. Hotel facilities include a bar, restaurant and 24 hour deli with 7 conference venues accommodating 4 to 120 delegates, freshening up facilities, indoor and outdoor gym, jogging trial, and eco pool. The hotel attracts international travellers and local corporate travellers, they have sought to attract local people by offering a reasonably priced restaurant as well as specials for those flying from the airport.

Hotel Verde aspires to be “Africa’s Greenest Hotel”. The application demonstrated that commitment and they share it with every share with every guest, delegate and supplier with whom they interact. Hotel Verde stood out in this category. A new build the Hotel Verde has a grey water recycling plant, rainwater and subsoil drainage water collection, Cobiax void formers to reduce the use of concrete in construction, a geothermal field, a green garden roof, wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, as well as energy efficient LED lighting throughout the property, and the elevators power regenerative drives allowing for about 30% of the input energy to be recaptured and fed back into the

<sup>52</sup> [www.casadelasolas.com](http://www.casadelasolas.com)

<sup>53</sup> [www.hotelverde.co.za](http://www.hotelverde.co.za)

building. Whenever an elevator travels in the “light” direction, i.e. when a full cart is going down, or an empty cart is going up, the motor acts as a generator and produces power.<sup>54</sup>. In daily operations they continue to reduce waste and energy consumption and communicate their green approach with guests in a quirky and entertaining way : “Save energy, take the stairs,’ ‘Our toilets use recycled grey water from hotel showers’ They are inconspicuous, to the point and a great talking point with our guests.” Guests are rewarded for positive green actions. Their Verdino is a coin valued at ZAR5 (\$0.50) given to guests to encourage behaviour that can also be mimicked in their own homes and the hotel has an offsetting programme which benefits a sustainable farming and reforestation programme in Zimbabwe which enables the hotel to claim to be carbon neutral for overnight guests and conference delegates.

Hotel Verde is the only LEED Platinum New Construction project on the African Continent. The staff have a well-designed ecologically low impact building to work with so the expectation that they will go further is high. They have a zero to landfill policy, organic waste is used to make compost, upcycling and recycling is the objective, the restaurant menus were made from the crates the lifts arrived in, chalk boards are used rather than flip charts. The hotel has created 87 jobs with a strong focus on training and interns and source from within a 160km radius.

They offer weekly school tours for groups of children who have reached the age where they are beginning to think about careers. They receive a presentation on sustainable living, hospitality careers and a tour of the hotel facilities and equipment; and they receive packs containing fact sheets and environmental news. Each school is given a voucher to use for fundraising purposes as well as a time capsule for them to bury in the school grounds. “It contains slips of promises to future generations that encourage the kids to make after they have learnt with us, that they can take lessons home and to heart.”

#### **Silver: ITC Grand Chola<sup>55</sup> Chennai**

The ITC Grand Chola has 600 guest rooms, suites and luxury serviced apartments is one of the ITC’s **Responsible Luxury** properties, “harnessing the renewable elements of nature while supporting local livelihoods to provide world-class luxury experiences.”<sup>56</sup> The ITC as a group is committed to triple bottom line sustainability and reports its achievement on the economic, social and environmental agenda, through sequestering twice the amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, they produce each year, they are able to claim to be “Carbon Positive” for the last six years and they have helped educate nearly 250,000 rural children.<sup>57</sup> The ITC Grand Chola is the world’s largest LEED Platinum Rated Hotel in the New Construction category and has achieved “Zero Discharge into Sewers” status, by using sewage treatment plants to treat the wastewater to almost potable quality. The

54 Details: <http://hotelverde.co.za/about/the-green-aspect/sustainable-design>

55 [www.itchotels.in/hotels/itcgrandchola.aspx](http://www.itchotels.in/hotels/itcgrandchola.aspx)

56 <http://www.itchotels.in/responsibleluxury/responseInner.html>

57 <http://www.itchotels.in/responsibleluxury/sustain.html>

treated water is recycled into the building for horticulture, cooling towers and toilet flushing. The remaining good quality treated wastewater flows into the neighbouring golf course. This approach minimises the hotel's dependence on ground water helping to conserve the ground water levels in the area. There is a list of all the initiatives taken at the ITC Grand Chola available on line in Green Hotelier.<sup>58</sup>

#### **Silver: Jurys Inn Brighton<sup>59</sup>**

A Green Tourism Gold<sup>60</sup> 234 room hotel in the heart of Brighton. Unusually, and commendably, they won a UK Building Research Establishment 'Excellent' Award when they opened. The property was built with sustainability in mind and they are the only Jurys Inn property to have a sustainability manager on the staff. They report that "Demand for environmentally friendly services and products among our customer base continues to grow."

The hotel is demonstrating what can be achieved by careful attention to detail, for example

"Our F&B and Kitchen teams ensure that all food waste has been segregated for a separate recycling scheme – last year we implemented this scheme with a local food recycling company and we saved 9,400 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> and recycled 10,440 kg of food waste. The food waste is treated with A.D and then turned into fertiliser. They also ensure that all dishwashers have a full load to them before running them. Last year we had a total energy reduction across the hotel of -3.2% kWh and an occupancy increase of 2.13% and this was despite the UK having the coldest start to the year for 20 years."

They have cut their water consumption by 13% since 2009 and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 5% since 2009 and have stretch targets for 2017.

Jurys Inn submitted a very detailed report from the Clifford Talbot Partnership covering their occupancy data, energy and water consumption which demonstrates their water and energy use per room sold, and per sleeper, month by month. More hotels are now undertaking this kind of analysis but it is rare for the data to be shared with the judges in this way.

#### **Best Cultural Heritage Attraction**

#### **Silver: Festivals of Puebla,<sup>61</sup> Mexico**

Since 1996 the Ministry of Tourism has been encouraging tourists to visitors. The judges wanted to recognise the efforts being made to encourage tourists to visit a broad and diverse range of festivals in Puebla: - the Festivals of Huey Atlixcayotl. Atlixco, the Day of the Dead in Tochimilco, the Festival of light and life in Chignahuapan, the Spring Equinox Festival, San Andrés y San Pedro Cholula, the Fair of Huipil and coffee,

58 <http://www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/new-builds-retro-fits/best-practice-itc-grand-chola/>

59 [www.jurysinns.com/hotels/brighton](http://www.jurysinns.com/hotels/brighton)

60 [www.green-tourism.com/visit/jurys-inn-brighton/listing-252/](http://www.green-tourism.com/visit/jurys-inn-brighton/listing-252/)

61 [www.puebla.travel](http://www.puebla.travel)

Cuetzalan, the Fair of flowers. Huauchinango, and the Carnival of Huejotzingo. These cultural events show the essence of Puebla's culture, their celebration every year is proof that despite globalization, indigenous Mexican people retain their traditional values and culture, important because these ancient celebrations, which can be traced to pre-Hispanic times, are rare in the modern world. This intangible heritage is a vital source of identity for local communities deeply rooted in history and it is the foundation of community life.

This year there was no Gold Award in this category. The judges look for examples of excellent Responsible Tourism practise, examples that can inspire and which others may replicate. We are also mindful of previous winners and each year seek to ensure that the category winners are on a par with previous winners. We can only select from amongst those nominated and based on the information in the public domain, in the information they provide in answering the questionnaire and the independent references.

## **Best Destination**

### **Gold: V & A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa**

This 300 acre regeneration site includes shops, residential properties and 22 historic landmarks and annually attracts in excess of 24 million visitors; the economic impact of the Waterfront speaks for itself. The judges were impressed by the scale and thoroughness of the Waterfront's efforts to reduce its environmental impacts; the refurbishment of the craft market, which will increase the capacity for local craft workers by 50%, and the Food Market that provides an outlet for 50 local producers. Since 2008 the Waterfront has been introducing sustainable green business practices throughout the entire property to increase resource efficiency and reduce costs; and requiring its tenants to green their operations too.

In their questionnaire the V&A Waterfront reported that their biggest challenge is getting staff and tenant buy in. Since 2008, the V&A Waterfront has invested more than R30 Million (US\$ 3Million) into energy efficiency, water savings and waste recycling across the property. In 2009, water saving initiatives were introduced which included water efficient toilets and urinals, water sensor taps in all bathrooms, drip irrigation and variable irrigation times. Exotic plants are being replaced with indigenous plants, and all new landscaped areas will only be planted with indigenous plants. A waste minimisation drive has nearly halved the amount of waste going to landfills and tenants have been incentivised to reduce waste at source by introducing new waste tariff structures. Recycling bins have been located throughout waterfront and in order to encourage visitors to be "car-free" they have bicycles lanes across the estate and have introduced more bicycle racks. The V&A Waterfront Security Team has also reduced vehicle patrols by switching to bicycle patrols.

There is an extensive social responsibility programme, for example the V&A has a social worker on site to engage with, and rehabilitate destitute people who visit the public spaces. The goal is to re-unite them with their families. They have a wide range

of social initiatives including a Young Captains Programme which identifies promising high school students from less privileged communities and engages them in training programmes at the V&A to expose them to opportunity and knowledge transfer within the working environment; and they contribute R300,000 annually to a study bursary programme which supports promising students, whose parents are employed by the V&A.

The judges were impressed by the V&A's determination to take responsibility and the range of ways in which it is working as a company and with its tenants and visitors to make the V&A Waterfront a more responsible destination. The V&A Waterfront Management Company has, in the opinion of the judges, demonstrated what a destination management company can do to establish more responsible policies and practices across a destination.

### **Best for Engaging People & Culture**

#### **Gold: Kutch Adventures<sup>62</sup> India**

In the application Kuldip Gadhvi recognised that local people and culture is the backbone of his small business, founded in 2010 Kutch Adventures has 50-70 guests each year. The judges were impressed by the depth of the cultural encounter, the opportunities to interact enjoyed by guests and locals; and felt that this was a highly replicable approach requiring little capital. As Kuldip wrote in his questionnaire "We offer a model that can be reproduced in many of the marginal communities across the world." Visitors have the opportunity to eat local dishes, to hear local stories, folk songs and music and to meet and purchase directly from the producers when they visit handicraft workshops.

Kuldip Gadhvi guides all the tours and ensures that the encounters are based on the values of respect and responsibility. Kuldip spent 16 months in Warwickshire, near Leamington Spa, in 2008-9, an experience which, he says, deepened and broadened his understanding of the Western world and helped him focus on his local culture and interpret it for visitors. As Kuldip says "tourism is the most interesting and informal way to educate people." The judges agree with what Kuldip wrote

"I believe the organisational model on which this business is based, founded with very little capital, where local communities are key beneficiaries and best use of information technologies can build bridges between two different cultures, constitutes an example that could be used by many around the world."

Kuldip is creating opportunities for local people with traditional cultures and skills, working as a cultural broker to ensure that host and guest, visited and visitor have a positive and memorable experience. Kutch Adventures, Kuldip says, "always gives priority to the least known and struggling artisans who are still not known to the world, to reach them is almost impossible without having a local link."

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62 <https://sites.google.com/site/kutchadventures>

"We take our visitors to local artisans of Kutch so that visitors can meet the real artisan who makes/produces handicrafts which visitors would have bought from the market otherwise. Here they can see how the products are being made, they can appreciate their craftsmanship, meet their family members who are also involved in it, if they make any purchase then money goes straight into the pocket of artisans-producers. Sometimes some visitors, who are associated with arts and crafts, may set business links with local artisans whom they have met during the tours. It is the best way for any local artisan to earn fair value for their handicrafts which are under the threat since the factory produced goods have taken over the market, worldwide."

The judges hope that others will be inspired to follow Kuldip Gadhvi's inspiring example.

#### **Silver: Footsteps Ecolodge,<sup>63</sup> The Gambia**

Footsteps Eco-lodge opened in 2002 need Gunjur village in The Gambia, it was built by local people using traditional materials and methods, two thirds of the original build team are still employed by the lodge. There are now 15 full time staff members from different households who receive above average rates of pay all year round, with benefits including 21 days paid leave per year , sick pay and pension benefits all of which have meant that their children have received a full time education. The lodge has been rebuilt following a disastrous bush fire in 2007 which devastated a large part of the area. The lodge supports the local museum by fundraising for it each year and the staff assist guests to engage in local activities and with local people. As they said in their questionnaire which they completed for the judges:

"One of the challenges to engaging local people and their culture in Gambia has been understanding the role that religion plays in everyday life. ....

Understanding each other is not always about language but more about your beliefs, culture, upbringing and expectations. It has been a challenge learning some local dialect and an even bigger challenge learning what is important to the local people and what is not. Like most things in life it's about not taking anything for granted and managing your own expectations."

#### **Best for People with Disabilities**

#### **Gold: Campo and Parque de Sonhos,<sup>64</sup> Brazil**

The Campo and Parque de Sonhos have demonstrated that it is possible to include people with disabilities in nearly all of the activities available to the able bodied in an adventure activity resort and to do it in ways which enable families and friends to holiday and play together. This is an inspiring example of what can be achieved when the owners commit to developing an activity product genuinely accessible to all and where the staff and visitors see beyond the disability to enable everyone to share in the activities.

63 <http://footstepsinthegambia.com>

64 <http://www.campodessonhos.com.br/> & <http://www.parquedessonhos.com.br/english.html>

Jose Fernandes Franco is an agricultural engineer who returned to his roots to open a Field of Dreams Farm Hotel and extended it to include a Field of Dreams rural farm and adventure activities available to everyone. This is a genuinely inclusive resort, as Jose Fernandes puts it "A 2-year old child descended the shorter Tyrolean in total safety, while an 84-year old lady broke the age record in the 1-km long Tyrolean". The Park of Dreams attracts novices, adventure sports enthusiasts who want to try a number of experiences in one day, school groups, corporate team building groups and those who want to make commercials. Being accessible for all makes commercial sense. Five zip lines, canopy walk way, rappelling, climbing, a rope swing, caving, trekking, fishing, cycling (they have 10 different types of accessible cycles), river tubing, horse-riding, swimming in natural pools and under water falls. People can visit the place for the day or stay for a few days or weeks at accessible accommodations, people with disabilities are enabled to participate at no extra charge.

"The place is fully accessible for people with and without disabilities as far as accommodations, bathrooms, restaurants, swimming pools, and all of the common areas. Everywhere in the attraction tourists will find ramps, hand bars, tactile floor, tactile maps, handrail for blind people, tactile menu and signs, reservation center for deaf, and a lot more. But this is the easy part; we go an extra mile on making the holiday experience even greater for people with disabilities with no extra charge at all.

We cater many different kinds of activities for a wide-range of disabilities, and most important of all is the fact that those with disabilities can enjoy the activities alongside the able bodied ones. And this is an amazing experience for both. It's truly all-inclusive!"

In 2007 they had about 400 visitors with some form of disability, in 2013 they had 4,000 out of a total of ~50,000. In 2007 the annual occupancy rate was 43.5% in 2013 it was 82.5% and they get a 60% repeat booking rate. They have made the accommodation and the activities available to those with autism, down's syndrome, dyslexia, visual impairment and blindness; hearing impairment and deafness; and mobility impairments such as amputations, head injuries, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, paralysis (paraplegic and quadriplegic) and Parkinson's. They see no conflicts between the needs of the able bodied and those with disabilities – all are treated equally and encouraged to enjoy as many experiences and adventures as possible.

"Our non-disabled clients also create a great admiration and loyalty to the hotel just by knowing how we go the extra-mile for the disabled and people with reduced mobility. Further more, the non-disabled visitors also benefit from the adaptation for all types of disabilities. For example: the build in kennels for guide dogs (for blind people) at the accommodations encouraged families who own a pet to stay at the hotel. All the equipment (light switches, towel hanger, telescopic mirror, etc) at an accessible height for wheelchair also served to children that could become more autonomous, which caused them to love the place and encourage their parents to

return to the location. Ramps were also vital for parents with strollers, and we also began to receive groups of elderly people during the weekdays to enjoy the comfort and security of accessibility."

It was not easy.

"The biggest challenge of all was to overcome the prejudice that most people had about having "crippled" people involved anyhow in any business. From our team, to our clients, and even from business partners and competitors, everyone doubted accessibility could bring sustainable growth to the business. After a while everyone believed in the project and experienced the good all-inclusive sensation.

We had to create equipment that did not exist, like a different seat and vest for a paraplegic or quadriplegic to be able to do rafting and zip line. We also created equipment with sustainable and low-cost material, as the handrails for blind people made out of bamboo."

#### **Gold: Cavan Town & Environs<sup>65</sup> Ireland**

Since 2007 there have been major efforts to provide an accessible tourism experience for visitors. New by-laws were introduced preventing businesses displaying obstructive signage or furniture on foot-paths which may prove hazardous or obstructive to wheel-chair users or people with visual impairments and with the Chamber of Commerce they are working to make Cavan an 'Age Friendly Business Town' offering deals and services specifically for older people. The needs of people with visual impairments were addressed at Johnston Central Library with the installation of enhanced reading equipment, large-print books and computer screens.

An Access Audit was carried out in 2007 and to date €180,000 has been spent on remedial works on streetscapes, footpaths, accessible parking and pedestrian crossings in the town. They worked with 13 local disability groups to develop their strategy to make their place more accessible for locals and visitors. Many of their public buildings have seen significant investment in access and improvements including Cavan Leisure Centre, Johnston Central Library, public parks, museums and viewing points. In addition the children's playground was enhanced with a section for children with disabilities. Upgrades to Cavan Leisure Centre have included the following pieces of equipment which assist visitors, in particular wheel-chair users – improved accessible parking, ramps, lifts, wheelchair access fitness equipment, swimming pool hoist and hydraulic changing table.

"For us, accessibility is important for two reasons:- firstly the ethical reason, for us it is important that everybody can participate in and avail of all of our attractions and secondly, there is a business case to be made for making your business more accessible. In the UK - Recent statistics show that guests with disabilities made up 11% of the visitor overnight stays in 2009, with a value of 2 billion pounds. Trips by this

<sup>65</sup> [www.thisiscavan.ie](http://www.thisiscavan.ie)

group tend to be longer than average and as a result spend per trip is higher. 13% of the Irish population have a disability. In addition older people, a valuable market, tend to have more disabilities and mobility issues as they get older."

"Cavan town has made major efforts to provide an accessible tourism experience for all visitors regardless of ability. In Cavan, accessibility means inclusivity both in attitude and in the services provided."

"The biggest obstacle to making a destination accessible is ignorance. People without disabilities or experience of disability often have no understanding of the obstacles that face a person living with a disability. Therefore, in order to be truly accessible and inclusive a destination must undergo a cultural shift in how it thinks."

At the Parque de Sonhos and Cavan they have gone far beyond bedrooms for people with disabilities, wheelchair access and disabled toilets. The Parque de Sonhos and Cavan are both pushing forward the agenda on inclusive tourism enabling people with and without disabilities to holiday together, enjoying the same attractions and engaging in the same activities – others should follow their example.

#### **Silver: NATIVE Charming Hotels and Accessible Tourism<sup>66</sup>**

Founded by Pablo Ramón in 2010, NATIVE is a club of hotels inspired, simply, by the right of everyone to enjoy a nice hotel and their activities. Based in Madrid they have around 60 associated hotels in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Morocco. They have about 900,000 visitors to the website per year.

NATIVE has one of the most accessible websites in the world unique club of hotels working for the general public, without distinctions, following the philosophy of inclusive design, from a very special website in 6 languages that offers 2 systems of accessibility, the well-known W3C-WAI (level AA) plus the new INCLUSITE system. NATIVE provides solutions for universal accessibility in their hotels, like Braille and embossed signage, avatars in deaf language, magnetic keys with information through BiDi code, orientation plans for blind clients, adapted bicycles for customers, Braille menu at their restaurants.

"For people without disabilities, the website is like hundred million of websites. For people with disabilities the website is like no other in the world of tourism. We could select a hotel and make our reservation even if we are blind, dumb and with no hands, just blowing over the microphone of our headphones set."

"People with disabilities are the focus of our work. We want to show that the current state of tourism all over the world is an unacceptable apartheid. And we have to provide solutions for integration."

People with disabilities must be appreciated by hotel owners like one more target to consider in their business. Clients with disability must feel well at hotels prepared to

<sup>66</sup> [www.nativehotels.org](http://www.nativehotels.org)

make their stay more comfortable. That's the challenge of every hotel in the world: to be able to do things properly, to know that clients are happy to return next year to your establishment."

## **Best for Poverty Reduction**

### **Gold: Adventure Alternative**

We have previously awarded Gavin Bate, he won Best Personal Contribution in 2009, but the judges felt that the extent to which he has expanded the operation of Adventure Alternative and increased the flow of benefits to the local communities with which the company works, deserved further recognition. Over twenty years Adventure Alternative has developed companies in Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, Malaysia, Morocco and Russia using Responsible Tourism and equitable contracts to create sustainable livelihoods and help people out of poverty. The judges were impressed by the wealth of detail that Adventure Alternative provided on their impacts and the way in which it is building self-reliant locally owned businesses.

Adventure Alternative began in 1991 as a small expedition company built to provide long term careers for some of the young people who were being supported by Gavin's Moving Mountains charity. Kelly Kioko began life as street kid and ended up becoming the Director of Adventure Alternative Kenya some fifteen years later, Rosie Gathirimu became the Director of Moving Mountains Kenya.

Gavin Bates describes his objective clearly

"I wanted my company to be alternative in its approach to employment, support and opportunity, but I also wanted it to provide a really authentic adventure holiday. Essentially I wanted to run a company that had a strong ethos towards tackling social injustice, but at the same time would still be a viable profitable concern."

By 2000 Adventure Alternative was a Limited Company with satellite offices in Nairobi, Kathmandu, Moshi and Moscow employing 29 staff. The main outbound, licensed and bonded, operating office is on the north coast of Ireland, where there is a core staff of five people who manage the arrangement of all trips for ~500 people each year.

"Product development is based on a sort of collaborative social entrepreneurship, so that our trips create financial benefit to communities, individuals, co-operatives and staff. The vision is to increase clientele, expand the range of trips, develop into new areas and continually provide training for local people to develop their own business ideas and incorporate them into a tourist model."

Gavin describes the achievement of his company thus:

"When I look back on twenty years of running Adventure Alternative and all the people who have worked for the company in all that time, I see proud staff with children who will never suffer the same privation that they did.

I see the street kids who I once taught at school when I was living in the slums of Nairobi, who are now married with qualifications and children of their own, living in brick houses, well looked after and a future ahead of them. They are the staff of Adventure Alternative Kenya –accountants, directors, guides, tour leaders. They grew up with the financial support of AA to give them the education and now they run the company. And they in turn impact on hundreds of others.

In Nepal the Sherpa friends I have climbed with for twenty years, some of them on my six Everest expeditions, are successful people now and their villages completely turned around because of Adventure Alternative."

The business model is alternative and successful

"Through a clear salary structure and fair employment contracts, it has enabled individuals to earn disposable income and achieve social mobility.

Through career development investment and training it has promoted self-esteem and success through a natural social entrepreneurialism and ambition.

Because of an ethic of slow organic growth, timescales measured in decades, no loans or debts, equitable partnerships and agreements, it has been profitable and successful for everyone in the company, directly employed and indirectly engaged. The long-term return is assured, because clients choose a brand with integrity and a strong 'story' that is embedded in the product.

Every link in my supply chain becomes part of the 'AA' business model. People have access to capacity building advice and significant financial investment. It encourages the stakeholders to take an active role in developing the tourism product. The AA brand has become synonymous with non-exploitative, non-discriminatory egalitarian business relationships especially in Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal where there are now established AA companies.

The ripple effect has spread beyond my company; it has energised and encouraged and educated people to redefine their role in the tourism supply chain on a more equitable platform and ensured a fairer trickledown of money.

The most important aspects are giving people an equal 'voice' in the tourism which we promote and sell here in the UK, and then agreeing an investment package which enables the local company to operate without cash flow issues or problems with resources. This package can last many years with annual reviews where the package becomes more and more refined. The aim is to create a financially sustainable local business, based on standards of quality rather than the lowest common denominator (i.e. the cheapest price). Initially we would provide all the clientele, but the package might include all the salaries for all the staff and all the overheads irrespective of the number of clients for the first three years.

During this time we provide training and development and access to the IT and resources that we take for granted here. This would include long work visits to the UK to work alongside the UK staff and learn about marketing, social media, accounting, product development and environmentally responsible practises.

As each company progresses it becomes more and more self-reliant, more and more confident and more successful. It competes on an equal playing field, able to attract business as a ground agent based on standards like the BS8848 and the STEPS programme, and not deferring always to exploitative agreements."

Will others follow?

#### **Silver: Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Kenya**

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy has one of the highest wildlife densities in Kenya including endangered black and white rhinos, and the world's single largest population of Grevy's zebra, nestled at the base of Mt. Kenya, spanning three counties: Isiolo, Meru and Laikipia. More than 50,000 people have been positively affected by Lewa's community development work. Additionally, Lewa employs approximately 300 people, 85% of whom come from their neighbouring communities.

Lewa's community development spans a variety of activities including women's micro-credit, adult literacy classes, agricultural training, livestock grazing projects, and four clinics that serve 30,000 people who would otherwise have no access to basic healthcare like vaccinations, HIV/AIDS care, pre and post natal care, first aid, and parasite mitigation. In less than a decade the Lewa Education Programme (LEP) has expanded its outreach to more than 19 schools with more than 6,500 students enrolled. Lewa undertakes a different Community Water Development project every year. Community representatives are involved in the decision making process and the local populations take responsibility for their own water projects and usage after it's been built. Most importantly, all communities pay a small token amount for the facilities and their water use, giving them ownership and pride over this crucial and scarce resource.

Through springs conservation projects Lewa has helped protect sources of rivers that flow across to neighbouring communities. Some examples include Rugusu springs, Mkuu springs and Lewa springs which form the rivers that flow for over 60km and supply fifteen different communities. The projects directly serve over 7000 people through Lewa-built technologically sustainable facilities. Lewa also funded and facilitated the building of community gravity fed water systems that are now fully owned by the communities. These eight water projects deliver clean and safe water to over 25,000 people around the conservancy in three counties Meru, Laikipia & Isiolo.

Lewa's conservation and community development work has an annual budget of over \$3m year. Tourism accounts for almost 30% of that budget and the rest is covered by foundation grants, as well as generous private donors. Lewa is a classic example of the way in which a major wildlife tourism initiative can fund with its own resources, and charitable donations from guests and foundations, can bring community development.

Mdumbi Backpackers demonstrates what can be achieved by a well-run community tourism initiative reliant almost entirely upon its own earned resources and the culture and enterprise of the local community.

#### **Silver: Mdumbi Backpackers<sup>67</sup> South Africa**

Mdumbi Backpackers offers simple & spacious accommodation - set in traditional style Xhosa huts and camping pitches and a café on the Wild Coast of South Africa, it attracts 2,500 guests per year. Now in the Eastern Cape it was formally in the Transkei, the cultural homeland and natural habitat of the Xhosa speaking or Pondo people. Mdumbi Backpackers was founded in 2002 by Hyman van Zyl and Johann Stadler on old church grounds in Mankosi Community overlooking the Mdumbi Beach. The local church board approved that they could use the existing facilities to start a tourism business. There were limited facilities and the founders invested their own capital to build up and improve the backpackers. They pay the local church board rent and maintain the existing facilities. The founders

“...see the tourism potential of the area as belonging to the local poor communities living there and their mandate is to stimulate local ownership of this potential. This approach is based on their choice to contribute towards creating a more equal world where knowledge and resources are shared fairly towards sustainable livelihoods that is possible for everyone and that can go on for ever..... , [From the beginning ] the owners have been on the same paying scale as their staff. They all agreed to keep wages on the minimum wage according to the tourism industry as to enable as high employment rate as possible offering as many job opportunities to local poor people. The owners offered 5 local staff members 30% shares and all shareholders agreed to give 10% of profits to the local representing community body and 9% to the local NPO called TransCape”

They have created nine permanent and five temporary jobs paid at the national minimum tourism wage, tourism enterprise opportunities for nine people and four family enterprises, sales opportunities for local fisherman, crafts people and cultural entertainers and community benefits of R45,000 plus medical transport and a water supply for 2000 people.

TransCape<sup>68</sup> is an initiative of Mdumbi Backpackers established in 2004 to help the communities of the Nyandeni sub-district to tackle their significant health, social, educational and economic needs. Mdumbi Backpackers have supported the local community enabling them to take ownership of their tourism potential: the African Pot, Tata Spargs Place and Mankosi Village Based Accommodation developed through this approach.

The judges were impressed by the vision and dedication of Mdumbi Backpackers

<sup>67</sup> [www.mdumbi.co.za](http://www.mdumbi.co.za)

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.transcape.org>

to use tourism to uplift the community to spread the benefits as widely as possible encouraging the development of sustainable local enterprises and capturing as much of the local tourism spend as possible for the local community, a really strong example of using tourism to make better places for people to live in.

## Best for Wildlife Conservation

### Gold: Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours,<sup>69</sup> Melbourne, Australia

Echidna Walkabout was established in 1993 to provide “interactive, informative, respectful experiences in nature”.

“We believe that people protect what they know, and what they love. So we set out to create a style of tourism that not only minimizes negative effects on the environment, but positively creates a sense of wonder, an understanding, a power to change for the better.”

Echidna are committed to reaching both eco-travellers and mainstream tourists recognising that only by changing the attitudes of large numbers of people can save our wildlife, they guide 6,000 visitors a year. Using the nature experience, a time when visitor attitudes are open to new ideas, their guides help to create connections between tourists and the koalas without any touching or disturbance. Over the last 16 years Echidna Walkabout have taken over 19,000 photographs of 98 individual koalas in three populations, and have found that every nose marking is different allowing researchers, and tourists, to identify individuals from afar without touching or handling and with a 93% accuracy rate in the field. For 16 years they have been reporting annually on wild koala behaviour, social relationships, home range size and tree usage. In October 2014 Janine Duffy presented a paper “As plain as the nose on their face: Efficacy of nostril pigment patterns in identifying individual koalas” at the Pathways Conference: Integrating Human Dimensions into Fish and Wildlife.<sup>70</sup>

“Echidna Walkabout’s Wild Koala Research Project “the best citizen science project in Australia”: The project has monitored the lives of 98 individual koalas to date, providing land and wildlife managers with critical, useful and current data on the needs of koalas in the subject parks. Trained citizen scientist researchers are employed an average of 280 days per year, accruing 1,000 to 1,300 koalas sightings annually. Each koala is identified, photographed, GPS and map location noted, time taken, their sex noted, tree usage, height in tree. Their behaviour is assigned to an agreed code, and special note is made of feeding, grooming, climbing, vocalisations and interaction with other koalas or other species. Deceased or disappeared koalas and babies born are noted. This provides a wealth of data on this threatened species. Of particular interest is the rate of koala population decline in the 12th, 13th and 14th year of drought (30% decline in the 14th year) and subsequent (slow) rate of increase after the drought broke in 2012.

<sup>69</sup> [www.echidnawalkabout.com.au/](http://www.echidnawalkabout.com.au/)

<sup>70</sup> <http://programme.exordo.com/pathways2014/delegates/presentation/3/>

Research is the foundation of conservation. Through our koala research we discovered that koalas are rarely found in areas heavily infested with the introduced weed Boneseed. We assessed this infested habitat, and in every way it is similar to the habitat used by koalas – same species of eucalypts, same level of tree canopy, same slope, same orientation. The only difference was the weed. Boneseed is known to negatively affect Australian wildlife, and to encourage feral/introduced animals. So we decided to try removing the weed. Boneseed is easy to remove by hand, but there is a lot of it, and there is 20 years worth of seed lying dormant in the ground. In theory, if we clear 5 hectares of infested habitat it should make it suitable for one additional koala to live. Clearing – or even thinning – the weed should increase the koala carrying capacity of the You Yangs Park. Better still, it should do it quickly – within a year or two. So this method of habitat creation could be better in the short term than tree planting, that takes 20 years for trees to mature.”

Echidna Walkabout's Nature Tours are priced reasonably and are made widely available through traditional travel agents, online booking agencies, Cruise Ship shore excursions and conference organisers – they guide 6,000 people a year. They recognise that it is important to reach both the converted eco-traveller and the mainstream traveller because it is only through changing the attitudes of large numbers of people that wildlife can be saved.

“This small business also invests around \$40,000 every year in koala research and conservation – a huge proportion of our profit. We do that because we will judge our impact in 10 and 20 years: if there are still wild koalas that can be seen by our tours in the forests near Melbourne in 20 years time, we will have succeeded. Experts predict they will be extinct in the wild by then, but we will fight to ensure that does not come true.”

#### **Silver: Chambal Safari<sup>71</sup> Uttar Pradesh, India**

Established in 1999 to help promote sustainable development in the Chambal Valley, the Lodge is set in 35 acres of reclaimed woodland and accommodates 1500 guests a year. As a consequence of the planting of thousands of indigenous species of plants over the last 15 years there are now over 195 species of birds, mammals and reptiles resident in the woodland and grounds. They do not solicit donations from guests or other organisations believing that guests contribute by visiting and that the onus is upon them to utilise those funds to protect the local environment and benefit the local community. By creating awareness of alternative livelihood options through eco-tourism, by employing local and procuring local goods & services and by fostering a sense of ownership and pride amongst the local communities, both illegal sand-mining and poaching have been substantially reduced. Various eco-development projects have been sanctioned for the benefit of the local population, including a handmade recycled paper project, rainwater-harvesting projects, and heritage conservation projects at the Bateshwar temples. There has also been a reduction in youth migration to the cities.

<sup>71</sup> [www.chambalsafari.com](http://www.chambalsafari.com)

"It is very encouraging to see young people training to be language guides, applying for licenses to operate boats on the sanctuary and consider options for homestays in and around the sanctuary.... A group of young people have joined together and applied for a license for 2014-15 to operate boats for tourism at one of these access points."

A detailed scientific listing of all the birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies and trees sighted in the Chambal Valley has been compiled with the assistance of both amateur birders and ornithologists of international repute over a period of several years of extensive research and is extensively revised and updated each year. Every year in October, a Wildlife Conservation Week is organised to create awareness and generate interest amongst school children. Close to 20,000 children from Agra, and from rural schools near the Sanctuary, participate in these events, which include talks, essay and quiz competitions, and visits to protected areas near Agra, including the National Chambal Sanctuary.

#### **Silver: On Track Safaris<sup>72</sup> UK and South Africa**

On Track Safaris was formed in 2007 by wildlife conservationists Will and Carol Fox to specialise in small group wildlife conservation safaris in support of wildlife conservation, they host around 100 clients a year. They had two aims: to provide a different safari experience that caters for the discerning traveller who wants to do more than just view animals; and to help support non-profit wildlife conservation projects.

They created and fund the INGWE Leopard Research programme<sup>73</sup> to gather data to model leopard behaviour and numbers. They provide support and teaching assistance to local rural schools to enable children who otherwise may have grown up without a knowledge of, and often a dislike of wild animals, to learn more about wildlife and conservation. On Track Safaris take schoolchildren to their home reserve and elsewhere to see wild animals and their environment and encourage them to engage, for example by owning their own camera trap as part of the On Track Safaris research program, on several occasions this has apparently led children to change their parents' behaviour.

Their second area of community education has been to engage with livestock owners or ranchers to deal with the issues around human conflict with predators. They reach out to the landowners whose response to livestock losses was previously to reach for a rifle or bottle of poison, through a complex and sustained PR program that takes into account all the historic and cultural issues they work alongside the livestock owners to not only show them the value of leopards but the need to preserve them.

72 [www.ontracksafaris.co.uk](http://www.ontracksafaris.co.uk)

73 [www.ingweleopard.org](http://www.ingweleopard.org)

## Best Short Film

### **Gold: Communities Powered by Travel: John Day River Territory,<sup>74</sup> Oregon**

The judges were looking for a consumer facing film that conveyed the qualities of the place and the people and which would inspire travellers to visit. We reviewed some excellent campaigning videos but settled on the John Day River Territory film because it explains beautifully what the place is about and what the visitor's experience will be. The values of the community, and why tourism is important to them, are powerfully conveyed in this short film which respectfully conveys the culture, homeland, heritage, and people of the place and provides a unique and authentic experience for the visitor.

### **Silver: Basecamp Foundation: Pioneering Sustainable Tourism in Kenya's Maasai Mara, GLP Films<sup>75</sup>**

Focuses on the work of the Basecamp Foundation and what tourism has meant for the Maasai, children and men and women. The film addresses gender empowerment and the wildlife impact of the work of the Foundation.

### **Silver: WWF: The Guardians,<sup>76</sup> Namibia**

This is the story of Jantjie Rhyn a farmer from a Namibian communal conservancy, his experience of the management by conservationists of wildlife- human conflict and the importance of tourism revenues to conservation.

## Overall Winners

Both Campo and Parque de Sonhos and South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance (SAASA) demonstrate a broad approach to Responsible Tourism and both have campaigned for change in the industry and in government policy.

SAASA have been advocates for change through their communications with visitors demonstrating that there is a better way to appreciate wildlife, lobbied government to regulate, managed their environmental impacts, employed and purchased locally to maximise their local economic development impact and sent us their HR Policy and Procedure Manual. Campo and Parque de Sonhos has demonstrated that by making a resort and its activities more accessible for people with disabilities everyone's experience is enhanced, 6,000 trees have been planted by visitors and 150 permanent local jobs have been created. Both Campo and Parque de Sonhos and SAASA take a very broad approach to responsibility demonstrating what successful businesses can achieve across the triple bottom line, using tourism to make their part of the world a better place to live in and to visit.

The judges wanted to recognise two very different category winners Campo and Parque de Sonhos and South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance for the overall award. The Sanctuary Alliance for demonstrating that animal attractions can liberate previously

<sup>74</sup> <http://vimeo.com/81694322>

<sup>75</sup> <http://glpfilms.com/films/basecamp-foundation/>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9LZXIAdpig>

captive wildlife and, without petting or exploitation, be commercially successful. Parque de Sonhos for demonstrating that truly inclusive tourism can enhance the adventure activity experiences for everyone and enable families and friends to share their leisure and the experiences. Both winners demonstrate that it is possible to address the rights agenda, to swim against the tide, and to be commercially successful.

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*If you are reading this and thinking that you know of other, or better, potential winners of the Awards please nominate them next year<sup>77</sup>, only those which are nominated and do the paper work, can be winners.*

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<sup>77</sup> [www.responsibletravel.com/awards/](http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/) Awards normally open in April each year

# Child Protection in the Travel & Tourism Industry

*Dr Harold Goodwin, Professor of Responsible Tourism at Manchester Metropolitan University and Advisor on Responsible Tourism to World Travel Market*

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At World Travel Market (WTM) in London in November 2014 there was a panel discussion on Child Protection. Through WTM's Responsible Tourism programme, Child Protection has been discussed since 2011 when Michael Horton<sup>78</sup> of ConCERT<sup>79</sup> in Cambodia raised the issue of tourism's role in fuelling the orphanage industry in Siem Reap. Horton argued that by bringing travellers and tourists to Siem Reap, the industry has inadvertently played a significant role in creating demand for orphanages from visitors and volunteers who want to make a difference. The unscrupulous have fed on that noble motivation. Orphanage owners have seized the opportunity and children have become an asset, with 'orphan' children being used to secure payments from tourists who want to make a difference. 72% of the children in Cambodian orphanages are reported not to be orphans. Tourists have unwittingly encouraged child trafficking, resulting in children being removed from their parents and being subject to abuse, not least from paedophiles.

As Michael Horton pointed out back in 2011:

"Emotions run high when visitors are faced with children living in difficult conditions. Holiday packages that include visits to, and voluntary work in, orphanages have a wide appeal, from gap-year teenagers to middle-aged professionals who wish to do good during their holidays, and the numbers continue to grow."<sup>80</sup>

UNICEF had expressed concern that orphanages in Cambodia had become so lucrative that the "demand" from tourists and volunteers had created supply and that tourism was unwittingly financing the creation of orphanages, populated by children who were not in fact orphans.

ConCERT had found that many centres were being run primarily as a means of providing an income for the founders and that some centres get 100% of their funding from tourists. Consequently children are often coerced/forced into fundraising activities – giving out flyers at night in the street, dancing for tourists, working for the owners in some other way – and children are deliberately kept looking dirty, scruffy, and malnourished to elicit maximum sympathy, and donations, from tourists. When extremely vulnerable children are brought from distant provinces, breaking links with their families, and children are used to make money for "orphanage" owners, their

78 <http://www.concertcambodia.org/who%20we%20are.html>

79 <http://www.concertcambodia.org/>

80 Horton M (2011) Presentation at WTM WRTD - 9th November 2011 unpublished

movement amounts to internal human trafficking.

Michael Horton's contribution to WTM in 2011 set the tone for our approach to the issue of child protection. The travel and tourism sector provides facilities which can be used by paedophiles seeking to abuse children, encouraging or facilitating visits by tourists to orphanages can create opportunities for paedophilia - the industry is used by the abusers, the industry unintentionally facilitates abusers to travel to destinations where they are able to abuse children.

Orphanage tourism and 'voluntourism' are different. By organising volunteering opportunities in orphanages and creating or encouraging visits to orphanages, the industry fuels demand for orphans to populate orphanages and thus to create successful tourist attractions. Orphanage tourism results in children being trafficked, removed from their families to become unnatural orphans.

As Michael argued in his original presentation in 2011, the child protection issues which arise from tourism are largely unintended consequences. It is important that the industry does not worsen the lot of vulnerable children, unintentionally.

The tragedy is that tourism has a great potential to bring real benefits to its local communities, including of course the children in them. The goodwill from travellers and within the industry is considerable, and the support they together can bring is increasingly important as the current international economic situation has resulted in traditional donors cutting back on their programmes. .... It is extremely distressing for those of us active on the ground and aware of the problems to see people's time, money, and good intentions often making the situation worse.<sup>81</sup>

Orphanage tourism is a particular challenge, not only in Cambodia and Nepal, but there is well-documented evidence for the scale of the problem in these two countries. In Cambodia, less than a quarter of children in orphanages are actual orphans. The New York Times in June 2014 published on Scam Orphanages in Cambodia. A government study conducted five years ago found that 77 percent of children living in Cambodia's orphanages had at least one parent.

The empathy of foreigners — who not only deliver contributions, but also sometimes open their own institutions — helped create a glut of orphanages, according to aid workers, and the government says they now house more than 11,000 children. Although some of the orphanages are clean and well-managed, many are decrepit and, according to the United Nations, leave children susceptible to sexual abuse.

"The number of orphans has been going down and the number of orphanages going up," said Sarah Chhin, who helps run an organization that encourages orphanage children who have families to return home. "We are forever having people say, 'I've come to Cambodia because I want to open an orphanage.' "<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Horton M (2011) Presentation at WTM WRTD - 9th November 2011 unpublished

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/world/asia/cambodian-activists-fall-exposes-broad-deception.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/world/asia/cambodian-activists-fall-exposes-broad-deception.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar&_r=1)

In 2012 UNICEF published on Residential Care in Cambodia. The number of children in residential care has increased sharply from 6,254 to 11,945 between 2005 and 2010. Cambodian government policy is that “institutional care should be a last resort and a temporary solution, and that the primary role in protecting and caring for children lies with their family.” UNICEF reported that

“Some residential care facilities exploit the problem of poverty by actively recruiting children in poor families by convincing, coercing or even paying parents to give their children away. Through this kind of recruiting, many parents believe their children would be better off in care, unaware of the risks involved for children in terms of abuse, sexual and labour exploitation and even trafficking.”<sup>83</sup>

UNICEF’s advice is blunt and unequivocal

- Overseas donors, including tourists, should refrain from visiting and donating to residential care facilities.
- Overseas visitors should be encouraged to volunteer or donate to programmes that support and promote family and community-based care, reintegration of children into family and community-based care, and provision of social services to vulnerable children and their families within a community setting and which prevent family separation.”<sup>84</sup>

Next Generation Nepal<sup>85</sup> was founded in 2006 and works to reconnect trafficked children with their families. They have linked over 400 trafficked children to their home communities in post-conflict Nepal through a careful process of reconnection and reunification. In Nepal there are 800 registered orphanages holding 15,000 children, two thirds of whom are NOT orphans. 90% of orphanages are in 5 districts, those which are visited most by tourists – there are 75 districts in Nepal, 90% of the orphanages are in just 5 of them. Demand for visits to, and volunteering in, orphanages creates supply.<sup>86</sup>

ChildSafe International<sup>87</sup> has been running campaigns encouraging tourists to think before giving money to begging children<sup>88</sup>, a child safe programme<sup>89</sup> encouraging and enabling tourism industry personnel, taxi/moto-drivers, travellers and foreign residents, the personnel of internet cafés and others to recognise when children are at risk and to intervene to protect the child. “Children are put at risk of abuse because communities either facilitate or turn a blind eye to situations and circumstances of abuse.”<sup>90</sup> Friends

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF (2012) Residential Care in Cambodia UNICEF Cambodia – available on-line [http://www.unicef.org/cambodia/Fact\\_sheet\\_-residential\\_care\\_Cambodia.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/cambodia/Fact_sheet_-residential_care_Cambodia.pdf) p.1

<sup>84</sup> Ibid p.4

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.nextgenerationnepal.org>

<sup>86</sup> Punaks M & Feit K (2014) **The Paradox of Orphanage Volunteering** Next Generation Nepal available on-line <http://www.nextgenerationnepal.org/File/The-Paradox-of-Orphanage-Volunteering.pdf> p.13.

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.childsafe-international.org/>

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.childsafe-international.org/Campaigns.asp>

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.childsafe-international.org/aboutCS.asp>

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.childsafe-international.org/aboutCS.asp> accessed 18/01/2015

International and the Child Safe Network have run a hard-hitting campaign: "Children are Not Tourist Attractions"<sup>91</sup> something still too often forgotten in the industry.



Michael Horton challenged the industry in 2011 to address these unintended consequences of misguided and poorly managed engagement between tourists and vulnerable children in orphanages. We have since had panellists discussing the issues of child labour, the sexual exploitation of children, the safety of young people travelling abroad on a gap year, and the issues of child abuse and neglect which arise in outbound families.<sup>92</sup> We have discussed child protection on panels at WTM Latin America and WTM Africa and this year's debate is about whether the tourism sector could and should do more to protect children.

In 2011 the UK's National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) published a report describing sexual abuse of children as a public health challenge.<sup>93</sup> They called for "sexual abuse prevention through the collaborative implementation and promotion of a public health approach." arguing that "The impacts and consequences of child sexual abuse are profound and far reaching, it is a public health problem which requires a co-ordinated, concerted and sustained response if it is going to be effectively addressed."<sup>94</sup>

It has been clear in the travel and tourism sector that although many companies have signed The Code ("The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism"<sup>95</sup>), there is still a major challenge for the travel and

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbeforevisiting/>

<sup>92</sup> The 2012 panel was videoed [www.wtmlondon.com/library/WRTD-Tourism-and-Child-Protection-2012](http://www.wtmlondon.com/library/WRTD-Tourism-and-Child-Protection-2012), in 2013 there were two interview wall videos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lk5FkYNMKu0> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z90t3u9dS8s>

<sup>93</sup> Lead T et al (2011) Sexual Abuse a Public Health Challenge NSPCC - available on line <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/sexual-abuse--public-health-challenge-evidence-review.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p.48 & 49

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.thecode.org>

tourism industry in addressing the sexual exploitation of children, of moving beyond the adoption of a policy to effective engagement with the issue. ECPAT International has announced a global study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children. They argue that

"Offenders are increasingly adept at using the travel and tourism industries as a route to child exploitation and new developments have heightened the dangers for children: the rise of the Internet and greater access to international travel have expanded 'demand.' At the same time, social and economic disparities, poverty and lack of education – combined with weak child protection systems – have fuelled the 'supply' of children."

Responses are hampered by a failure of collective action, meagre resources and a chronic lack of robust evidence and comparable data that, taken together, allow offenders to commit their crimes in the shadows, and often with impunity. The Task-force aims to pull this crime from the shadows into the light, guiding an authoritative global study on its scale and nature, assessing what works and advocating for the necessary changes. It aims to re-assess current approaches that are failing to protect children, and to ensure that governments are held accountable when they fail to act. One prime example has been the case of Ian Bower, convicted for sexual offences against children in the UK in 2004, who was able to flee bail to Cambodia in 2006 and abuse children for another eight years before being captured.<sup>96</sup>

But the challenge for the industry is much broader than paedophilia and sexual exploitation. The challenge of child protection is broad, ranging across neglect, abuse, trafficking and exploitation through child labour, begging and sexual exploitation. So at WTM in London on November 5<sup>th</sup> 2014, World Responsible Tourism Day, we brought together a diverse group, from within the industry and others professionally engaged in child protection, to discuss what the industry could and should do to address the issue of child protection. The panel included Elise Allart, Manager Sustainable Tourism TUI Benelux; Bill Bell, Head of Child Protection Save the Children; Márcio Favilla L. de Paula, Executive Director for Competitiveness, External Relations and Partnerships at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); Willem Niemeijer, Founder & CEO of Khiri Travel Bangkok; Bharti Patel, CEO of ECPAT UK; Amanda Read, UK Border Agency & Home Office; Peter Watt, National Services Director, NSPCC.

The panel discussion was videoed and that is the record of the discussion and of who said what.<sup>97</sup> There were 80+ people at the panel discussion.

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.ecpat.net/news/announcement-global-study-and-its-taskforce-end-sexual-exploitation-children-travel-and-tourism> accessed 07 January 2015

<sup>97</sup> The video of the panel is available on line <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utPzDCq0O5g>

## Background to the panel ‘debate’

Child abuse is worldwide and the effort which has been made since 1996<sup>98</sup> to raise awareness of the child sexual abuse issue has resulted in over 1,200 signatories in 50+ countries<sup>99</sup> We sought to avoid focusing only on the sexual exploitation of children – there is a wide range of child protection issues which arise in tourism: child abuse and neglect in families holidaying abroad together; the safety of children and young people abroad; child labour; begging; ‘unnatural’ orphans<sup>100</sup>, as well as sexual exploitation of children.

We had some concern when planning the panel and discussion that we may appear to be suggesting that the problems which arise in child protection in tourism arise primarily in the developing world, child protection is a global issue. In fact most of the initial discussion during the panel was about the situation in the UK and Europe and the originating or source market issues. The NSPCC has research data on abuse which reveals that abuse is often known only to the victim and the perpetrator. Of those physically hurt by a parent or guardian, in over 1 in 5 cases (22.9%) nobody but the child and perpetrator knew about it. Of those who experienced contact sexual abuse by an adult, in over 1 in 3 cases (34%) nobody else knew. They found that 5.9% of under 11’s and 18.6% of 11–17’s in the UK had experienced severe physical maltreatment, severe maltreatment by a parent or guardian, or contact sexual abuse.<sup>101</sup>

It is difficult to identify perpetrators:

“Child sexual abuse is committed by men, women, teenagers, and other children. There isn’t one ‘type’ of person. Offenders come from all parts of society, and all backgrounds.

Contrary to the popular image, abusers usually seem quite normal to other people. In many cases friends, relatives and co-workers find it hard to believe that someone they know has abused a child.

But it’s more likely for a child to be sexually abused by someone they know, like a relative, a peer, a family friend or a person in a position of trust, rather than a stranger.

Because so much abuse goes undisclosed and unreported, the majority of perpetrators in our communities aren’t known to the authorities.”<sup>102</sup>

98 <http://www.thecode.org/about/history/>

99 <http://www.thecode.org/about/>

100 Unnatural orphans are “created” when children are trafficked, purchased or recruited to live away from their natural family.

101 Radford L et al (2014) Child abuse and neglect in the UK today NSPCC. p11, 9 available on line <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/child-abuse-neglect-uk-today-research-report.pdf>

102 [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/what-is-csa/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/what-is-csa/) accessed 20150124

### **Box 1 What research tells us about adult sex offenders**

The majority of child sexual abuse is committed by male abusers, according to NSPCC research (Radford et al, 2011) and criminal statistics. Other research suggests women could be responsible for up to 5% of sexual offences committed against children (Bunting, 2005). Abuse by females is almost certainly under-reported, and research into female offenders has been hindered by the belief that women don't behave this way towards children (Ford, 2006).

Children contacting ChildLine tell us that girls are much more likely to be sexually abused by a male abuser (Mariathasan, 2009).

Boys are less likely to be sexually abused (Radford, 2011) but they are equally likely to be abused by men and women (Mariathasan, 2009).

Source, [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/what-is-csa/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/what-is-csa/) accessed 2015.01.24

### **Notes of the Discussion at WTM**

This note on work in progress presents the main points made in the discussion and suggests an agenda for the industry, one which may be pursued at WTM shows over the next few years. The session in November 2014 at WTM London addressed the issues of Child Protection in general. We took a welfare approach, asking what more the industry can do to protect children. Bharti Patel of the ECPAT UK argued that there is also a rights issue at the heart of the child protection agenda.<sup>103</sup> Children's Rights and Business Principles form part of the UN Global Compact and it is clear that they are of increasing importance.<sup>104</sup> Whilst we do not dissent from that view, and clearly the industry does lobby governments, our focus in the Responsible Tourism session is on what the industry can do, alone or with others, rather than on campaigning to get others to act.

Since UNWTO published on the Protection of Children in Tourism in 1997 and established the Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism its mandate had broadened to preventing all forms of youth exploitation in the tourism sector (sexual exploitation, child labour and child trafficking).<sup>105</sup>

The development of the Code by ECPAT International with the support of UNWTO has helped raise awareness, and reduced levels of denial of the issue, it was widely agreed by the panel that there is still lots to do. Collaboration and partnerships between business, NGO, governments and inter-governmental organisations in campaigning for recognition of the issue means that there is less flat denial, the response "that does not

103 Available at [https://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/betterlifeleaflet2012\\_press.pdf](https://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/betterlifeleaflet2012_press.pdf)

104 Developed by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children – the Children's Rights and Business Principles (the Principles) are the first comprehensive set of principles to guide companies on the full range of actions they can take in the workplace, marketplace and community to respect and support children's rights. Available on-line [https://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human\\_rights/childrens\\_principles.html](https://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/childrens_principles.html)

105 <http://ethics.unwto.org/content/world-tourism-network-child-protection>

happen in my country”, is heard less often. There is more recognition of the issue but the work is far from complete. In 2014 UNWTO published *15 Years of the UNWTO World Tourism Network on Child Protection: A Compilation of Good Practices*<sup>106</sup> which contains 16 examples of good practice.<sup>106</sup>

The need for child protection arises from a range of causes: neglect and poor care, physical abuse, emotional deprivation, sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking across international boundaries and within countries, and removal from the family when a child is recruited into an orphanage despite having living relatives. Child protection is required in all societies – it is not just a developed or developing world issue. There is therefore a wide range of issues which arise in many different societal contexts.

It is important to consider both intentional abuse and unintended consequences. A parent, guardian or older sibling leaving a child unsupervised by the pool, or incapacitated by drink whilst being responsible for a child, is unintentionally putting a child at risk. A holidaymaker taking an excursion to an orphanage or a tour operator selling an orphanage excursion and encouraging donations is creating demand for orphanage experiences which encourages the creation of unnatural orphans, “orphaned” but with living parents.

In the context of tourism there are some particular challenges and opportunities. There is a real and common risk of

- facilitating access to children in ways unacceptable in the originating market – access which puts children at risk.
- facilitating a flow of money from tourists and/or tour operators to orphanages creating a demand for orphans which results in child trafficking and the creation of unnatural orphans – tourism may unintentionally fuel orphanages through casual visits or volunteering. In orphanages there are issues of poor care, sexual and physical abuse and deprivation of family relationships. Separation of children from their families is “not at all a good thing”.
- child labour which arises in the industry both directly in ‘employment’ of family members in the provision of accommodation and food & beverage and less directly in craft and souvenir production.
- encouraging begging and the child abuse associated with it – ranging from tempting children to skip school to physical harm to increase the value of child as a beggar.<sup>107</sup>

The prevalence and scale of these forms of child abuse and the degree to which they are associated with the industry is difficult to determine or even to estimate, given that many of these activities are criminalised. There is therefore a lack of official data.

106 <http://ethics.unwto.org/content/protection-children-tourism>

107 See for example “Gang profits from maimed child beggars” <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2011/05/04/gang-profits-from-maimed-child-beggars/> accessed 2013/01/24 Putting “increasing the value of child beggars” into Google will reveal many examples.

At Heathrow, Border Agency staff stop about 500 children a month who are travelling alone or without their parents. In 20% of those cases further action is taken with a referral to social services or police intervention.

There are three principles at the heart to of child protection:

- 1 Do not harm - good intentions are not enough, it is important to think carefully about unintended consequences. The orphanages issue is an example of this.
- 2 Think child safeguarding - think of the child and not just of the customer. It is important to look at places and situations from the perspective of the child. Children form attachments quite quickly with people who are kind to them – a volunteer or air steward, for example – and may not be very discerning about authority figures. Trust is often quickly built, trust which may be deliberately or unthinkingly abused. When a volunteer leaves, the child suffers from a sense of rejection – the air steward, who the child trusts, may have enough of a relationship from a brief encounter to begin grooming.
- 3 Constant vigilance and management is essential if attractions and facilities are to be child safe - just signing up to a code is not enough.

Recently in the UK we have seen errors which have been made, children ignored or disbelieved when they made complaints, authority figures determining that children were making lifestyle choices and denying their responsibility to intervene. For effective child protection:

- 1 the world has to be seen from the perspective of the child;
- 2 policy and procedures are not enough - there has to be a culture which not only does not tolerate inaction but also demands action;
- 3 children have to be listened to and believed;
- 4 people need to know what to do - they need to be enabled to take responsibility and to act effectively. They need to know who to contact and how and the culture needs to support them in taking action when they are concerned.

There is some evidence that people feel that they don't have enough information about what to look out for and what to do if they have suspicions about child abuse, through dedicated local phone numbers or within the business. People generally want to be proactive and to contribute towards ensuring that children are not at risk. Begging and selling souvenirs often involves missing school and can be the first step into sexual exploitation. Businesses in destinations and incoming tour operators can contribute a lot by discouraging holidaymakers and travellers from giving to beggars and encouraging them to go to the right shops and restaurants, the ones where, if there is child labour, the children are attending school and the labour is not excessive.

The experience of TUI in the Netherlands extends from signing The Code in 2002, through action on the supply-side in NE Brazil with vocational training and job-seeking skills for vulnerable young people, to working on the demand side. TUI worked with

the border police on a national campaign to raise awareness amongst travellers so that they could be the eyes and ears of child protection – travellers and holidaymakers can be part of the solution if or when they see something suspicious. To enable travellers and holidaymakers to take appropriate action, they need the right information: what number to call, what is required for a useful report that can be actioned. There were 27 reports and 5 good leads in 2014, 3 Dutch and 2 international.

In businesses where staff had taken effective action against trafficking and/or paedophilia, there was some discussion about why the businesses sought to maintain secrecy about the issue and the staff's actions. It appears that the tendency is still to protect the business rather than to protect the children. It was argued that this is changing and that keeping an incident secret begins quickly to look like a cover-up and that this carries increasing reputational risk: covering-up may cause more damage to a company's reputation than being transparent.

Orphanages raise a number of child protection issues:

- Estimates of the number of children in orphanages with living parents range as high as 80 to 90%. Orphanages are not the right place for children to be. Parents are tempted to let their children go by offers of money which enable them to feed the other children or assurances that the child will receive a good education. The child would be better in the family with charitable support towards keeping the children in their families.
- Orphanages create opportunities for abuse. Many orphanages are run as businesses and the children are neglected or physically abused within them. There is also a significant risk of children in orphanages being sexually abused by staff or volunteers – the orphanage may have been established for these abusive purposes.
- Volunteers working in orphanages allow and/or encourage children to form attachments with them. The child is needy and craves attention, and the volunteer enjoys being needed. When the volunteer leaves, the child feels a real loss of attachment, and it hurts. Children can be quite damaged by this experience, an experience which may be serial. Volunteering in orphanages should be “completely discouraged”.

On the surface everything may look wonderful – behind the scenes the picture may be very different, with the pain of separation, squalor, violence and abuse.

Child abuse in families travelling outbound is also an issue. Given the prevalence of neglect and physical and sexual abuse of children in the UK and other originating or source markets, it is to be expected that the abuse will travel with the families. It is also likely to be more visible when families are together for long periods of time, unbroken by school and work. There may be more likelihood of abuse being visible when families are on holiday as they let their guard down and perhaps consume more alcohol than usual.

It was argued that airlines could do more to raise awareness through inflight magazines and films; that travel writers and journalists should not ignore these issues; that travellers and holidaymakers, employees and employers should not turn a blind eye to suspicious activity and behaviour. Airports could provide more information and raise awareness of what to do when suspicions are aroused.

The statutory sector alone cannot tackle child abuse and achieve child protection; we all have to do more to act as the eyes and ears of the professionals and to report. Destinations need to do more but they need to be supported by the industry, by their staff and contractors, and by travellers. The scale of the problem is under-estimated and no one wants to talk about it, but if we turn a blind eye and don't talk about the issues of child abuse and child protection, some would argue that we are in fact colluding with the abusers through our silence and inaction. It is important to avoid becoming fatalistic about an issue where the individual and the industry can and should make a difference.

The Border Force in the UK has a single unique intervention point, but the officer has seconds to observe behaviour and make a decision about whether or not they need to ask questions and how hard they need to probe. On the inbound flight the crew have a much longer period to observe the behaviour as do holidaymakers and travellers.

Take responsibility "don't turn a blind eye to child abuse."

# The impacts of orphanage tourism in Cambodia: residential care centre perspectives

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## Abstract:

This article analyses on the phenomenon of orphanage tourism/ childcare tourism in Cambodia and its social and economic impacts by interviewing the managers directors or volunteer coordinators of nine residential care facilities and to develop recommendations and guidelines for the residential care centres and volunteer organisations to improve the volunteering practice in the future. Impacts of orphanage tourism are perceived by the respondents as mainly positive and rarely negative- residential care is considered more positive than the children's abusive family situations. All centres say the positive impacts are due to strict recruitment, induction, rules and regulations concerning volunteers and tourists. The negative impacts are perceived to mainly be caused by cooperation with volunteer sending agencies which have an overall negative reputation throughout the literature and secondary data. The respondents distance themselves from the overly negative description of orphanage tourism in literature and media. Thus the research provides interesting insights in the perception of impacts of orphanage tourism through the eyes of the host. Furthermore it provides recommendations for host organisations, volunteer sending organisations and governments to improve their practices and policies about orphanage tourism.

**Keywords:** Orphanage Tourism, Volunteer Tourism, Cambodia.

## Introduction

The growing popularity of international volunteering has led to the trend of orphanage tourism, whereby people take time to volunteer at or visit an orphanage while visiting a foreign country. The literature on volunteer tourism is growing but mainly focuses on the volunteer and to a lesser extent on the host communities, and the literature on orphanage tourism is limited. Hanna Tabea Voelkl conducted an unpublished qualitative case study in Ghana that focused specifically on the experiences of orphanage children with international volunteer tourists and Richter and Norman published the study "AIDS orphan tourism: A threat to young children in residential care". Jane Reas also conducted an unpublished sociological research about the commodification and objectification of the orphaned child in Cambodia. Furthermore, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence about the positive and negative impacts on host organizations, but

very little empirical research has been published. Many blogs, newspapers and journalists have pointed out the potential negative impacts and tour operators are bringing forward possible positive impacts.

This paper unravels some of the tensions between the vocational and financial aspects of care from the currently unreported perspective of the managers of the care centres. It analyses social and economic, negative and positive impacts of orphanage tourism in Cambodia by interviewing the managers, directors or volunteer coordinators of nine residential care facilities and to develop recommendations and guidelines for the residential care centres and volunteer organisations. Orphanages in Cambodia are supposed to be long term residential centres that provide all basic developmental needs for children who have lost one or both biological parents . Yet Save The Children Alliance shows many countries in which 80% of the children in residential care have parents, which is also the case in Cambodia according to UNICEF . Cambodia has an estimated 553,000 single and double orphans, accounting for 8.8 % of all children. In comparison, the child population in residential care facilities remains relatively small at 11,945 (2.2%) and the majority of children in residential care are not double orphans, but children with parents. These centres also admit a variety of children at risk and children in need of special protection, but are often unable to provide specialised services. 2009 statistics counted 269 orphanages in Cambodia , growing fast and increasingly replacing non-residential alternative care options .

International research demonstrates that institutionalisation of children impacts negatively on social, physical, intellectual and emotional child development and that non-institutional care is recognised as providing children with a range of benefits compared to other forms of residential care . Globally, there is a growing consensus on the need to promote family-based alternatives to institutional care for children. Furthermore, much of the care in these centres is done by international volunteers. The literature and media point out a manifold of issues arising with orphanage tourism. It is believed to negatively impact the children and the community and add existing problems or create an environment where children are kept in vulnerable and dangerous situations . However the literature on volunteer tourism also points out several positive impacts on host organizations: alleviation of poverty , enhancing career opportunities by training locals , improving the local economy and establishing cross cultural understanding .

## Orphanage Tourism

'Orphanage tourism', a form of volunteer tourism characterized by short-term travel to residential care facilities to engage in every day caregiving or for a short leisure visit, sells an emotional connection with needy young children . Tourists in Cambodia also attend dance performances or events in which orphans perform . In the literature, the issues arising from orphanage tourism are manifold. Although examples in other countries exist, the literature mainly focuses on Cambodia.

There is a high rise in number of orphanages globally, with evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa , Nepal Indonesia and Ghana . The growth in Cambodia is 75% since 2005 counting only facilities registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, so actual numbers could be much higher. Some believe there is a link between the 250% rise in tourism during the same period as the rise in residential care facilities . Most orphanages are supported by overseas donors and tourists who are unaware of community based and family care alternatives and the potential risks of putting children in orphanages . Also contributing to this increase is the support residential care receives by local government, who often suggests to families to put their children into care in the absence of alternative support mechanisms. Now, there are 269 orphanages in the country and only 21 are state run. Cambodia, torn apart by civil war in the 1970s, and again in the 1990s, has become a hotspot for volunteer tourism and orphanage tourism. Residential care facilities are increasingly replacing traditional forms of non-residential care, like family and community care .

The orphanage is a tourist attraction. According to UNICEF private overseas donors are the main funders of residential care in Cambodia and have little awareness of alternatives to residential care. Sebastien Marot, Director of NGO Friends International and the Child Safe network in Cambodia, acknowledges most tourists going to orphanages are acting out of pure motives when they visit and donate money . There is little doubt that some Cambodian orphanages have been set up to make money from foreign tourists and there are cases of children being asked to perform for, or befriend donors and sometimes to actively solicit the funds to guarantee the residential centres' survival . Jane Reas argues the poorness and orphaned state of Cambodia's children is being turned into a marketable commodity, in part, by an equally massive industry that is volunteer tourism. "Labourers in many of the components of the orphanage tourist industry transform the poverty and neediness of the orphaned child into 'an amazing experience'; 'a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity'; 'the most fun you'll ever have''. She quotes Halnon "the tourist is estranged from what really lies behind the commodity: the haunting humanity of the poor and fearful reality of poverty".

Cambodian orphans have parents. The situation outlined in the introduction also happens in Cambodia: parents are giving away their children to orphanages in hope of a better future and a good education . Over 70% of the 'orphans' in Cambodia have at least one living parent . These residential care centres are technically not orphanages and these children are not orphans, but in Cambodia for example the terms 'orphanages' and 'orphans' are widespread . Yet many tourists are unaware that the majority of children in residential care in Cambodia are not double orphans and 49.3 % of tourists believed the main reason children were in orphanages was because they did not have parents.

Residential care has negative impacts on vulnerable children. Studies found that young children in residential care had significantly higher rates of Reactive Attachment Disorder that can either make the child withdrawn (inhibited type) or indiscriminately

social (disinhibited type) . Young children in institutions were more likely to have cognitive delays, poorer physical growth and competence. According to Save The Children, children under three, in particular, are at risk of permanent developmental damage as a result of the lack of family-based care. A meta-analysis of 42 studies conducted in 19 countries found significant differences between the IQ of institutional children and children raised in family settings. It also found that children placed younger at the institution had worse outcomes than those who were older or placed at an older age. Other studies confirm that orphans face inferior educational outcomes than non-orphans.

Tourism itself also has negative impacts on residential care centers. Very young children are programmed to build attachments and undergo repeated abandonments: first the young children's parents may die or leave them, then they go to live in an orphanage where you often have high staff turnover and finally the tourists come and go as sort of the third wave of this abandonment. Institutionalized children tend to manifest the same indiscriminate affection towards volunteers and volunteers are often encouraged to make intimate connections with the children. After a few days or weeks, this attachment is broken when the volunteer leaves and a new attachment forms when the next volunteer arrives. Although there is little empirical evidence on children's reactions to very short-term, repeat attachments over time, evidence from children in temporary or unstable foster care indicates that repeated disruptions in attachment are extremely disturbing for children. Constant abandonment causes low self-esteem, and lack of self-worth created by hugging and playing with volunteers and visitors . One study concludes that children in orphanages are spoiled but poor: they receive a lot of material presents and have constant entertainment through the continuous flow of volunteers but the volunteers make very little impact in terms of sustainable improvement of the children's living situation or their intellectual development . Possible gaps in the children's education due to the lack of consistency in teaching, accents and different approaches to teaching . The use of care institutions continues to rise, with evidence from central and eastern Europe, the former Soviet, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and many more despite recognition of the harm it can cause, due to the persistent use of institutional care within the formal child protection system, while other increases are due to the rise of unregulated and unlicensed institutions.

This is aggravated by the lack of skills on orphanage management as the vast majority of people running the orphanages in Cambodia have little or no skills and experience in operating residential childcare institutions . Visitors who have undergone no background checks can walk into dozens of Cambodia's orphanages and be left alone with children, even removing children from the centre for a trip or a lunch . Staff and volunteers do not always undergo background checks before working at the orphanage . Orphanages are financially unviable as a long-term solution, costing far more per child than alternative, community-based care- a recent study in sub-Saharan Africa showed that institutional care can cost up to six times as much as alternative child care mechanisms . Yet Cambodian residential care centres generate funds that cannot be accounted

for or provide profit . Many donors would rather donate to orphanages, where they can see an actual child, build an emotional 'relationship', and feel that they know exactly where their donation is going. Better, more appropriate community based alternatives that are more child focused, rather than donor focused, are often overlooked.

Yet alternative options to orphanages exist . Several successful models of family and community-based care have already been developed. Not all care institutions are harmful to children, and small group homes, in particular, can sometimes play an important role in meeting the needs of certain groups of children. However institutional care in general is rarely provided appropriately, to a high enough standard and in the best interests of the individual child. Also, the problem is not being tackled due to lack of political will to invest in and promote family-based and community care and misconceptions of donors and humanitarian organizations, unaware of the potential harm on institutional care.

## **Methodology**

The technique of data triangulation was applied in this research, involving in depth-semi-structured interviews and literature and media review. The in-depth interview was chosen with the intention to reveal the interviewees ideas, opinions and expressions and to reach the research's aims and objectives. The focal point of the sample structure was the orphanage type. The respondents are managers at orphanages that follow national, international laws and guidelines on childcare and child protection. A criterion sample was used and The Child Safe guidelines on Orphanage Tourism and United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children were used as criteria to select orphanages out of the population of 269 registered orphanages. The criteria are that the orphanage:

- Is legally registered and monitored.
- Has a child protection policy
- Mustn't allow visitors to drop in and have access to the children without supervision.
- Mustn't require children to work to secure funds for the orphanage.
- Must have an active family reunification program.
- Must try and keep siblings together in a family unit.
- Is ideally set up as a family-like or small group setting.
- Is ideally located in the same community as the child previously lived.
- Has long-term, trained, and well supervised staff.
- Respects and accommodates each child's religious beliefs.

A purposive sample of 9 orphanages was chosen. The orphanages were recruited by announcement on popular online media forums and by e-mail and through the researcher's network, who lived in Cambodia for several years. Over a 3 week period a series of 9 semi-structured in-depth interviews amongst Western and Cambodian orphanage managers, directors or volunteer coordinators were conducted in Cambodia.

Distortions such as the 'interviewer effect' were minimized and 'researcher bias' was carefully avoided by being objective, formulating the questions clearly, following the interview guide and noting the answers exactly the way the respondents formulate them. The primary data from the interviews was then transformed into an analyzable form. For more detail, please see the extended report.

## Results

Only one Cambodian participant, and 8 foreigners, participated in the study. The respondents either run or owned the orphanage, all had good intentions, philanthropic ideas and little education or background in child care except two respondents. According to all the respondents, their centres are a last resort for children from abusive, very poor or parentless families. Two of the orphanages care for children with HIV or affected by HIV, who are often rejected by Cambodian society or their parents.

"When we first started the kids and their families basically lived on the garbage dump, that's why we started housing the kids"

The lack of knowledge about family reintegration or family based care among all interviewees was notable, except for one respondent with an academic background in social work. She believed most children could be reintegrated within their families and has started a family reintegration programme. Furthermore two other orphanages mentioned efforts towards integrating children back into their families.

## The role of volunteers

Confirming the literature, according to the orphanages, the volunteers' main motivations are experiencing another culture, working with children and gaining a sense of self-worth. The research also reveals the interest of people affected with HIV to volunteer with children who are equally affected by the illness. Volunteers stay in the orphanages for an average of 6 weeks and are mostly employed as English teaching assistants or creative workshop teachers. One orphanage lets the volunteers teach the staff instead of teaching the children directly. Child care responsibilities are given to volunteers by one orphanage only: to dress the children, give them medicines and bring them to the hospital. This contrasts the more typical experience of volunteers as caregivers. In contrast, orphanage tourism in this research is not "the engagement in every day caregiving for needy orphans". Volunteers and visitors in the centres mainly take on the role of teacher, social worker, creative workshop teacher, manual or administrative labourer.

## Impacts of orphanage tourism

Categorising the impacts of orphanage tourism, we started off by looking at the impacts of the first type of orphanage tourists: the volunteers, on the organisation of the orphanage. The findings demonstrate that the respondents mainly perceive volunteers

as an asset and positive experiences with volunteers are dominant.

It first emerged that working with volunteers is work intensive: volunteers require time, training and supervision. This is not strictly perceived as a negative impact because volunteers are worth the effort according to the respondents: The workload mainly consists out of recruitment of volunteers. Certain authors gave the example of orphanages where people walk off the street to volunteer without any requirements or interviews. All respondents except one strongly deny such practices, have strict regulations and do not allow visitors to walk freely in the centre. The orphanages have requirements for the applicants to pass in order to be selected. The general idea among these orphanages seemed to be: the stricter the screening, the better the volunteers. Child protection policies in all centres are lengthy and need to be respected.

"Because of the strict screening process, we mostly attract good volunteers".

A smaller part of the workload consists of the volunteer induction, led by centre managers/ directors or volunteer coordinators. Three of the orphanages also have volunteer coordinators to guide and supervise them; other inductions are led by orphanage staff. None of the orphanages provide training for the volunteers, after the induction they usually start the work or settle in their room. The orphanages do not agree with Carey saying if one views labour as the sole objective, the costs of having volunteers outweighs the benefits. According to them, the benefits outweigh the costs and resources.

The categorisation of voluntourists by Callanan and Thomas applies to the respondents' ideas about volunteers. They classified volunteer tourists as 'shallow', 'intermediate' or 'deep'. This classification was based on the required skills or qualifications, the duration of the trip, passive or active involvement of the volunteers, their level of contribution to local communities, and the altruistic or self-interested focus of the experience. It is clear here that these orphanages aim to attract the "deep" volunteers, that are most actively involved, want to contribute to the community and have a more altruistic than self-interested focus and want to avoid the 'shallow' volunteers. They do this by investing time and resources in recruitment. The orphanages want to attract the 'volunteer-minded' and avoid the 'vacation-minded'. Yet there is still the perception of some volunteer's negative behavior occasionally negatively disrupting the daily operations of the orphanage. This behaviour ranges from disobeying the rules and unacceptable behavior, judgmental attitude to immaturity and controlling behavior.

A second impact pointed out by the respondents was the small financial benefit contributed by the volunteers. Most orphanages have donors, sponsors and financial grants. According to them the volunteers contribute little to their budget and finances. This contrasts with the literature and media, where it is often said that orphanages want to attract volunteers for their money and donations. In fact only two orphanages charge a volunteer fee but they do not rely on these fees.

" Volunteers are just a small part of our finances, for example we earn 5 times more with selling chicken eggs than with volunteers".

Interestingly all orphanages stressed that volunteers often make promises about fund-raising at home but mostly don't act on it. However, the financial benefit may lie in the fact that orphanages save money by hiring volunteers instead of paid western staff. All orphanages agree: it would be hard to run the centre without volunteers. Volunteers are often qualified labourers the orphanages could not afford to pay a salary to. All orphanages point out that volunteers bring a unique set of skills and knowledge that is not available in Cambodia. Some volunteers are very artistic, tech savvy or great accountants, all skills that can be taught to either the children or the staff. They point out the poor standards of education, health care and social services in Cambodia and are happy to receive help from abroad. This, according to the orphanages, does not influence the labour demand of local staff implied in the literature . The local staff and the volunteers have different jobs and tasks. The volunteers perform jobs that local staff is not educated or skilled for. However volunteer tourism can foster dependency as free labour and skills of the volunteers, but less on the financial benefits.

All respondents found it challenging to cooperate with overseas volunteer sending agencies. Attitudes among the respondents towards overseas sending agencies were overall very negative. Many problems seem to arise with the cooperation of orphanages and overseas volunteer sending agencies. The main complaints were the insufficient screening of volunteers, inefficiently organized agencies and lack of preparation and information for the volunteers. The respondents found one of the benefits of current volunteers was to advertise for the orphanage and to attract other like-minded volunteers, bypassing agencies. Most orphanages receive little or no funds from the agencies and this seemed to be a point of frustration, mainly towards those agencies that don't provide good volunteers and communication. Generally all respondents were angry and even upset about the fact that overseas sending agencies frequently make a high profit. It emerged that the more volunteers apply through the website, the less the orphanages feel the need to work with volunteer placement agencies. Some orphanages even said they wished not to work with agencies, but did not have enough volunteers and needed the agencies.

"Those agencies that give the impression that volunteering is easy or a holiday aren't appreciated, we stopped working with them. I call on to the agencies to prepare the volunteers better".

"1 agency showed the kind of volunteer tourism on their website that is drinking cocktails, volunteering is easy and does not take much effort. So I refused to work with them any longer".

The literature and research findings about volunteer placement agencies largely collide. The literature reveals the criticism on overseas agencies being too profit driven, over-promising benefits, creating customer dissatisfaction and even harming destinations of

the sending agencies . The research suggests that the respondents are often unsatisfied with the recruitment of volunteers by the agencies and volunteers aren't trained or briefed on how to interact with children. The Cambodian volunteer agencies however had very good reviews. The three orphanages working with them were very pleased and content. The communication was easy and the partnerships pleasant, as the agencies are located in Cambodia and had a better understanding of the needs and culture of the place.

We now move on to discuss the impacts of volunteering on the children's education. All orphanages employ volunteers as teachers and according to them, the volunteers impacts on education are manifold and all positive. The children's English education seems to be very important to all orphanages except one, that stopped providing English classes because the children did not progress well due to volunteer turnover. The other orphanages that provide English classes claim to see great results, and see the turnover as a positive for example as children learn to adapt to different accents of the volunteers.

Some orphanages especially select volunteers on their creative skills. The volunteers teach creative workshops in the orphanage such as dance, music, art, theatre and yoga classes. The effect of these workshops is perceived as very important; respondents claim that the children can grow confident and learn a skill that could be valuable in later life. All orphanages, again except one, agree the interaction between the volunteers and the children increases the children's confidence more than other children as Cambodian households are traditionally very conservative and growing up with Westerners broadens the children's worldview. Respondents claim that getting used to talking to foreigners will help them in later life and future job applications.

"These kids speak a bit of French, Japanese, Danish and other languages. They learn all of that from the volunteers".

One orphanage however, argues there are better ways for children to acquire these life skills and the confidence is in fact a form of overconfidence and laziness:

"It might broaden the kids' worldview but there are other ways to do this. Over confidence can also turn against them. For example the older kids: they can't keep their jobs, they always quit, depend heavily on the centre and think money is easy to get there. True confidence is something very different."

Also, according to them, due to the influence of Westerners in the centres, the kids grow up too Westernized and alienated from their own culture:

"They grow up Western and don't understand their own culture. They get false expectations and it's hard to integrate into society. Also they get discriminated once leaving the centre: parents for example don't want their children to marry someone from an orphanage."

Another respondent partially agreed with this, but tried to teach the children how to deal with money, savings and work ethics. The literature refers to cross cultural understanding as a positive impact of volunteering . However, the respondents mainly refer to the impacts on the children, as they believe the children understood more about the world and different cultures by interaction with volunteers. Therefore, the findings of the research point more towards cultural influence of the volunteers on the children, than cross-cultural understanding.

Negative effects of cross cultural understanding include attempts to imitate tourist's consumption patterns and the rise of discontent when the desired items remain out of reach. This disappointment was mentioned by one respondent that often disagreed with the others, who believed that the exposure to volunteer lifestyles can only lead to unrealistic expectations. Another respondent pointed out that children can become overconfident and spoiled, confirming the literature , that claims that children stay poor despite the entertainment and gifts, and that volunteers have a low positive impact on the children's living situation or their intellectual development. Our respondents contrastingly feel that volunteers impact on the intellectual development of the children but do not mention improvements in the children living situation.

Volunteering also impacts on the children's psychological and emotional wellbeing. In all orphanages, except one, volunteers teach or interact with the children. The one orphanage where volunteer interaction with the children is not allowed believes, due to inconsistency and volunteer turnover, that volunteer teachers are harmful for the children. Contrarily, according to the other orphanages, the children can always depend on the permanent staff and the volunteer turnover has little effect. They even believe it is beneficial that the children get acquainted with different teaching styles, accents and creative skills. However, some orphanages are doubtful about the potential psychological impacts on the children. One respondent pointed out the lack of knowledge on the possible impacts on the children:

"We don't see the effects on the children yet, because they are too little. We don't have young adults here yet so we don't know."

According to our respondents it is strictly forbidden for the volunteers to "play the therapist" unless they are in fact a certified therapist. In all cases when children seem distressed they need to contact the staff or social worker. Strict rules about interaction with the children are in place and the relationship is one of teacher and students. Volunteers in all the orphanages are not encouraged to make intimate connections with the children, contrary to the literature that shows that children in residential care have significant higher rates of Reactive Attachment Disorder . The respondents mention several types of behaviour that point towards RAD mentioned, but interestingly do not find them alarming as they are not conscious about the possible link between the behaviour and the disorder, for example:

"Kids get distant and stop trying in class because they know the teacher is leaving anyway. Other kids get emotional when volunteers leave. They had a lot of abandonment in their own life".

"Sometimes there are discipline problems. They don't behave well because they know the teachers are leaving anyway".

Only at one orphanage, the researcher observed during the interview behaviour from the children that could point towards the RAD disorder. The researcher would be hugged and kissed by the children during the interview and when leaving the children told her to be very sad and even begged her not to leave. During all other interviews the children were hardly around and interviewer only met the interviewee. Finally some orphanages said the kids can also be influenced by the bad behaviour of volunteers:

"Getting upset and emotional in front of the kids. We try and tell them to hide their tears from the kids".

Although again they stressed bad behaviour of volunteers is rare.

Volunteering also has impacts on the staff. According to all respondents, the English speaking skills of the local staff improved through interaction with volunteers. They also learned about the world through interaction with volunteers. However, only one orphanage employs the volunteers to work on capacity building with the local staff. The researcher always had to ask explicitly about the impacts on the staff and it always took time for the interviewee to come up with an answer.

In addition we need to consider the impacts on the community. Orphanages located in rural areas with no shops, restaurants or guesthouses said the positive impacts on the local community were low. According to the other orphanages, located near small shops and restaurants, the surrounding businesses definitely gain benefits from the visitors and volunteers. The economic benefits for the community are pointed out .

### **Summary of negative and positive impacts of volunteering**

Negative impacts	Positive Impacts
Increase of workload for management	Contribution of small financial benefit
Challenging cooperation with overseas volunteer placement agencies	Cheap skilled labourers
Negative behaviour can disrupt daily operations	Free advertisement for the orphanage
Can possibly cause or worsen psychological traumas of the children	Improvement of children's English education
Negative behaviour can negatively impact the children's well-being.	Enhances children's creativity through creative workshops
	Enhances children's life skills
	Improvement of staff's English education and life skills

## Visitors' impacts

The next part of the research focused on the impacts of the second type of orphanage tourists: the visitors: Again we looked at the different categories of impacts starting with the impacts on the organisation of the centre. The orphanages all agree the visitor impacts on the organisation are mainly financial. Visitors bring in money and often raise funds, which is worth the time and effort to guide them around the property.

"Visitors are becoming more critical; they need to see where the money goes and if it's well spent. It gives them a good feeling to have a look."

It is notable that according to the respondents, visitors contribute more financially than volunteers. However, one orphanage adds that visitors, who are in this case the children's sponsors, can often be disruptive.

"Visitors can be very demanding. They see their sponsor child as their own; they want to take them out for dinner and so on. They get emotional and unhappy if we don't allow them to shower the child with gifts."

It is important that, except one, all orphanages obligate visitors to make an appointment before visiting the orphanage to clarify their intention to visit the centre. This rule seems to be in place so the visitors do not disrupt the day to day operations and the staff is prepared to receive them. All orphanages have visiting hours, rules and regulations that need to be respected. There are no checks on visitors but they are guided around and never allowed to walk around alone or visit children's private living areas. One orphanage does not allow visitors, as they believe it would be too disruptive for the work and children. Another one has set up a visitor's centre, where visitors are welcomed and get to see photos and information about the project. Here, the visitors are not allowed to visit the property or interact with the children.

"With a visitor centre we want to show visitors how it can be done. There's no interaction with the children but you still have a good visit."

The second category of impacts was on the psychological and emotional wellbeing of the children. The literature suggests that often visitors cannot walk in to the orphanages freely. The respondents claim otherwise, that always get a guided tour and interacting with the children is restricted to a minimum, however through further querying it is evident that three orphanages however let visitors join the volunteer activities for the children. The orphanages that work with child sponsors did point out the negative impacts on the children, as jealousy can arise among the children and sponsors can be demanding. Other behaviours that could indicate psychological traumas were mentioned by one orphanage:

"Some kids run up to visitors, they like to practice their English or get attention."

Respondents claim that most visitors easily follow the rules and understand why they are in place, and perceive no negative impacts on the children, due to strict regulations.

There were no more impacts revealed due to the little interaction of the visitors with the children. So to summarise the negative impacts of visitors in orphanages included being disruptive for the daily operations and the risk of causing or worsening the children's psychological traumas. The positive impact was the financial benefits.

After researching the impacts of orphanage tourism on the residential care centres, the respondents were asked about their opinions and ideas about orphanage tourism and the recent media articles.

The rise in orphanages in Cambodia since 2005 resulting from tourism may well exist according to our respondents, who see many people setting up orphanages to gain money from tourists, and claim to know many orphanages run as a business, but don't wish to associate themselves with such practices, saying we are not "those kinds of places". The Cambodian government has announced an inquiry into the country's orphanages after UNICEF voiced serious concerns about the rise in facilities, according to whom the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation have now developed a monitoring tool based on the Minimum Standards on Alternative Care for Children, used to monitor registered residential care centres across the country. The respondents applaud NGO campaigns and actions to close down exploitative and abusive residential care centres. Most respondents also claim openness towards education and information about family integration for the children, and understand the changing laws and regulations on alternative care. However, the respondents have encountered difficulties with the governments monitoring tool based on the Minimum Standards on Alternative Care for Children, and they encourage such tool but suggest it is not being used appropriately.

## **Conclusion**

Orphanage tourism is clearly different from conventional forms of tourism as it involves the combination of pleasure, work and children. The research provided background information on the phenomenon of orphanage tourism/ childcare tourism in Cambodia and its social and economic impacts through extensive literature research and secondary data. The research findings present the narrative of the orphanages and compare their opinions and ideas with the literature on the subject.

Impacts of orphanage tourism are perceived as mainly positive and rarely negative. The positive impacts are on the children's education, life skills, confidence, staff skills, the local economy and the centres' finances. Impacts of residential care are also a better option than the children's abusive family situations according to the respondents. It is important to mention that one orphanage responded more critically than the others and they in fact find the impacts of orphanage tourism on residential care centres mainly negative. All centres say the positive impacts are due to strict recruitment, induction, rules and regulations. Interestingly, according to the respondents, negative impacts were mainly caused by cooperation with volunteer placement agencies which have an overall

negative reputation throughout the literature and secondary data. However, it was revealed that most respondents had a lack of knowledge concerning negative impacts of orphanage tourism. They risk not acknowledging the signs of negative impacts on the children's wellbeing, for example RAD. However the orphanages claimed to be generally willing to learn about childcare, specifically family reintegration and improve their practices. They were open for government monitoring and applaud efforts to reduce exploitation in residential care.

The orphanages overall depend on volunteers for cheap skilled labour and on visitors for financial benefits. It was apparent that the literature and host organisations barely mention the impacts of orphanage tourism on their staff and only one of the orphanages employs the volunteers to build staff capacity. It was clear that the respondents and the literature largely contrast in depicting the practice of orphanage tourism. The respondents distance themselves from the overly negative description of orphanage tourism in literature and media and acknowledge the existence of "those exploitative orphanages" but do not associate with them.

The impacts of orphanage tourism on the children in orphanages needs further detailed investigation, especially by psychologists and social workers. The research revealed that the majority of the orphanages were unaware and unskilled to determine the emotional and psychological impacts of orphanage tourism on children. Furthermore the impacts of orphanage tourism on staff and the possibilities for capacity building should be further researched. Is there in fact a categorization of orphanages and are there different types of "good" and "bad" orphanages? The impacts of orphanage tourism on orphanages can be researched on a wider scale and in different countries, to expand the academic research on the topic and give a broader view on the subject. There is clearly a need for further research which investigates the long-term effects of voluntourists on the orphans and research with orphanages that are not considered best practice. Finally the possibilities for alternative care in developing countries should be further investigated to determine if residential care is in fact the solution or the centres should shift towards a family re integration approach.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendations for residential care centres to improve their volunteer and visitor management:**

It is important for the residential care centres to further develop the appropriate tools to determine the commitment and intent of the volunteers and visitors, to minimize negative impacts of orphanage tourism. It is also important to determine the possible negative impacts of orphanage tourism on the children's well-being by cooperating with therapists and social workers and measure the extent to which volunteers contribute to sustainable development. Furthermore it is suggested to address the government about their concerns with the execution of the governments monitoring and evaluations. The orphanages can also communicate their concerns to the volunteer placement agencies

and even use the research findings to address the deteriorating reputation and relationship with the sending agencies. Finally the residential care centres should consider the potential benefits of capacity building and staff training by volunteers rather than just educating the children. There is also a need for better training for orphanage staff to recognise and manage the psychological impacts of voluntourism on the children in their care. Capacity building is an important tool towards poverty alleviation, which is an aim of orphanage tourism.

#### **Recommendations for volunteer placement agencies:**

Volunteer placement agencies play an important role in ensuring the positive impacts of orphanage tourism and minimising the negative. This study points out a large percentage of the agencies are not fulfilling this role. It is important for the sending agencies to develop positive relationships with the host organisations, focus on the needs of the organisations and assess the merits of each project to determine the impact of orphanage tourism. They should develop clear lines of communication and recognise their responsibility towards host communities. These companies need to review their practices and try to align more closely with developmental issues in order to truly 'make a difference'.

#### **Recommendations for government**

The monitoring tool could be a valuable instrument to eliminate abusive and exploitative residential care centres. Therefore it needs to be re-evaluated and the opinions and a clear tool of communication between the orphanages and the government should be developed. Finally there's a need for educational materials about family reintegration and alternative care.

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# Wise Growth in English Tourism: Four Case Studies

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In 2011 and UK's Coalition government launched its new tourism policy which had a section on financial sustainability<sup>108</sup> and one mention of sustainability, "so we can grow tourism responsibly and to look after our natural assets"<sup>109</sup>, was identified as an area of opportunity for best practice.<sup>110</sup> Prior to the publication of the policy VisitEngland had undertaken a major consultation exercise with stakeholders to develop a vision and strategic framework for tourism in England. This vision is "to maximise tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life in England."<sup>111</sup> VisitEngland's strategic framework placed considerably more emphasis on sustainability than did the government's policy.

VisitEngland articulated four objectives on behalf of English tourism:

- 1 To increase England's share of global visitor markets.
- 2 To offer visitors compelling destinations of distinction.
- 3 To champion a successful, thriving tourism industry.
- 4 To facilitate greater engagement between the visitor and the experience.

There were also a series of Action Plans one of which was for Wise Growth. VisitEngland recognised that tourism "brings positive economic benefits but with the potential for negative social and environmental impacts."

"A 'wise growth' approach will help balance the growth aspirations of this Framework with the principles of sustainability, in terms of protecting the environment and cultural heritage, natural and manmade, that makes England so attractive and ensuring long-term economic success.

By embedding 'wise growth' principles across the industry and by advocating the approach to non-tourism decision makers, local communities and economies will have a greater opportunity to thrive. Key benefits would include an improved visitor experience, enhanced productivity, comprehensive support from residents and politicians and a better managed destinations for all stakeholders."<sup>112</sup>

Jason Freezer worked with colleagues in VisitEngland, destination management and the industry to develop a Wise Growth Action Plan in which Wise Growth was defined:

108 4.2.4 Ensuring Financial Sustainability

109 This enabled the Department of Culture Media and Sport, which has responsibility for tourism, to link its tourism policy to the Natural Environment White Paper

110 p.25

111 p.10

112 p.16

## What is Wise Growth?

This Action Plan uses the term Wise Growth rather than sustainable tourism in order to link and balance the growth aspirations of the Strategic Framework with the principles of sustainability in tourism. These principles are drawn from a range of globally recognised definitions and characterise Wise Growth in tourism as:

- Inclusive: visitor experiences are fun, inspirational, safe, open and accessible to all with no discrimination based on gender, race or disability.
- Engaging: involving local residents in tourism development through working relationships, consultation and cooperation.
- Well-being: tourism activities strengthen and sustain the quality of life of the communities in which they take place by improving access to local resources and amenities for residents.
- Caring: the cultural heritage of places, the authenticity and distinctiveness is protected or enhanced through preserving traditions and local culture for both residents and visitors.
- Distinctive: the quality of the urban, coastal and rural environment is maintained or enhanced without physical or visual degradation.
- Fun and appealing: capitalise on the enjoyment of England's natural and built environments, habitats and wildlife but ensure these are not damaged in the process.
- Viable: champion local businesses that operate successfully and responsibly over the long-term. Create and strengthen the number and quality of local jobs supported by tourism activities, including salary, conditions and availability. Ensure local residents benefit from the tourism activity they host, especially by maximising visitor spending retained in the local economy.
- Efficient: visitors and businesses use scarce and non-renewable resources wisely; visitors and businesses seek to minimise pollution, especially from transport, and reduce waste from all tourism activity.

Source Wise Growth Action Plan <sup>113</sup>

Part of the Action Plan was to: "Develop dynamic case studies of destinations to show how the adoption of Wise Growth principles can result in positive change and the meeting of strategic objectives."<sup>114</sup>

<sup>113</sup> pp1-2

<sup>114</sup> p.5

The result was four case studies undertaken collaboratively with destination managers and key stakeholders in four English destinations in 2012-13. They were intended to support the Wise Growth Action Plans by contributing to a greater understanding of how the principles of Wise Growth can be adopted by, and implemented in, destinations. The case studies were intended to be dynamic and they have each been read and commented on in their drafting by a wide range of stakeholders, where differences of view persist they have been reported. The two objectives were to

- 1 determine to what extent Wise Growth principles have been adopted by a range of destinations: a cosmopolitan city (Manchester), a rural county with a historic city at its heart (Durham), a rural District with a protected area (New Forest) and a seaside resort (Newquay).
- 2 develop suggested activities for pilot destinations to enable Wise Growth to be further embedded and reported upon in the future.

These case studies are based on a limited number of interviews with key stakeholders, published and unpublished documents and the comments and corrections received on drafts circulated to stakeholders. Where quotation marks are used, these unattributed quotes come from interviews with key informants, all the interviews were conducted on the understanding that anonymity was assured. A final version of each case study was seen and amended by the DMO prior to publication.

The case studies do not report all that is being done in the destinations concerned to enhance sustainability or responsible tourism – the focus is on the identifiable contribution of the destination management organisation. With the cuts in government funding, which followed the election of the Coalition in May 2010, many Destination Management Organisations lost funding and some were abolished or operated with significantly reduced functions. The four case studies selected here were chosen to be to some degree representative of the range of forms of organisation taking responsibility of Destination Management and where it was anticipated that good examples of Wise Growth practices would be apparent.

Each of the case studies warrants reflection and in each case we collected key findings which might be transferable to other areas and reflections on what might have been done differently. These were the result of lengthy discussion between the case study author, Visit England and the DMO managers concerned.

The four DMOs were all primarily marketing rather than management organisations; management is primarily a local government or national park function. Good partnership and relationships with stakeholders came through as a key theme, with the DMO playing a strategic leadership role. The DMO role was often seen as to look for partnerships and new funding opportunities, to fund the maintenance of the organisation and destination promotion and marketing activity; and identifying visitor economy issues, to be the voice of the visitor, and to provide marketing and promotion expertise. It

was difficult to find examples of sustainability initiatives where DMOs had engaged as leaders, they saw their role as developing and articulating an holistic approach to the management of the tourism and visitor economy primarily through marketing but also by influencing those who manage the destination in planning, waste disposal, leisure, recreation and parks departments. The balance between promotion and marketing, a fundamental distinction not always made in practice, varies from one DMO to another and overtime. It was through marketing, informing decision making amongst those responsible for the practical destination management, that these DMOs were able to encourage sustainable practices.

## **Manchester: Visit Manchester**

### **Key findings: Key learning points transferable to other areas.**

- Manchester has extremely strong public sector leadership and commitment to the importance of the visitor economy to Manchester's sustainable economic growth and prosperity that is reflected in Visit Manchester's annual Association of Greater Manchester Authorities core funding settlement. This was agreed in April 2012 for a 3 year term which is the first time this has happened.
- Good partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders are vital, particularly through periods of change. Relationship management is a huge part of senior roles at Marketing/Visit Manchester.
- Strategic leadership and holistic stakeholder management of the visitor economy on behalf of the destination can only come from the DMO. A management approach that focuses on balancing the needs of members and the destination with an economically sustainable organisation is vital for DMO's to survive and needs to be led from the top of the organisation. The CEO at Marketing Manchester takes a very close interest in income generation and drives this agenda. Marketing Manchester is fortunate to have a track record of strong private sector relationships and funding partners which has helped cushion the blow of losing significant RDA funding.
- Take advantage of new opportunities. You need to be constantly alert to the possibility of new partnerships, projects and the joint funding opportunities that they could bring.
- As the DMO you have skills and expertise in marketing and identifying visitor economy issues that have value and traction with local government and private businesses. You are probably best placed to provide the strategic lead for the visitor economy and be the "voice" of the visitor in your area, helping to identify how tourism contributes to the destination, its people and wider (non-tourism) stakeholders. Play this to its full advantage when establishing new partnerships and looking for new opportunities.

- There are a plethora of sustainability initiatives in Manchester and the Greater Manchester region which are documented in various strategic documents reviewed here. Manchester City Council has been particularly pro-active on climate change and sustainability but there have been many initiatives across the region. The DMO needs to be clear where and how it can add value to these initiatives. Changing governance structures have “led to improvements in the merging of sustainability strategic frameworks and a clearer way forward for how and where the tourist board should interface with these.”

### **What might, on reflection and with the benefit of hindsight, have been done differently?**

- The Manchester Visitor Economy Forum was only established in 2011 replacing a previous Visit Manchester management board. Establishing a more senior level forum earlier with a clearer remit for managing and developing the Destination Management Plan would have been beneficial.
- Operating at a strategic as well as a tactical level earlier would have been beneficial. There was initially a concentration on business support initiatives such as promoting the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) and supporting SMEC (a sustainable events initiative led by the City Council) rather than ensuring the visitor economy was included in strategic plans around climate change and low carbon initiatives. This is now being addressed through the refresh of ‘Manchester-A Certain Future’ and the alignment of this document with the Greater Manchester Climate Change Strategy and the new Greater Manchester Tourism Strategy 2014 -2020.”

### **Structure and Governance**

Marketing Manchester (founded 1996) is the agency charged with promoting the city region on a national and international stage. It aims to develop Greater Manchester into a leading leisure, learning and business destination for domestic and international visitors, to enhance the national and international reputation of the city region and promote sustainable economic development and growth. Visit Manchester, the official tourist board for the city region was created in 2008 as a division of Marketing Manchester.

Marketing/Visit Manchester has always worked in partnership with all the ten Greater Manchester Local Authorities and receives annual core funding via AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities). The ten authorities of Greater Manchester are Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. Significant core funding was also received between 2004 and 2011 from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).

## Strategic context

In 2008, the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) was undertaken, this was the largest study of Manchester's economic future ever conducted, which led, the following year, to the development of the Greater Manchester Strategy, which set a blueprint for economic development through to 2020. This strategy was a direct response to the 2009 budget which gave Manchester the opportunity to become a pilot statutory city region. One of the priority areas in the strategy is 'Sense of Place' which is about improving the quality of life for residents and the quality of experience for both residents and visitors across all the urban and rural areas of Greater Manchester. This is underpinned by a programme of branding, marketing and communications to promote the city region and change external perceptions.

'A Tourism Strategy for Greater Manchester 2008-13' identifies the tourism challenge as being "to create a City that delivers a better quality of life for the three million people who live or work there." The strategy is based on the premise that: "If we build a destination that is fit for us, the people of Greater Manchester, then we will create a future City that will attract people from all over the world.."

The tourism strategy was drafted by Visit Manchester in collaboration with partners across the City Region and the wider Northwest. Considerable emphasis is placed across the Manchester City Region<sup>115</sup> on creating "a City to be proud of". The strategy carries the strap line "We are each of us tourists in the original modern city" and the strategy is based on the aspiration to create a City with a strong identity and sense of place. The strategy argues that if,

"our quality of life is improved, if our physical environment is transformed and if we are inspired by all that surrounds us in the form of culture, entertainment, food and services then we will have a City to be proud of and one that attracts the great minds and great businesses as well as a new, global tourism market."

The Tourism strategy has five objectives;

- 1 create globally recognised and iconic events, developments, initiatives and opportunities<sup>116</sup>
- 2 ensure a better quality of life for the communities of Greater Manchester<sup>117</sup> and the wider City Region
- 3 make the practices of the City Region's tourism sector a key plank of delivering against the Original Modern brand vision

<sup>115</sup> A wider definition taking in the additional drive to work areas such as Glossop and Macclesfield.

<sup>116</sup> These include the Manchester International Festival, Manchester Pride, the Lowry, the Imperial War Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester Art Gallery, the People's History Museum, Media City, the National Museum of Football, the Commonwealth Games venues, the Manchester Central conference centre,

<sup>117</sup> Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan  
(Association of Greater Manchester Authorities)

- 4 tackle the tough issues like wider community benefits through tourism; accessibility and diversity; a more inclusive night-time economy
- 5 embark on a ‘blue skies’ strand of long range thinking that explores issues such as technological change, demographic shifts and environmental sustainability

The tourism strategy is described as a “wholly-owned subsidiary” of the Original Modern vision for Manchester.

“Original Modern explains the essence of Manchester, two simple words that define what sets Manchester apart from our peers across the globe. Original Modern is what Manchester gives to the world.

It explains Manchester’s spirit, its indefatigable energy for progress and change, that ‘do something’ attitude, that desire to be different that always has and always will exist within the City. Original Modern is what runs through Manchester’s blood and it’s detectable in the best of what we do.”<sup>118</sup>

The ambition is to ensure that the attractions and tourism services in Manchester are “all striving to be original, and modern, in everything they do and seek to do.” The building of a better “Manchester ‘product’” and increasing business tourism in particular is seen as part of a broader strategy to attract inward investment<sup>119</sup>. In the interviews with key stakeholders the importance of the quality of the public realm for residents, workers and visitors was frequently emphasised as was the principle of social inclusion. Visit Manchester’s role in marketing was seen as central to delivering the original modern brand values in all their promotional and communications activity. Respondents noted, however, there could have been a greater connection between the sustainability initiatives of the local authority and what was promoted to visitors. One example cited was the public transport information on the Visit Manchester website.

## Structures

With the change of UK Government in 2010 and subsequent changes to national policy, including the abolition of regional structures, Greater Manchester structures have taken on greater significance. There have been a number of recent structural changes.

Marketing Manchester benefits from being central to the Manchester Family of agencies. Marketing Manchester, MIDAS and New Economy are three centres of excellence which work together alongside a fourth organisation, Manchester Solutions to develop economic growth through a strengthening of marketing, tourism, business growth, inward investment and research. Tourism is seen as a major contributor to the economic and social development of the City because it presents Manchester to the world; enables visitors to experience it; and attracts additional spend to the region contributing to

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.marketingmanchester.com/original-modern.aspx>

<sup>119</sup> A large number of sustainability issues came up during the interviews :transport and pedestrianisation, cleaner streets, taxi licensing and black cab operations, cathedral gardens, canals, more use of walkways, improvements in railway stations, improved shopping streets (particularly Cross St), free hopper bus, improvements in docks and Salford Quays, European café culture, cycling, Deansgate Locks.

economic growth and the diversity of services and attractions. Marketing Manchester is the centre of excellence for marketing, communications and tourism. This structure has recently been strengthened by the appointment of a Group CEO from early 2013.

In April 2011 the Association of Great Manchester Authorities (AGMA) became a Combined Authority (GMCA). The Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership (GM LEP), established in 2011, now plays a key role in shaping economic development activity and overseeing delivery of, amongst other things, employment and skills, business development, inward investment and international trade, the low carbon economy, planning, housing and transport and marketing and tourism.<sup>120</sup> The LEP supports the Combined Authority by monitoring the delivery of the Manchester Family Business Plan, including the delivery of visitor economy objectives and targets.

As part of the City deal, Greater Manchester is establishing a 'Low Carbon Hub' in order to drive the delivery of the Greater Manchester Climate Change strategy (published in 2011), designed to transform Greater Manchester to become a low carbon economy and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30-50% by 2020. There is a newly emerging environmental architecture at a GM level including a GM Low Carbon Hub Board, Energy Group, Local Nature partnership and Green Deal programme. In 2009 Manchester City Council had launched 'Manchester – A Certain Future', a plan for the City to address climate change. This plan is currently being refreshed to reflect recent changes and to better align activity between the City and the Greater Manchester city region.

## **The Tourism Vision**

Manchester's vision for tourism is driven through strong civic leadership. Manchester has benefited from a continuity of civic vision forged in the aftermath of the IRA bombing in June 1996. Up to 50,000 square metres of retail space and nearly 25,000 square metres of office space had to be reconstructed overseen by a City Centre Task Force. The process of bidding for two Olympics and successfully bidding for and delivering a hugely successful Commonwealth Games in 2002 also contributed to developing the product, enhancing sustainability and building cross-sector partnerships. Manchester is a city with a clear vision and shared purpose.

The tourism vision for the future of Manchester is for residents and visitors alike, it "is all about our own quality of life as well as new visitors...". The strategy recognises that success requires that "the cultural, tourism and arts sectors work ... hand-in-hand with planners, developers and major institutions in a genuine spirit of partnership." The strategy recognises the need for an "honest and robust dialogue" between those who understand the visitor economy and the "planners, the transport sector, local authorities and our city centre management organisations."

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120 <http://www.agma.gov.uk/agma/newsletter-archive/agma-update-march-2011/index.html>

The strategy covers the ten local authority areas in Greater Manchester. The strategy vision is to improve “the quality of urban space, street trees, public art, an enthralling public realm” to “unlock the closest and most readily available market: ourselves.” The strategy asserts the contribution which increased use of the natural environment in Greater Manchester could make to improving health “a product that is so compulsive that you simply have to switch off the TV, put down the fried drumstick and get out and enjoy it.” The strategy also calls for a “sustained push to increase levels of accessibility and quality across the entire City Region” and for people to work together to extend length of stay by developing “more mini-dispersal” or themed promotions.”

The Greater Manchester Tourism strategy is underpinned by the sustainable development principles outlined in the now defunct NWDA regional tourism strategy. Economic, social and environmental sustainability is implicit rather than explicit in both the strategy and the DMP. Visit Manchester has done a lot of work to promote accessibility, quality, equality and diversity and relevant accreditations such as GTBS and MIA since 2004 with NWDA funding. Transport links in Greater Manchester have been a priority and the improvements in public transport have contributed significantly to the quality of people’s lives and to sustainability. Visit Manchester promotes the full range of transport options in the region but there is no particular emphasis on sustainable transport.<sup>121</sup>

## **Current Situation**

The Greater Manchester Destination Management Plan is overseen by the Manchester Visitor Economy Forum (MVEF) which was established in December 2011, chaired by Visit Manchester with senior representation from Greater Manchester’s visitor economy – conference centres, hotels, cultural organisations, sport, city centre management, the airport, transport and local authorities.<sup>122</sup> The Manchester Visitor Economy Forum (MVEF) is the principle stakeholder group overseeing destination management and visitor economy growth.

The Destination Management Plan is a partnership document which is co-ordinated and written by Visit Manchester but which is now developed and monitored by MVEF. It specifies objectives and targets, reviews priorities and acts as a key tool for consultation and engagement. Many of the actions are led by Visit Manchester.

Visit Manchester has undertaken a range of activity since 2004 to support a sustainable destination.

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121 <http://www.visitmanchester.com/travel>

122 As at March 2013 “Angie Robinson, Chief Executive, Manchester Central, Mike Mellor, TfGM; Julia Fawcett, Chief Executive, The Lowry; Keith Davies, Director of Development and Regeneration, Bolton Council (AGMA); Mike Gibbons, Director of International Development, University of Manchester.; Paul Simpson, Managing Director, Visit Manchester; Sara Tomkins, Assistant Chief Executive, Manchester City Council; Stephen Miles, Chair, Manchester Hoteliers Association; Vaughan Allen, Chief Executive, CityCo; Gary McLarnan, Sparklestreet ; James Allen, Manchester Arena; Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth and Manchester City Art Galleries; Caroline McElenely, Manchester Utd; Jeff Howarth, Marketing Director, Manchester Airport.

- Business support activity e.g. profit through productivity, quality programmes, accessibility, skills activity, GTBS promotion<sup>123</sup> (Marketing Manchester have been Gold GTBS award holders since 2010) and MIA accreditation.
- Externally funded projects e.g. RDPE Tourism and Food Connect programmes (2009-11/12) which sought to improve the quality and sustainability of rural tourism accommodation businesses and to improve the profile and use of local food and drink. Other recent marketing projects funded by ERDF are Manchester's Countryside (2009-2012) and Modern History (2008-2011) which sought to improve the awareness of the rural and the industrial heritage offer and improve footfall to attractions.
- Following the publication of 'Manchester a Certain Future' in 2009 the Manchester Sustainable Event Charter (SMEC) was developed between the City Council, Marketing Manchester, Green Tourism and Positive Impact to drive change towards achieving sustainable event management in the city. Participation in BS8901 was encouraged. Manchester now have two of its key venues, Manchester Central and Old Trafford with the new ISO 20121 accreditation. Visit Manchester are supporting Positive Impact to encourage other venues and organisations in the event supply chain to become ISO 20121 accredited.
- Business Tourism is of particular importance to Manchester. Conferences and events were worth £822m in 2011. The business tourism team provide a conference research and bidding service, venue location and accommodation booking services. Manchester's bids contain a strong sustainability section that draw the organisers attention to sustainable transport options, the fact that Manchester is an official Fair Trade City, the strategic framework, 'Manchester A Certain Future', the SMEC partnership/ISO 20121 and GTBS.
- Visit Manchester delivers campaigns targeting leisure and business tourism on a regional, national and international basis. Manchester Airport is a key partner. Visit Manchester is currently a primary destination receiving funding through Visit England's RGF programme. Summer, Christmas and Cultural<sup>124</sup> leisure campaigns are delivered.
- Following the riots in August 2011 Visit Manchester ran an I Love MCR campaign, "targeted specifically at nurturing the swell of civic pride and educating residents on the assets of the city region. In three weeks, the campaign generated 27k 'likes' on Facebook; 40k mentions on twitter (trending twice in the UK) with a total digital value of more than £95k; an outdoor profile with a commercial value of over £200k and media coverage with an AVE of over £750k.

<sup>123</sup> There are in 2013, 32 GTBS rated tourism businesses in Manchester, seven of which (20%) have been assisted by Visit Manchester with a 50% subsidy .

<sup>124</sup> the Christmas Markets recently won "Best Green Festival" [http://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/6494/its\\_a\\_green\\_christmas\\_at\\_manchester\\_markets](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/6494/its_a_green_christmas_at_manchester_markets)

## Industry Engagement

Marketing/Visit Manchester participate in numerous marketing and tourism development working groups across Greater Manchester and the CEO sits on a number of Boards including Manchester Central, Manchester International Festival and Manchester Cathedral and attends LEP meetings as an observer.

Marketing Manchester's Board has strong private sector representation. A new Chair Iwan Griffiths, from PWC was recruited in summer 2013.

The Manchester Visitor Economy Forum (MVEF) which has previously been mentioned is the main stakeholder group that manages visitor economy growth.

## Impacts and Results of Initiatives

The value of the visitor economy has increased from £5.3 billion in 2008 to £6.6 billion in 2012 and employment in the sector grew from 73,174 in 2008 to 83,934 in 2012.

Hotel occupancy is buoyant with the annual average remaining above 70% (city centre occupancy 74% in 2012) despite the continual growth in the number of hotels, with the number of hotel rooms in the city centre hitting 10,000 in 2012.

Manchester has retained its UK ICCA ranking of fourth since 2007 and has improved the number of ICCA ranked events held with a global ranking of 78 in 2012. The value of business tourism grew from £573m in 2009 to £822m in 2011.

There has been significant Investment in the infrastructure and development of the product in the last five years including hotels, conference facilities, attractions, sporting venues and transport.

International perceptions of the city are measured by the Anholt City Index.

"Influence has also been achieved through domestic and international marketing campaigns developed in collaboration with partners such as Manchester Airport and as a result a positive shift in perceptions has been tracked in the Anholt City Brands Index. Since 2009 Manchester has moved ahead of Dubai and Dublin, pulled an extra three places clear of Edinburgh, and has closed the gap on Brussels and Chicago – only one and two places behind respectively in 2011, whereas we were seven and eight places behind in 2009. Perceptions in our priority target markets have also improved, with the USA, China and Brazil showing the strongest improvement between 2009 and 2011, and the UK having the most positive shift between 2007 and 2009." Paul Simpson

## Durham: Visit County Durham (VCD)

### **Key findings: key learning points transferable to other areas.**

It is clear that the stakeholders see the role of VCD in increasing the size of the visitor economy and in driving the cultural agenda, as its significant contribution to sustainable development in the county and that the majority regard VCD as very successful.

- VCD is widely regarded as “speaking for the visitors”, and in doing so VCD follows the evidence on market demand and the demands of visitors, it is seen as having successfully resisted being swayed by the loudest voices.
- The importance of developing a responsible and holistic approach to the visitor economy that encompasses wise growth principles requires strategic leadership and destination management in its fullest sense. As such many of the key findings relate to the development of the destination management organisation, its governance and role as opposed to specific initiatives to sustainability itself.
- To shape a destination’s tourism offer Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) need to actively engage with businesses which provide tourism services or attractions, local government and civil society and community groups which manage the public realm for visitors and residents and be the entity that through advocacy, influence and action seeks to keep the three pillars of sustainability in balance.
- Ensure that the image and identity of the destination is “deeply rooted in the fabric of the place” to ensure that it resonates with the local population and therefore has longevity.
- As the impact of a DMO is mainly intangible, and felt cumulatively over time, it is essential to explain what you are doing and why and to ground your work and advice on sound intelligence. It is important to articulate the economic importance of tourism and raise awareness of it.
- Be an “honest broker” between competing interests and between the public and private sector, be a “critical friend” and ensure that opinion, comment and advice are evidence based.
- Securing additional funding from outside the destination and establishing strong relationships with national organisations, like VisitEngland and Defra, assists in building and maintaining credibility locally.
- DMOs usually have no direct ownership over the component parts of the products that make up a visitor offer, so their role is to influence what others do using the VICE principals.
- Partnership working requires resource and is often undervalued and poorly understood. It is often intangible, medium to long term and requires focused, evidence-based leadership. The alternative is not a true Destination Management Organisation

## What might, on reflection and with the benefit of hindsight, have been done differently?

- Earlier quick wins for the private sector would have built credibility, but in the early days of RDA funding agreements and associated business plans the ability of the DMO to respond to local needs was limited.
- Support for the DMO within the county from the private and public organisations should have been secured in advance of Visit County Durham (VCD) being established by those that wanted it. VCD was not best placed to do this retrospectively.
- Identifying the influential people and those capable of blocking initiatives and then winning them over should have been a higher priority particularly for the Board – high level diplomatic skills are essential particularly in the absence of a consensus on VCD's existence. The DMO inherited a largely traditional passive, unchallenging public sector approach, which encouraged a public-private sector dependency culture. This should have been identified earlier as a challenge. The DMO had to operate quickly to build trust and a track record while at the same time trying to encourage a shift in approach towards mutual benefit through partnership.
- The product development challenges were greater than anticipated and were only identified once the executive was in place. This could have been identified earlier and translated into a more rounded business plan from the outset. The executive had to deliver a pre-existing business plan that was marketing focused and simultaneously rewrite the business plan to reflect the needs of the destination.

## Context

Many see Durham as a cathedral city with an historic centre. But Durham is more than that. In 1984, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, a panel of 50 architectural experts voted Durham Cathedral the most beautiful building in the world; in 1987 Durham Cathedral and Castle were declared a World Heritage Site. The County of Durham has a proud industrial history, in 1970 the North of England Open Air Museum was established at Beamish and in 1983 the 100<sup>th</sup> Durham Miners' Gala was held. However, pit closures and a general decline in heavy and extractive industry hit the county hard in the 1970s and 1980s and large numbers of jobs in mining and steel working were lost. In 2007 a report by the County Durham Foundation<sup>125</sup> identified two challenges facing County Durham: tackling deprivation, overcoming inequality and division, countering polarisation; and promoting cultural development and change. The county was reported to have a weak entrepreneurial culture, to be heavily dependent on the public sector, to have a high incidence of worklessness, deprivation was reported to be commonplace and many households were on very low incomes. This is the context within which the Durham County Council and civil society defined its sustainable development challenges and determined the contribution which tourism could make.

<sup>125</sup> Robinson F (2007) County Durham and Darlington: where are we now? County Durham Foundation

## Structure and Governance

In 2006 Visit County Durham (VCD) was established with funding from One North East by a task group drawn from the public and private sectors as a public/private partnership, one of four area tourism partnerships in North East England. VCD had five areas of focus: the visitor experience, business engagement, information management, destination marketing and destination development. Destination development plans included “town plans for visitors, area tourism management plan, capital projects, and project support.”<sup>126</sup> Responsibility for delivering visitor information services remained with the Durham County Council (DCC).

During 2010 a move towards integration between the VCD strategic tourism functions and the DCC areas of direct delivery began when three DCC tourism staff were seconded to VCD. VCD were asked to lead a review of DCCs visitor information provision: the independent findings included the fact that only 3% of visitors to the county visited one of the 6 TICs and just 1% had any “meaningful interaction with their service”, defined as a transaction completed or an enquiry handled.<sup>127</sup>

When One North East funding disappeared combined with local government cuts<sup>128</sup> a budget of only £825,000 remained to cover the delivery of all tourism services within the county, only 47% of the 2009/10 investment in the service.

DCC decided to step in to secure tourism services, accelerate the integration of strategic and information services and redesign the information service using the findings of the review of visitor information provision to achieve the necessary savings. Strategic services were reduced to a minimum viable level and a county-wide information network replaced the Tourist Information Centres, with 30 third parties at the forefront of delivery. This was seen as an appropriate response given the emphasis placed on the potential of tourism in DCC’s 2009 Regeneration Statement and recent economic impact trends which showed that in 2011 Durham’s visitor economy grew the most (5%) of any sub region in the North East contributing £650 million to the County’s economy. Tourism in 2011 was worth £738 million to Durham’s economy (50% - food & drink, 19% - recreation, 13% - non-food shopping, 9% - accommodation, 9% - transport) and supporting almost 12,000 jobs.

### Major trends since 2003<sup>129</sup>

- Overnight visitors - grown from 1.3 million to 1.5 million
- Total visitors - grown from 16.9 million to 19.3 million
- Economic expenditure - grown by over £71 million
- Number of bed spaces - increased by almost 3,000 from 14,427 to 17,350

<sup>126</sup> Durham County Council (15 Dec 2010) Cabinet Key Decision R&ED/13/10 Proposals for the Delivery of Tourism Services in County Durham

<sup>127</sup> ibid

<sup>128</sup> For tourism a 25% reduction from current costs

<sup>129</sup> Source: STEAM 2011

Durham County Council (DCC) was mindful of the changing national policy framework and that private sector-led destinations would be the focus for future support, whether financial or other. DCC concluded that it was therefore important to retain Visit County Durham as a viable private sector company, limited by guarantee, with a private sector-led Board to ensure that they had the ability to access funding and support at the national level. As a public-private partnership the Board members are appointed using Nolan principles and maintains its private sector majority and chair although the DCC portfolio holder for Regeneration and Economic Development and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Economic Development occupy two of the ten Board positions as of right.

Tourism is identified in DCC's Regeneration Statement as fundamental to creating a thriving Durham City, achieving the cultural and tourism ambitions for the City is seen as benefiting the entire County and tourism is also identified as part of the regeneration of Bishops Auckland, Seaham and the Durham Heritage Coast, West and North Durham.<sup>130</sup>. Several Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) Teesdale, Weardale and Durham City have identified tourism as a priority. VCD also facilitated a process which allowed 6 towns in the county (Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle, Seaham, Chester-le-Street, Stanhope and Durham City) to develop their own Destination Development Plans. Visit County Durham's vision is that by 2020 the county's visitor economy will comprise 17% of the county's economy<sup>131</sup>, this would equate to an additional 3,135 jobs by 2020.<sup>132</sup>

The Durham Area Tourism Management Plan<sup>133</sup> (DTMaP) identifies eight priorities

- 1 Manage and maintain the public realm for visitors
- 2 Increase the contribution of Durham's rural areas to the overall value of the county visitor economy
- 3 Increase spend by implementing a step change in the quality of the visitor experience post arrival
- 4 Optimise the potential of Durham City making it a viable 48-hour stay
- 5 Develop local distinctiveness in line with the destination brand
- 6 Tackle seasonality by focusing on events and business tourism
- 7 Grow the profile of the county regionally and nationally
- 8 Extend length of stay by optimising the potential of the county's market towns and town centres.

Four of these, public realm, spreading and growing visitor spend and addressing seasonality, have a potentially significant positive sustainability impact. The public realm priorities are identified as "robust cleaning regimes, appropriate signage and

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<sup>130</sup> Durham County Council & County Durham Economic Partnership (2012) Regeneration Statement 2012-2022

<sup>131</sup> VCD (2009) Brand Guidelines, VCD

<sup>132</sup> Durham Tourism Management Plan 2012-2016

<sup>133</sup> Durham Tourism Management Plan 2012-2016

suitable toilet provision." These are identified as the responsibility of DCC Neighbourhood Services, the priorities were identified as "easy win" elements in [enhancing] post arrival visitor satisfaction levels."<sup>134</sup> The Durham Business Improvement District is also enhancing signage and information provision for visitors.<sup>135</sup>

The visitor economy vision for County Durham explicitly recognises the importance of visitors to the sustainability of the county.

'County Durham will offer a visitor experience that matches its outstanding natural landscapes and internationally famous built heritage. The visitor economy will support long term social, economic and environmental sustainability right across the county and be recognised by the county's residents as important to the quality of their lives.'<sup>136</sup>

From the outset VCD has developed a working relationship with a wide range of departments and officers within DCC including planners, policy, regeneration and strategic investment. VCD contributes to reviews of tourism developments and acts as a "critical friend to developers" putting projects through the DTMaP project proposals process to assure that they are "strategically desirable and viable."<sup>137</sup> The DTMaP project assessment criteria, now known as the Durham Tourism Management Plan Investment Evaluation Process (DTMaP IEP)<sup>138</sup>, include improving length of stay, spreading the economic impact across the county, countering seasonality, creating employment, and improving the quality of the workforce, enhancing and conserving the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets. The criteria require that "projects/activities must demonstrate, where appropriate, that they have taken into account the principles of sustainable development and this includes sourcing locally, community focus, environmentally sound."

- The DTMaP IEP's has helped to shape, support and guide: Adventure Valley a family farm-based attraction, the Barnard Castle Rope Bridge, Auckland Castle, Ramside Hall Hotel & Golf Club, The Morritt Country House Hotel & New Garage Spa, Plawsworth Hal Serviced Cottages and Apartments and Beamish Museum among others.
- The process uses the VERB<sup>139</sup> model. "It is important that projects and activities are acceptable and/or beneficial to both the community and the environment and, for them to contribute to the visitor economy, they should also be beneficial to either the industry or the visitor – ideally both."<sup>140</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Durham Tourism Management Plan 2012-2016: 5

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.durhambid.co.uk/>

<sup>136</sup> Durham Tourism Management Plan 2012-2016

<sup>137</sup> VCDPresentationtoPlannersAugust2011.ppt

<sup>138</sup> Durham Tourism Management Plan 2012-2016:16

<sup>139</sup> Visitor, Environment, Residents and Businesses. VERB is the updated version of the VICE principle.

<sup>140</sup> ATMaP Final Criteria.doc

VCD has also been successful in ensuring that robust market intelligence is used to inform decision making. VCD collaborates with Visit England and members of the Northern Tourism Alliance (of which it is a founding member) to maintain the intelligence resource and has a close working relationship with DCC regeneration that has resulted in securing funding for project specific feasibility and benchmarking studies.

A new Durham County Council officer working group chaired by Visit County Durham has been established to deliver a multidisciplinary public sector approach to delivering the objectives of the DTMaP. The Tourism Internal Working Group includes senior council officers from the planning, policy, environmental, heritage, landscape, design, culture, direct services (cleaning, toilets, parks and public realm) and transport. VCD is also developing a new prospectus to identify appropriate potential development sites for visitor economy projects, the Visitor Economy Investment Portfolio (VEIP).

DCC reports (August 2012) that in the consultation process for the Local Plan it was clear that there was support for

"Greater emphasis on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and historic environment acknowledging the importance this asset can have on social wellbeing, tourism and wider economic objectives."<sup>141</sup>

The importance of the visitor economy is recognised in the Local Plan:

"A healthy tourism industry can help sustainable economic growth, and contribute to prosperous communities and attractive environments, making it a key element of the Altogether Wealthier theme of our Sustainable Communities Strategy and Regeneration Statement."

The plan also asserts that "green infrastructure will be protected, and where necessary enhanced, promoted and expanded in partnership with key agencies and delivery partners."

The Local Plan recognises the role of VCD as the official Destination Management Organisation for County Durham, responsible for coordinating the development of the visitor economy and managing and marketing the County as a destination. The Local Plan also recognises the role of VCD as a critical friend to developers.

"Visit County Durham offers support and guidance to potential tourism developers through the DTMaP Investment Evaluation Process. This ensures that projects are desirable in terms of market need, viability, sustainability and how they would impact on visitors, the economy, the tourism industry, the environment and residents. One of key roles of the DTMaP process is to ensure that potential investment is based on robust evidence."<sup>142</sup>

It is indicative of the degree of integration of VCD with DCC that its eight DTMaP Priorities are reproduced as the Tourism and Attractions (Policies 27 & 28) in the Appendices

<sup>141</sup>DCC (2012) The County Durham Plan, Local Plan Preferred Options:20

<sup>142</sup> DCC (2012) The County Durham Plan, Local Plan Preferred Options:140

to the Local Plan Preferred Options.<sup>143</sup> VCD is responsible for the audience work for the revision of the World Heritage Site Management Plan.

## Current Situation

Based on STEAM<sup>144</sup> data analysis the visitor contribution to the Durham economy is estimated to be £738 million, creating 9,000 FTE direct jobs (47% of those in food and beverage) and 2,200 jobs indirectly. 57% of overnight visitors to Durham stay with friends and relatives (VFR), but they account for only a third (37%) of overnight visitor spending with an average spend per trip of £134. This is a more profitable segment in comparison to some sectors such as group travel but not as profitable as independent leisure travel and business tourism. This compares to an average spend per person per trip of £178 for overnight visitors staying in commercial accommodation. Seasonality remains a challenge with one quarter of the year (July, August and September) accounting for one third of all visitor days.

Tourism's contribution to the local economy is growing, over the last 7 years the number of overnight visitors has grown by 15% resulting in an 18% increase in visitor overnights in Durham. An additional £26.4 million was spent by overnight visitors in 2009 compared to 2003, with an overnight visitor numbers of 16% and extended length of stay. Although more recently length of stay has reduced. The number of visitors staying overnight increased from 8% in 2008 to 9% in 2009 but the average length of stay fell from 2.8 to 2.7 nights between 2008 and 2009.

GHK in their 2011 report concluded that in the Durham Functional Economic Area

"the most significant employment growth has taken place in the tourism sector, with employment levels doubling since 2000. It is likely that this has been centred on the expansion of the city centre leisure offer and business growth related to increased visitor numbers at the World Heritage Site."<sup>145</sup>

### Box 1: Overnight Visitor Spend in 2009

Area	Visitors	Value	Average day visitor spend	Average overnight visitor spend	Number of days
Durham City	3,809,030	£173,580,000	£22.96	£223.67	2.8
Durham Dales	2,363,500	£130,060,000	£22.93	£267.90	3.7
Durham Coast	2,852,720	£85,290,000	£22.98	£132.94	1.3
Vale of Durham	8,548,000	£270,500,000	£22.91	£151.89	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,573,250</b>	<b>£659,430,000</b>			

Source: STEAM data, <http://www.visitcountydurham.org/tourism-facts-and-figures>

143 DCC (2012) The County Durham Plan, Appendices to the Local Plan Preferred Options: 212-213

144 <http://www.visitcountydurham.org/tourism-facts-and-figures>

145 GHK (2011) Mapping County Durham's Functional Economic Market Areas DCC: 28; 34

Tourism is remarkably evenly spread across the four areas although the Vale of Durham with 48% of the visitors has 41% of the total tourism earnings.

GHK concluded that Durham "could attract many more and higher value added visitors to the county (i.e. increasing the number, spend and duration of visitor stays in the County). This could be achieved through more active marketing of the City (in its fullest sense, i.e. including consideration of product, price and place/ distribution channels), the expansion of events and festivals based on the unique history and traditions of the City, attracting business visitors and a coordinated joining up of the tourism offer across the region." For South Durham there was also a mention of sustainability, GHK recommended the development of a : "set of higher value tourism propositions, which secure the benefits of increased visitor spend for rural communities while supporting the sustainable management of rural landscapes."<sup>146</sup> VCD's focus for growth is on higher value segments visitors, which is informed by the principles of wise growth, i.e. driving value not volume.

Stakeholders consulted for this report suggested that the GHK report exaggerated the expansion in the city centre and their perception was that the offer for leisure and tourism has in fact stood still in recent times. Independent research (STEAM) suggests an alternative conclusion to the GHK report since the area contributing the highest proportion of economic benefit from tourism activity is the Vale (between the A68 and the A19, excluding the city). This is where the vast majority of visitor attraction product, which drives the day visit market, is located.

In 2011 19.3 million people visited Durham, an increase of 12% over 2010 and an increase of 12% in overall visitor expenditure.<sup>147</sup> There were 1.51 million overnight tourists in County Durham in 2011, spending almost 4.2 million nights and tourism is estimated to support 11,308 full time equivalents (FTE) jobs of which 9,026 are directly employed in the visitor economy. There were 2.4 million more visitors to Durham in 2010 than in 2003. <sup>148</sup>

Durham was benchmarked by VCD against heritage cities with rural hinterlands: Chester, Lincoln and Stratford. The landing page on the 'this is Durham' website<sup>149</sup> clearly links Durham City and the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site, with the Durham Dales, the North Pennines AONB and the Durham Heritage Coast, seeking to disperse visitors and spread the benefits of tourism across the county. The same page, the first that visitors see, emphasises that the area is worth visiting all year round. Local sourcing is encouraged through the Taste Durham and Local Produce Champion programmes.

**Transport:** in 2010 84% of visitors travelled to Durham in their own car, an increase of around 10% over 2008 only 6% arrived by train ( a reduction over 2008), despite

<sup>146</sup> GHK (2011) Mapping County Durham's Functional Economic Market Areas DCC: 75

<sup>147</sup> Overall visitor expenditure in 2011 was £738 million.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas I (2012) The economic impact of tourism in Durham in 2011 Newcastle Gateshead Initiative

<sup>149</sup> <http://www.thisisdurham.com/>

Durham being on the main line between London and Edinburgh. Not surprisingly ease and quality of car parking was regarded as important by 92% of those interviewed in 2010; and 98% regarded cleanliness as important. 92% rated car parking as good or very good; and 94% rated the cleanliness as good or very good.<sup>150</sup> The 2012 Durham City Destination Development Plan recommends giving a higher profile to the electric bus which runs between Durham Railway Station and Palace Green to deliver a better service for visitors, help increase use and reduce its subsidy; review its route to maximise the use of the service and potentially include other attractions; and introduce better public transport routes to connect with visitor attractions close to Durham City.

VCD has limited resources to manage many of the operational issues identified above but a proactive step to address these via a local authority Tourism Internal Working Group. This is formed from senior officers across a range of county council services looking to improve the visitor experience. Services represented include transport, highways, heritage, planning, street scene, economic development, sustainability, culture and strategic investment. The group is chaired by VCD.

There is an absence of snobbery about tourism in the area, many people in the county are reliant on multiple part-time jobs, and tourism is a significant source of additional livelihoods for local people. There is strong (hard fought for and won by VCD) political support for tourism which is recognised as important to the regeneration of the city and the county. The fact that VCD staff are on the payroll of DCC, and as insiders are able to engage with council departments is seen as an advantage, one amplified by VCD's ability as an industry led organisation to represent the industry to DCC.

There is inevitably some tension between the line management and payroll relationships of VCD staff as part of the Economic Development Group and the exercise of leadership by the private sector. It is challenging to represent both the public interest and to protect the public realm whilst representing the private sector. As a consequence of the structure of VCD and its relationship to DCC some of the balancing of the different interests of the community, their environment, business and the visitors takes place within VCD as well as in discussions between VCD and the 40 groups it partners with. Toilets, cleanliness and litter are addressed within council working groups. There still remains a culture in both the private sector (and publicly owned tourism assets) of not wanting to fund (or buy into) what it regards as public sector responsibilities. The engagement with the private sector is seen as contributing to overcoming dependency culture.

Engagement with the industry, a wide range of council committees and staff, and with community groups is seen as important by VCD and valued by those it engages with. Functioning partnerships are seen as core to VCD's approach and it is seen by those who with whom it engages as very good at partnerships. Stakeholders described the process of creating the Destination Management Plan as based on "building a genuine consensus", VCD demonstrated an ability to "step out of arrogance, to consult and still

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150 One North East (2010) Durham Visitor Survey 2010

be the experts". They described tourism as not being "an alien voice", rather "part of what we are doing as we are of what they are doing". The consultation process resulted in real changes with 2 or 3 things going out and 2 or 3 things being included. VCD is seen as bringing the sector together and acting as an effective advocate for it and "delivering both the private sector and on the local authority agenda." On the other hand VCD is criticised by a minority for seeing only the marketing angle: "to be perfectly honest I don't think that they look anywhere else other than to marketing"; and others point to the tension between the council's line management role and a sense that the Board is "a liaison group receiving reports about what is happening." It should be noted that the understanding of what is meant by "marketing" is not clear. Marketing in tourism terms can often be marginalised as just promotional activities. Evidence clearly suggests VCD takes an active role in product development (DTMaP, the formation of a new council Tourism Internal Working Group and the commissioning of detailed sector and market intelligence analysis), which is a part of marketing in its fullest sense. What is not clear is if the effectiveness of the communication of this wider remit to private sector stakeholders, who actively seek promotional activity and engagement with VCD,

VCD uses the VERB model but it is seen as emphasising the importance of the visitor and the visitor perception of Durham; this was described by one stakeholder as "an important reality check". One of the stakeholders voiced this general view eloquently: VCD was "speaking for the visitors". It is also recognised that in doing so VCD follows the evidence on market demand and the demands of visitors, it is seen as having successfully resisted being swayed by the loudest voices. VCD is seen as being industry and evidence led with staff with the expertise and credibility to "lead and challenge using VERB."

In its marketing strategy for the county VCD has been clear about the market segments which it seeks to attract and the image which it presents of the Durham City and Durham County. Most of VCD's effort has gone into attracting tourists, overnight visitors, to Durham because their average spend is higher and their impact is arguably lower (in environmental terms). Some feel that day trippers and coach parties have not been encouraged despite their importance to some parts of the visitor economy. Again this is based on the principle that these visitor types are seen as having a higher [environmental] cost and lower economic benefit. In Durham City it is the students who are blamed for pricing local people out of accommodation and the High Street rather than the tourists. VCD has sought to ensure that Durham's product development is relevant to the visitor segments it currently attracts (Discoverers and Traditionals) and those, who with destination development it could attract (Cosmopolitans) and those who could stay longer and spend more (Functionals).

The catchy phrase "passionate places, passionate people"<sup>151</sup> widely heard in the county, now replaced with "This is Durham" illustrates maintaining and generating civic pride

<sup>151</sup> This catch phrase originated in a NE wide promotion campaign led by the now defunct Regional Development Agency.

is clearly a priority. VCD is seen as having a role in place making, culture and tourism are seen as major drivers of local development. VCD is seen as playing an important role in ensuring that tourism makes a major contribution to driving the cultural agenda in Durham, tourism is seen as an important “commercial resource for the cultural sector”. Some feel that there has been too much focus on events and festivals to drive tourism and some neglect of festivals which are important to local people. There is some criticism over its unwillingness to promote or market the Durham Miners’ Gala and the brass festival is seen as being very much on the edge of VCD’s area. With limited resources, however decisions have been taken for VCD to focus on events and festivals that have wider appeal and can drive the wider economic regeneration.

There are seven Destination Plans for Durham City, Stanhope, Seaham, Chester-le-Street, Barnard Castle, Durham Heritage Coast and Bishop Auckland, these are long term plans, agreed by the towns and geared towards improving the visitor experience.<sup>152</sup> In particular sustainable, long term destination/product development. VCD facilitated the process, but were keen (and successful) in ensuring they did not become mini marketing (promotions) strategies. The emphasis was very much on the Visitor experience, by bringing the Industry to the table, involving the Community and aware of Environmental issues (the VICE model that has been recently rebranded to VERB).

VCD has a rural tourism action plan, complementing the Strategic Framework for Tourism in England. The main outputs have been two rural tourism conferences, one delivered by VCD and the other in partnership with the North Pennines Dales LEADER programme. This has helped identify that the county needs products to animate the rural economy (appropriately) whilst maximising the economic benefits (spend and employment). VCD has also invested a great deal of time and effort trying extract RDPE funding from DEFRA to encourage destination development.

VCD has been working closely with the two NE AONBs, National Parks and Northumberland Tourism. As a result, recently the organisation has taken on the bid coordinator role for the DEFRA tourism growth package in the North East – referred to as an “Our Land type programme”. After an unsuccessful first attempt by the Protected Landscapes themselves, VCD were approached by DEFRA to see if they could revive the bid. VCD are coordinating a Northern Land Protected Landscapes bid for approximately £700k in partnership with regional national parks, AONBs, The Forestry Commission, Durham Heritage Coast and three market town food festivals. The project includes the following product development projects:

- Electric bike infrastructure development
- Cycle tourism route development
- Horse riding

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<sup>152</sup> [http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/common/search/advanced\\_search.jsp?id=440428&lookingFor=representations&tab=list](http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/common/search/advanced_search.jsp?id=440428&lookingFor=representations&tab=list) The destination management plans are available at <http://www.visitcountydurham.org/strategies-and-plans>

- Go Ape into Hamsterley
- Welcome to.....industry skills (A sense of place) development across the region
- Dark Skies tourism

## Resources

Since 2007, VCD have introduced an Investment Evaluation Process that operates as a successful product development “critical friend” process. This takes projects through two stages of written process to look at market demand, impacts, sustainability, viability and VICE, impacts, business planning. VCD work alongside project developers to support the project ground work this has been proven to have a higher rate of success for developments. It is guided by a committee which includes the head of regeneration, the director of Beamish, Deputy Director of the AONB, Radisson Blu General Manager

As a result of the successes several council teams (i.e. planning, policy, heritage, sustainability, environment etc) refer to the process and contact VCD for guidance. There is a suggestion that the principles of wise growth of tourism are being embedded in wider strategies in order to be sustainable themselves, i.e. if VCD cease to exist the principles and processes in place will survive.

The representation on circa 40 groups, many of them about local needs, managing landscapes (rural and built) and involving local communities in the development of tourism; is an indication of the commitment and resources given towards implementing a wise growth approach.

## Industry Engagement

VCD participates in around 40 groups including visitor economy and economic partnership working groups; destination development working groups, tourism and visit networks; AONB and coast forums, area action partnerships, Durham Area Natural Environment Strategy Partnership, the World Heritage Site Management Committee, Love Food Working Partners Group (Durham Dales)

VCD was pivotal in developing Taste Durham, which is very much geared towards professionalising and improving the visitor experience and championing local produce. It has taken centre stage in the region's largest food festival and has a three year plan for its development into the supply chain. As a result VCD has also moved into a curatorial role for the Bishop Auckland Food Festival which has allowed the event to develop and include local producers and local products under “A Taste of Durham” brand.

## Impacts and Results of Initiatives

- VCD was the only DMO in the NE to go through GTBS and show a lead, achieving a Gold level that was held for three years. But several respondents GTBS Durham didn't work – not a credible marketing tool (VCD were the local face of regional

efforts to push the scheme and there were obligations to do this through its RDA funding agreement. However, it is the industry that has turned away from it because the industry felt that it didn't deliver for them – participants suggested "green labelling not worth anything" "environmental practice not a focus")

- There are 50 businesses going through Taste Durham and being assessed on local sourcing policy
- New walking festival emerging in the Dales as a result of VCD rural conference
- Rurally focused national marketing campaign worth £180,000 encouraging the public to visit and explore the county on a bike or on foot
- WHS management plan revised with an audience development plan that suggests audience development must support conservation and accessibility no the other way round
- Bishop Auckland food festival showcasing 42 county based producers providing a platform on which to increase their business
- Over 40 projects utilised the Investment Evaluation Process (IEP) and thereby being asked to address sustainability issues directly
- VCD programmed a Food Tourism conference in November and this will be centred around speakers on the importance of local produce and we'll be facilitating an exchange bringing local producers in front of accommodation providers, attractions, restaurants and retailers.
- VCD also chairs the county's events forum as facilitators. The membership is 70+ and includes anyone who is involved in the sector – from small local organisations staging community plays to major venues such as the Cricket Club staging the Ashes.
- The CEO sits on the cultural partnership as a board member and is one of five on the DCC internal culture board. VCD contributes towards the parts of culture that are going to support growth of the visitor economy – there are others in the partnership that focus on the rest of the agenda i.e. community capacity, social inclusion etc.
- VCD is directly responsible for the development of Bishop Auckland Food Festival, the Streets of Durham Festival and major partners in Lumiere and the Gospels exhibition although participation in these going forward is reviewed on a regular basis to assess.

## **New Forest: New Forest Destination Partnership (NFDP)**

The case studies do not report all that is being done in the destinations concerned to enhance sustainability/responsible tourism – the focus is on the identifiable contribution of the destination partnership which, in this case, is the New Forest Destination Partnership (NFDP).

## Key findings: key learning points transferable to other areas

- Recognise that a long-term investment of time and effort is required by the destination to create and maintain a comprehensive network of relationships.
- Relationship management is essential for Wise Growth, particularly in an area such as the New Forest, where multiple agencies and organisations operate with differing interests. Partnership, mutual benefit and Wise Growth must be positioned at the heart of these relationships, ensuring all stakeholders work together with common purpose for the wider good.
- Capitalise on shared interests within a destination to provide high quality, all-round customer experiences which deliver responsible tourism to the benefit of Visitors, Environmental interest, Residents and Businesses (VERB).
- Commit to building Wise Growth principles into every policy, objective and action to ensure a culture of sustainability is embedded in all activities.
- The “honest broker role” of the public sector cannot be over-estimated in ensuring the VERB approach to Wise Growth is maintained in all actions that relate to the visitor economy and this is even more important in protected areas where the tension between conservation and commerce is most acute.
- Commercial activity is the engine that drives the visitor economy, but often does so at the expense of local experiences, cultures and communities. If this activity can however be harnessed through Wise Growth, which promotes a mix of co-operation and competition, it can deliver ever-improving quality and innovation, alongside the benefits of collaboration and economies of scale.
- For New Forest Destination Partnership (NFDP), the mutual relationships that emanate from co-operation and competition and the VERB model, under an umbrella of a true public/private partnership, has created a strong sense of collective confidence that enables it to continually challenge the way it works. The arbiters of Wise Growth are however adaptation and evolution, not revolution.
- Understanding leads to greater mutual respect, ownership and co-ordinated engagement of stakeholders. A holistic relationship develops stronger understanding which in turn leads to better outcomes through a collectively owned vision. A clear vision creates the confidence for responsible decisions, which stimulates private and public investment at both an emotional (policy) and financial (development) level.
- Collaborative working breeds understanding and trust, giving decision-makers the confidence to allow common sense to override policy where it is appropriate to do so.
- Recognising and acknowledging the hidden conflict between residents and large numbers of visitors is essential if a lasting and sustainable high-quality visitor economy is to be achieved. Taking bold steps towards resolution, such as the New

Forest's public consolation document 'Living With The Enemy' published in the early 1990's, together with a continual reminder to residents of the benefits of Wise Growth, is crucial in maintaining support for tourism and a hospitable visitor welcome.

- Collaborative networks are only as strong as their weakest links, everybody must pull together to deliver a top quality sustainable visitor offering. Responsible experiences which support the values of the destination in turn create responsible satisfied visitors. Get this right and your visitors will communicate the destination's values (at no extra cost) to their social media followers and review websites, generating the best value marketing to the right target audiences.

### **What might, on reflection and with the benefit of hindsight, been done differently?**

- Bidding for additional finance could have improved the ability to deliver Wise Growth, providing additional resources to what was already being done.
- Understanding the benefits of linking all tourism activity into the wider economy at a much earlier stage may have provided quicker results, most particularly in the context of residents.
- An earlier and more positive relationship with the National Park Authority would have reduced duplication of effort, confusion amongst stakeholders and brought clarity to shared purposes.

### **Context**

The New Forest District is approx. 300 square miles of open forest, heath, river valleys and coast, dotted by small settlements with a total population of 175,000. In the peak season there are approximately 25,000 visitor beds and in 2012 the economic volume and value survey undertaken by Tourism South East estimated that tourism was worth in the region of £500m per year.

Until the 20th century the New Forest was only visited by royalty and the aristocracy, but with the coming of the railways the area became a popular destination, particularly over the last 30 years. Concerns about protecting the forest's ancient traditions, particularly the grazing of animals and the commoning regime led New Forest District Council (NFDC) to develop and adopt planning policies equivalent to that of a National Park. This eventually led to National Park status being formally achieved in 2006.

The New Forest Destination Partnership (NFDP) a public/private partnership has worked for the benefit of visitors, environmental interests, residents and businesses of the New Forest since its inception in 1988. The NFDP provides funding for the development, marketing and promotion of the New Forest through the annual Little Acorns Destination Marketing Plan, which is steered by a committee of nominated representatives from each NFTA Sector Group and nominated politicians and officers

of NFDC. This combined funding and management relationship also provides for the development, investment and execution of all digital destination activity, such as [www.thenewforest.co.uk](http://www.thenewforest.co.uk) which is the New Forest's main online platform.

The New Forest is estimated to have up to 13.5 million visits each year many of these are local visitors who come to the forest as day visitors. In 2012 it is estimated that 878,900 staying trips were made to the area as a whole, amounting to around 3.327 million visitor nights, in the same period there were 7.84 million day trips.<sup>153</sup> 35% of day visitors come from home and 25% are day visitors from outside the Forest,<sup>154</sup> New Forest District Council (NFDC) claims that "working with a wide range of local interests, [to have] led the way nationally in developing a sustainable approach to tourism management, for example, improved management and use of access and travel arrangements for all visitors."<sup>155</sup> There are around 800 businesses directly related to tourism creating 10,619 jobs which is nearly 14% of the total for the district. The sector is estimated to have generated £491m in 2012.<sup>156</sup>

Given that large scale development is inappropriate in an environmentally sensitive area, NFDC's strategy is based on securing more effective use of existing facilities particularly serviced accommodation (80% of accommodation income comes from this sector). NFDC recognises that one "of the destination's great advantages is that virtually all tourism businesses are locally owned, employing predominantly local people." They argue that this ensures that "the Industry is much more focused on local needs than might otherwise be the case." It also helps that "many local people regularly use [their] attractions, restaurants, pubs and village centres."<sup>157</sup> NFDC has placed emphasis on the importance of a quality tourism offer.

NFDC explicitly recognises the importance of tourism to the District and its residents:

"Without the spending and jobs brought by tourism, the community would lose many of its services and small businesses. Visitor spending is crucial in maintaining diverse and viable retail centres in settlements. When visitors trade with local businesses they purchase supplies and services. Local business in turn purchase the supplies and services they need to operate and through successive rounds of purchases the initial direct spend of a visitor multiplies throughout the local and regional economy. In many cases visitor spending is what keeps these businesses going."

Tourism also has a major part to play in supporting the skills and economic activities that are traditional to the District. The Green Leaf scheme helps the industry find ways

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<sup>153</sup> Visitor Survey by Tourism South East, 2004/5 & The Economic Impact of Tourism on the New Forest 2012 by Tourism South East

<sup>154</sup> Changing Lives Partnership (2008) Future Matters The Sustainable Community Strategy for the New Forest District 2008 – 2012 New Forest District Council p.23

<sup>155</sup> Changing Lives Partnership (2008) Future Matters The Sustainable Community Strategy for the New Forest District 2008 – 2012 New Forest District Council p. 25

<sup>156</sup> The Economic Impact of Tourism on the New Forest 2012 by Tourism South East

<sup>157</sup> Our Future Together II p.13

of increasing this support by using employees, produce and services from the locality. Tourism also benefits the community by providing improved infrastructure, recreation and cultural facilities, increased local authority revenues and greater local awareness, all helping to foster a general sense of community pride in the District's natural and cultural heritage.”<sup>158</sup>

NFDC reported in their residents' survey “83% of the panel agreed that the tourism service achieves harmony between the interests of visitors, tourism industry, local community and the environment”.<sup>159</sup>

NFDC recognises the importance of ensuring that the needs of tourism are “incorporated into all relevant political decisions” particularly transport, planning and other supporting services at District and County level.<sup>160</sup> Policy objectives include the maintenance of the Tourism Community Action Network where local groups meet twice per year; to manage tourism to have, where possible, a positive environmental impact, and to ensure that there is no decline in environmental quality: “if the environmental component of tourism product declines in quality and value, this will result in a decline in the local tourism and visitor economy and its associated community benefits.”<sup>161</sup>

## Structure and Governance

The management of tourism in the New Forest understands the importance of balancing the interests of: visitors and the quality of their experience; the environment where tourism takes place, local residents' needs and local businesses in the tourism industry. In the New Forest the range of businesses recognised as engaged in tourism extends beyond the traditional transport, accommodation providers and attractions to include a wide variety of organisations in the New Forest which benefit from tourism spend and contribute to the visitor experience. In traditional approaches to sustainability the emphasis is on the triple bottom line, social, economic and environmental. In destination management in the New Forest an important distinction is made between the interests of visitors and the residents. This distinction ensures that the destination management function balances the conflicting interests of these two groups of stakeholders.

The Visitors, Industry, Community and the Environment (VICE) model which originated in practice in the New Forest, has spread virally around the world as practitioners have recognised the value of the acronym in asserting the importance of balancing the interests of the four major stakeholder groups. More recently this approach has been refreshed to Visitors, Environment, Residents and Businesses (VERB). Both models have however been criticised for putting the visitor interest first. The assertion in the New Forest is that these four stakeholder groups all need to be considered and the application of management approaches and practices based on these principle's results in a

<sup>158</sup> Our Future Together II p.14

<sup>159</sup> NFDC Performance Matters 2007/8 p.91

<sup>160</sup> Our Future Together II p.14

<sup>161</sup> Our Future Together II p.16

very different approach to destination management. Sustainability is understood in the New Forest approach to destination management to mean balancing the interests of the community and residents, the businesses and industry, the tourists and day visitors and the environment today in ways which secures the maintenance of the environment, the Forest, for the future.

The management approach which flows from the VICE or VERB model is much more akin to sculpting, through a set of processes in the governance of the New Forest, the interests of the different groups which are weighed, shaped and balanced to create a destination. The essence of the process is to form a balance between the competing interests in the destination. The destination is the place, the environment, where visitors, residents and businesses interact and where their competing and diverse interests have to be managed through local government, civil society and the market. For 27 years the New Forest has benefited from a rare continuity and holistic approach in its destination and visitor management. The approach has evolved, but with a strong degree of continuity. In the New Forest the interests of all four stakeholder groups are reflected in destination management, product development and marketing strategy.

In 1994 relationships between residents and visitors in the New Forest were poor and New Forest District Council published *Living with the Enemy?* which recognised that since the 1960s increasing intrusion by the motor car had made visitor management a necessity. The conflicts had to be managed. *Living with the Enemy?* suggested that the visitor and the industry had to become allies in order to make tourism work for everyone. The objective was a long term tourism strategy that tackled the issues and safeguarded the industry and the place in which it operated. The consultation process was designed to bring people together to manage tourism to ensure that it was good for the local community and the environment. The objective was defined as "tourism that does not prejudice the future quality of life or the natural and cultural resources of the District. Our task is to balance the needs of the visitor, the tourism industry, the community and... the District's special environment."<sup>162</sup> Tourism was recognised in *Living with the Enemy?* as "a powerful tool in helping to maintain the services, amenities and vitality of the District."<sup>163</sup>

NFDC has consistently been seen as the organisation responsible for managing tourism, as the "host authority".<sup>164</sup> In *Living with the Enemy?* the importance of managing visitors is recognised:

"... we must ... create the circumstances and opportunities for our visitors [to experience and enjoy our District] in ways that are acceptable to the local community, beneficial to our existing visitor industry and not prejudicial to the condition of our settlements, landscape nature conservation and cultural heritage."<sup>165</sup>

<sup>162</sup> p. 3 This is an early articulation of VICE

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. p. 3

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p. 4

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. p. 4

The New Forest Encounter where visitors and hosts met on equal terms was originally developed to create employment for locals and enjoyment for visitors. Emphasis was placed on the staying visitor over the excursionist in part because of the greater economic value, but also because "staying visitor, having invested in their holiday, are more likely to spend time and effort in getting to know the District and behave responsibly."<sup>166</sup> This evolved into the Economics of Visitor Happiness statement of 2012 (see Appendix 2).

As early as 1994 the objective of the marketing programme sought to "achieve the right numbers and type of visitors, in the right place at the right time.. influenc[ing] them to behave in the appropriate manner during their visit."<sup>167</sup> Targeting those who would spend the most in the District increased the economic benefit per visitor; the focus was on yield rather than just on visitor numbers. By promoting towns and villages and commercial attractions visitor expenditure could be increased and pressure on the Forest reduced. Successful tourism was seen as being "about adapting and evolving our approach to ensure that the needs and demands of the visitor, industry, community and environment are all kept in equilibrium."<sup>168</sup>

In Our Future Together first published in 1997 a partnership approach to tourism management was outlined to achieve a more sustainable balanced form of tourism, people were to be tempted out of their cars by improving transport links for visitors and residents and using tourism to improve local livelihoods. "A well planned and prosperous tourism industry" was seen as "revitalising the amenity of the whole District making it a better place to live and visit."<sup>169</sup> Visitors were seen as guests, hosts and visitors should be treated on equal terms.<sup>170 171</sup>

With the creation of the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) in 2006 there was a review of local authority functions in which it was agreed that the NFDC would lead on tourism management and development activities with the NPA supporting.<sup>172</sup> Policy continues to be guided by the VICE model predicated on the assumption that "all tourism management should be based on an equitable partnership between the competing needs and demands of visitors, industry, community and environment."<sup>173</sup> The revised policy placed great emphasis, in the context of "difficult trading conditions" on the "need to maximize the economic and job creation potential of tourism for the whole of the local economy within the VICE context." There is greater emphasis on how tourism can better support local retail centres in settlements, the need to promote

<sup>166</sup> Ibid p.5

<sup>167</sup> Ibid p. 7

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. p.11

<sup>169</sup> NFDC (1997) *Our Future Together* p. 6

<sup>170</sup> Ibid p.9

<sup>171</sup> Changing Lives Partnership (2008) *Future Matters The Sustainable Community Strategy for the New Forest District 2008 – 2012* New Forest District Council

<sup>172</sup> NFDC (2009) *Our Future Together II* NFDC and NF NPA p. 1.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p.1

local tourism job opportunities through schools and colleges and the need to develop vocational training to help improve the quality of the visitor offer.<sup>174</sup>

## Current Situation

The destination marketing programme is used to encourage businesses to sign up to quality, local distinctiveness and sustainability under the Green Leaf Scheme. The scheme encourages Green Leaf businesses to try to reduce traffic, support local producers and help visitors to get the best out of the forest without ruining it. Green Leaf businesses promote New Forest Marque produce and the history, culture, wildlife and traditions they are helping to protect.

The Green Leaf Tourism Scheme was first launched in 1996 and rather like the Destination's approach to Wise Growth, it is about building in participation rather than creating a complex accreditation scheme. Participation is free and the scheme is aimed at both businesses and town and village groups. Annual self-assessment questionnaires are completed and yearly training and review events support its evolution. In 2012 140 businesses participated and some continue to link with the more formal Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation process.

Participants pledge to set aside at least 10% of their grounds for wildlife, improve waste management and recycling, along with water and energy efficiency. Green Leaf also provides opportunities for businesses to establish walking, cycling and other car-free activities from their own sites into the destination-wide car free network. Another important feature of the scheme is to enable businesses to be fully integrated into the development of the New Forest Visitor Transport Initiative such as the New Forest Tour and Twizy Electric Vehicle Network and the initiative's promotion to guests.

The New Forest Marque was created in 1999 to provide a recognised quality sign that is easily identified and ensures that all produce is from the New Forest. In order to use the Marque, producers have to ensure their goods meet stringent standards relevant to their own particular speciality. For example, meat producers must show that high standards of welfare and good husbandry as well as local provenance have been applied at all times.

The New Forest is home to a diverse range of local produce businesses working with the tourism and hospitality industry. Whilst significant progress has been made in improving the links between these two business groups, it is recognised that more needs to be done to improve the local supply chain and the ability for these businesses to work with each other at a local level. In recognising this issue, NFDC working with NFTA, NPA and New Forest Marque has recently been awarded European INTERREG funding to develop a project which aims to connect local producers/suppliers with end users and improve the efficiency of deliveries throughout the New Forest and beyond. By working

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid. pp.1-2

with partners on either side of the English Channel, it is believed that this project can be replicated both in France and elsewhere in the UK.

This project is developing a piece of online software (called The Matrix) which will allow local suppliers to upload their products for purchase in real time by end users including hotels, restaurants, pubs and retailers. This will improve access to market for producers, broaden the range and seasonality of products available to end users and reduce short circuits in the local supply chain. The ability for the software to identify inefficiencies in the local supply chain will also improve forward planning, as well as links to a distribution centre in the heart of the forest. It is from this building that goods will be delivered to and from the producer and be redistributed to end users, such as hotels and restaurants, using energy efficient and electric vehicles utilising the Twizy charge point network.

Brand New Forest<sup>175</sup> (BNF) is a campaign to back local New Forest businesses by encouraging visitors and residents to support the local economy which in turn improves the guest experience and the host quality of life. Its programmes are designed to link consumer activity and spending with local businesses to maintain and develop local economic, social and environmental resilience and in particular the many small town and village centres.

The BNF “Doing Better Business Local” programme seeks to improve local skills and especially the economic future of young people. “Eat & Grow Local”, “Shop & Buy Local”, “Enjoy Local”, “Exercise Local” and “Save Energy Local” all aim to influence how everyone (visitor and resident) live their lives within the destination. Experience has shown that visitors and residents are much more likely to connect with the idea of Wise Growth through their normal daily activities rather than via other more worthy and complex forms of promotion. The special offers and discounts offered by the BNF Card Scheme for example provide an excellent incentive to stimulate this day-to-day engagement.

Recent innovations to reduce congestion and carbon include BNF Card-based visitor itineraries that link to the BNF Twizy electric vehicle and chargepoint network. The overall BNF campaign is supported by New Forest Business Partnership, New Forest Transition, Forestry Commission, NPA, NFDC, NFTA and many other local organisations and groups. It is part of the broader communications structure within the wider local economy which embeds the principles of Wise Growth via the VERB model of engagement itself underpinned by the Economics of Visitor Happiness (see Appendix 2).

## Management of Visitors

In the New Forest the importance of reducing negative visitor impacts and increasing positive visitor impacts through marketing has long been recognised and visitor stew-

175 <http://www.brandnewforest.com>

ardship is a priority. All of the marketing is done with positive messages: “reflect and interpret the destination’s values, cultural heritage and landscape” to communicate local distinctiveness and contribute to the destination management strategy.<sup>176</sup> ‘5 ways to love the Forest’ and ‘My Perfect New Forest Day’ are 2 examples of campaigns that are embedded into all management and marketing activities.

The ‘My Perfect New Forest Day’ campaign suggests all with question marks, a cycle ride, scrummy picnic, forest fun, deer watching, refreshing walk, gorgeous pub grub. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the web “brandnewforest.com/perfect day”) are used to engage visitors to share their experience of the perfect New Forest Day and to encourage others to emulate the more sustainable and enjoyable experiences. The campaign encourages visitors to extend their length of stay and to return to do something different next time, adding value to their visit and increasing their contribution to the local economy.

The ‘5 ways to love the Forest’ campaign, which started in 2009, uses a matchbox size folded leaflet placed in visitor bedrooms to encourage visitors to slow down around animals to prevent accidents; buy New Forest Marque products; give the car a break and walk or cycle; not to feed the animals; and to support Green Leaf businesses.

## Transport

Over the last 30 years there has been a lot of physical regulation of visitor access through the creation of barriers, car parking, zoning, visitor routing systems, increasing access by public transport and through the development of car free cycle routes. Considerable effort has also been made to promote sustainable transport for visitors, by encouraging hotels to create ideas for car free holidays, by establishing the ‘New Forest Tour’ open top bus and cycle carrier and by establishing the Twizy electric vehicle and charge point network.

Initiated from NFDP funds in 1998, the New Forest Tour is now a network of 6 open top buses operating 3 circular routes in the New Forest. The Tour operates between June and September and helps reduce congestion in the New Forest and stimulate economic growth, whilst providing a unique and memorable visitor experience for its customers. The New Forest Tour is now led by the NPA and is funded through a combination of revenue from ticket sales and income from strategic marketing partnerships with tourism businesses in the New Forest.

## Resources

NFDP is a public/private sector organisation and as such each partner (NFDC & NFTA) resources its own input to the partnership’s overall programme of activity. The main area of shared resourcing is in creating and delivering the Little Acorns Annual

<sup>176</sup> Climpson A (2008) Sustainable Destination Management :the Vice Model

Marketing and Promotion programme. The Little Acorns programme, which has Wise Growth built in to all actions, is delivered by a partnership board consisting of representatives of each NFTA sector group (hotels, bed & breakfast, self-catering, holiday parks, attractions, etc), NPA and NFDC officers and councillors. The total fund pot is in the region of £100,000 annually and contributions are split equally between NFDC and NFTA at around £50,000 each. The NFTA contribution is made up of £25,000 in cash and £25,000 in kind via individual member business's contributions of tickets, food, accommodation etc for visiting journalists, booking agents, tourism service providers as well as contributions towards individually funded events, promotions, exhibitions and familiarisation such as the annual Wedding and Conference Showcases.

## Industry Engagement

NFDC was instrumental in establishing NFTA which was founded in 1989 and a close working relationship was developed around issues of planning, transportation, marketing, training and quality standards<sup>177</sup>. Today, NFTA has close to 300 members and the Council clearly values the partnership.

"The value of our partnership with NFTA cannot be overestimated. The relationship enables the Council and trade to act quickly, effectively and collectively in dealing with such issues as planning, transportation, marketing, training and quality standards etc as and when they arise.

Without the support of the local industry no strategy for tourism can be successful. It is the best way to provide a consistent quality of service and experience for the visitor, and a sense of purpose and co-ordination to the industry."<sup>178</sup>

"Through our partnership with NFTA we have achieved a growing understanding of critical issues for the industry such as planning and transportation matters."<sup>179</sup>

It was evident from interviews that a feeling of partnership based on shared endeavour and respect is reciprocated. NFDC works with NFTA to promote environmental awareness through the Green Leaf Programme in order to "stimulate improvements in the industry's environmental performance, promote the use of local produce, promote good practice in planning development and create industry support for conservation activities that also help visitors develop a sense of stewardship for the District."<sup>180</sup>.

The Visitor Stewardship Programme is one of four integrated programmes that help deliver the New Forest Destination Management VERB Model referred to in Appendix 1. This programme is delivered through all destination marketing, media and publication activities, as well as through the Green Leaf and Local Distinctiveness Programme (the second integrated programme), which seeks to create a better understanding of the

<sup>177</sup> Our Future Together p. 8

<sup>178</sup> Our Future Together II p.11

<sup>179</sup> Ibid p.13

<sup>180</sup> Ibid p.13

local environment by businesses so that they manage all tourism development in a way that has a positive effect on their surroundings and the destination's resources.

The Brand New Forest campaign (the third integrated programme) seeks to empower local residents and encourage ownership through involvement in all tourism matters. The importance of The Brand New Forest campaign in enabling residents to recognise the benefits of tourism cannot be overestimated. In its three years of operation it has allowed town and village communities to become involved in the tourism sector by putting on local events, such as the Great Burley Picnic, Small Business Saturday and Milford Food Week, all of which add significant numbers to the local visitor economy.

Marketing and Product Development (the fourth integrated programme) is where NFDP works with businesses to improve their offer by providing high quality environmentally aware services and facilities, and helps to market them to appropriate audiences throughout the year.

### **Impacts and Results of Initiatives**

The key findings listed earlier summarise the main impacts and results of the initiatives identified in this Case Study. NFDP has very limited resources in comparison with other well-known destinations meaning that monitoring and benchmarking outcomes and consistent baseline setting has been difficult to achieve over 25 year period. Full blown research is rarely undertaken due to cost, however, in the recent past NFDC and NPA have undertaken visitor and resident surveys and the destination participates in a volume and value survey every two years using the Cambridge Economic Model.

A significant result of NFDP's commitment to long term relationship building has been the effort put into getting policy makers of local authorities outside of the tourism remit to understand the benefits of Wise Growth and incorporate them into their policy development. There is recognition that this has assisted in creating continuity between the planning policies of NFDC and the NPA which has led to consistent and positive support for tourism related planning applications by both authorities, particularly in the sensitivities of built tourism development. “..liaison role in tourism related planning matters to improve mutual understanding between the Industry and The Planning Authority and thus reduce the cost of wasted applications by the Industry and the fighting of appeals by the Authority.”<sup>181</sup>

In the last 5 or 6 years alone, there has been in the region of £150m invested in local tourism visitor economy infrastructure and local businesses which has continued to raise the bar in quality of guest experience. This level of investment is unlikely to have been achieved without the confidence of potential developers that their applications would receive a fairer hearing than perhaps might have been the case in the past. To demonstrate the confidence of the destination further, in 2011 alone the New Forest

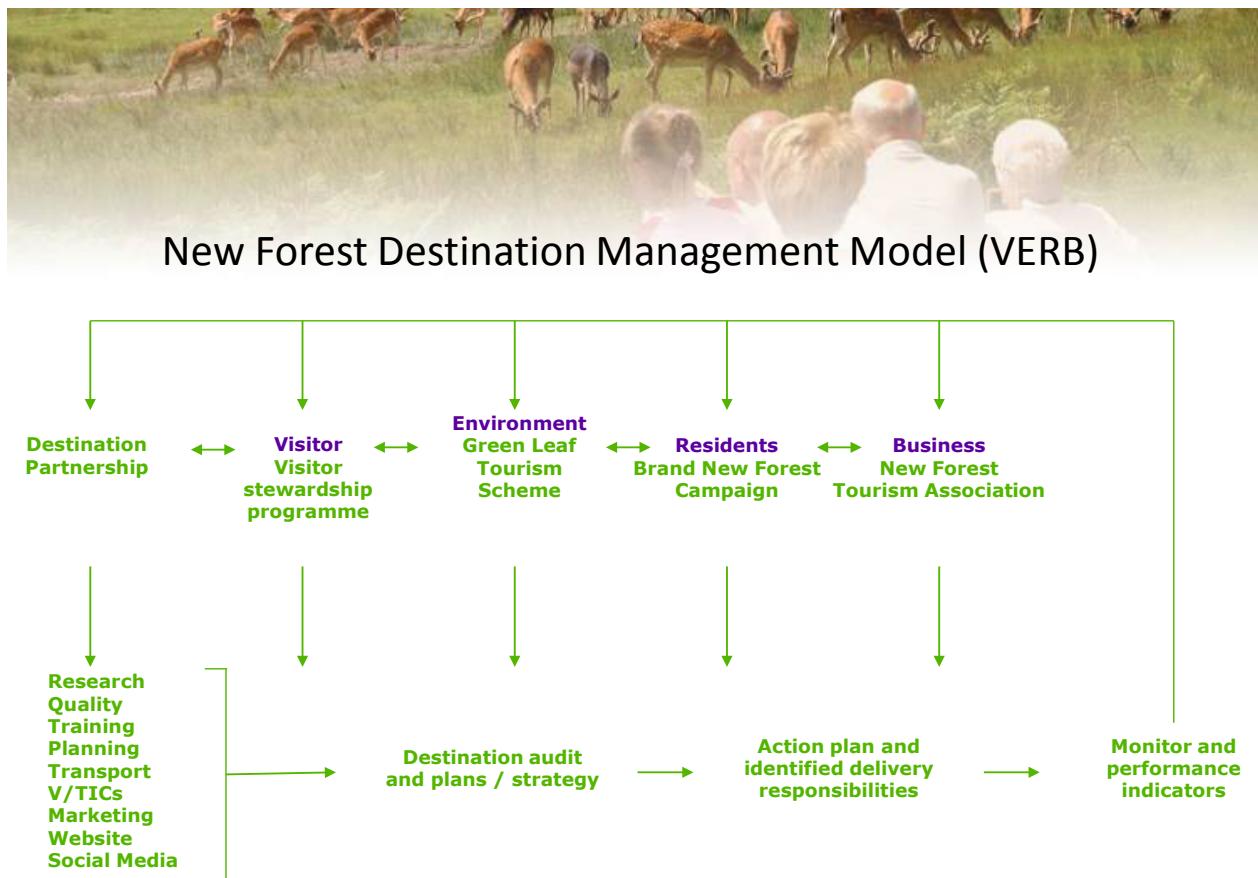
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<sup>181</sup> Our Future Together II p.21

helped provide the UK Hotelier of the Year, World Sommelier Champion, Which Best UK Attraction, AA Hotel of the Year along with the regular winning of many other national and regional hospitality awards.

## Appendix 1

**VERB Model** Provided by Anthony Climpson, New Forest District Council



## Appendix 2

Provided by Anthony Climpson, New Forest District Council

### Responsible Destination Management – using common sense to strengthen the English visitor economy

Create and maintain a comprehensive network of relationships that makes common sense, common practice and develops a common network to deliver common benefit at a local level. To do this by using the recognition of shared interests in providing great experiences and through them, deliver the mutual benefits to Visitors, the Environment, Residents and Businesses. And do so in responsible ways which enhance the human, cultural, economic and natural resources within and between each UK destination, both now and in the future.

## The Economics of Visitor Happiness

Explains the benefits and enlightened shared interest of responsible tourism between Visitors, the Environment, Residents & Businesses

Visitors who are well-informed before they visit, welcomed when they arrive and well cared for during and after their stay tend to be happier visitors.

Happier visitors tend to understand more, spend more, behave well and enjoy a better overall experience during their stay.

A better overall experience during their stay means visitors are more likely to respect and connect with the local culture, environment, residents and businesses, thereby getting more from the place they are visiting.

Visitors who get more from the place they are visiting are therefore more likely to invest in it, both emotionally and financially.

So the emotional and financial needs of local cultures, environment, residents and businesses are more likely to be met by happy visitors.

Happy visitors are also more likely to be less demanding on the public purse, and promote the great experience they've just enjoyed to their family, friends and social media followers.

## Newquay: Newquay Town Council

### Key findings: Key learning points transferable to other areas.

- The DMO function in Cornwall has been placed in an independent, although wholly owned company<sup>182</sup>. The DMO function is limited to marketing, festivals and event co-ordination and development. Sustainable tourism management expertise sits within the organisation and a recognised aspect of the organisation's role.
- The VisitCornwall partnerships have environmental and cultural representatives, as well as several CoaST ambassadors, on the board. All board members have to sign up to, and pledge a commitment to, sustainable tourism principles.
- The success of CoaST in advocating sustainable tourism in Cornwall, and further afield, is widely acknowledged in the public and private sector in Cornwall. Its impact has largely been in the private sector and it has had no financial support from the public sector in recent years. Many of those interviewed said "all credit to CoaST." Credit was also given to Surfers Against Sewage, Cornwall College and South West Tourism (2005 – 2011). Visit Cornwall supported the awards where

<sup>182</sup> Visit Cornwall is a service of Cornwall Development Company which is the arm's length economic development company of Cornwall Council, been charged with delivering economic priorities and solutions on behalf of the Council.

sustainability is a key requirement of all entrants and Visit Cornwall has lead on the testing of the EU indicators.

- In Cornwall most of the progress in sustainable tourism is attributable to the private sector and to GTBS – a number of people used the language of making Cornwall a better place to live and play in – then you can successfully invite visitors. But the perception of the DMO work is limited to promotion and PR.
- The progress made in Cornwall on renewable energy<sup>183</sup> has not been driven by tourism although CoaST has played a role in spreading its use in the tourism sector.
- Because of the leadership of CoaST and the extreme weather events in Cornwall since the Boscastle floods in 2004 more work has been done on sustainability and resilience than anywhere else in the UK, and arguably globally.
- The creation of the new unitary authority led to significant new staffing and the loss of expertise resulting in a policy vacuum in tourism. To mitigate the lack of tourism capacity and competence in the local authority Visit Cornwall were asked to lead policy review
- Tourism has not been “hugely reflected” in the local plan by a “planning department friendly to local development”. In a county where investment is difficult to attract the planners take a positive approach to get development. If sustainable tourism is addressed it is through other policies,

## Context

Cornwall had one million less visitors in 2012 than in 2011, It remains a strong destination offering many who live in urban areas the opportunity to have a breath of fresh air. It comes top of Arkenford's destination consideration league table with 74% of respondents considering it their kind of place for a holiday. It comes third after Yorkshire and Devon for having attracted a visit in the last two years. Cornwall's long coastline is an asset as a visitor attraction, but it also makes it isolated and expensive to reach. Newquay is second only in popularity to St Ives as a place to visit in Cornwall, although of all the destinations in Cornwall it has the highest percentage, 14%, of people saying that it is not their kind of place<sup>184</sup>.

Lacking large urban areas on its doorstep, other than Plymouth with a population of 250,000, Cornwall relies on attracting visitors from further afield<sup>185</sup> and the increasing cost of transport is an issue. Coupled with the experience of extreme weather events, which have since the Boscastle floods in 2004, regularly made the national and international news this contributed to raising awareness of resilience as an issue for the Cornwall and the tourism industry in particular. 2012 was widely referred to as the “lost

<sup>183</sup> The Green Cornwall Strategy <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=29833>

<sup>184</sup> Arkenford Perceptions Research: Generating Strategic Insight for Cornwall December 2012

<sup>185</sup> 28% of tourists come from the South West, 26% from the South East and only 13% from the West Midlands.

Between 80 and 90% of visitors are repeats. Beaufort Research (2013) Cornwall Visitor Survey 2012

summer”, the wettest summer in 100 years, the autumn was also exceptionally wet with flood alerts in Cornwall.

Cornwall Council became a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change in September 2010. Cornwall Council accepts the scientific evidence that climate change is occurring and that it will continue to have far reaching effects on the UK’s people and places, economy, society and environment. The Council acknowledges that

“As an extreme Atlantic coastal area, Cornwall currently has a generally temperate maritime climate. Wetter, stormier winters and hotter drier summers will directly impact, for example, biodiversity, water resources, infrastructure, health, tourism and agriculture. Increased rainfall, storminess and sea level rise have great significance in terms of Cornwall’s vulnerability to the effects of climate change as a particularly exposed peninsula.”<sup>186</sup>

There has been considerable investment in the county in wind and solar power, pioneering work has been done on wave power and the grid is now at “feed in” capacity. The council have also adopted the green Cornwall Strategy and the Sustainable Energy Action plan. Both have reference to the green economy of which tourism is a sector<sup>187</sup>.

In 2011 Cornwall had 4.5m tourists who spent nearly 23 million nights in Cornwall with total visitor spend estimated at £1,855m, generating nearly direct employment of 44,000 FTE jobs, and when 1,225 indirect and induced employment jobs are added reaching 25% of all employment in Cornwall, by contrast in Devon tourism accounts for only 12% of jobs. There is no data for Newquay, but the 2011 data for the former district of Restormel, of which Newquay is the major part, suggests the area has just over 1 million staying visitors and 4.8m staying nights, creating 23% of all employment and employment for 11,951 people equivalent to 8,674 FTEs.<sup>188</sup>

Since the creation of the unitary authority in 2009 tourism has not seen as a priority by Cornwall Council – for example, its 2013 publication Cornwall’s economy at a glance” does not mention tourism. The latest policy statement in January 2013 is quoted here in its entirety:

“ Cornwall Council is committed to supporting the tourist industry in Cornwall and has been working closely with businesses to ensure that all sectors make the best use of the resources which are available.”

Cornwall Council, in partnership with Visit Cornwall and the wider private sector, has been carrying out a review to identify priorities for tourism, marketing and development for the coming decade. The findings of the review are due to be discussed at next week’s meeting of the Council’s Environment, Planning and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any decision on the tourism budget will be made as part of the overall budget setting process of the Council.

<sup>186</sup> <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=23433>

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=6641b960-bf0a-485f-9e24-0be9a0dc9699&version=-1>

<sup>188</sup> The South West Research Company (2012) Value of Tourism 2011, Cornwall

"Tourism is vitally important to the economy of Cornwall and generates £1.5B of visitor spend and supports over 30,000 jobs," said Joan Symons, the Council's portfolio holder for tourism, culture and leisure. "The review process is very important in ensuring that we are investing resources in priority areas which have the most impact and which support the private sector to drive up the value of the sector to the Cornish economy."<sup>189</sup>

This review has been undertaken at a time of significant change in unitary authority, the Chief Executive resigned in December 2012, in March the full council voted down the budget and decided to freeze the authority's council tax, this is likely to result in unplanned and short notice cuts. Elections are due in May and the outcome is more than usually uncertain. One result of the cuts, although it has been mooted for some time, has been a decision to reduce Cornwall Council's support for public toilets. Alternative management measures were being discussed at the time of completing this research to ensure the provision is not lost totally.

Visit Cornwall is the official tourist board for Cornwall, the official tourism service, responsible for marketing Cornwall to domestic and established overseas markets and for improving Cornwall's tourism product. However, its functions are the maintenance of the website, PR and marketing campaigns and research. Visit Cornwall is part of the Cornwall Development Company, established by the new unitary authority in April 2009 its functions included managing the visitor economy and marketing Cornwall. Tourism is not identified as a key sector and whilst the focus of its activity through Visit Cornwall is predominantly on marketing (the most visible function), one third of its work includes research to support tourism development in the round, supporting community event organisers, TICs and supporting social enterprises relating to the skills and inclusion agenda. In Business Pulse the services offered are advertising, marketing and digital communications.<sup>190</sup>

Visit Cornwall is part of a Carbon Footprint Calculator initiative with Superfast Cornwall, CoaST and Clear about Carbon. As they point out on their website "understanding your carbon footprint is the first step towards reducing it and saving money."<sup>191</sup>

Following a fundamental review of tourism in Spring 2012 (lead by Visit Cornwall) which considered destination management and sustainable tourism Cornwall Council Tourism Strategy Paper, January 2013, recommends that a "detailed tourism strategy be developed for the period 2013 to 2020 in order to successfully maintain and manage Cornwall's competitive position in relation to its core tourism related assets and distinctiveness for the economic and social benefit of both local people and visitors." Meanwhile for 2013/14 three key activities are prioritised: marketing, digital marketing and research and market intelligence.<sup>192</sup>

189 <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=33345> posted 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013

190 <http://www.business-pulse.co.uk/groups/cornwall-development-company-cdc/?id=296>

191 <http://www.visitcornwall.com/industry/carbon-footprint-calculator>

192 Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1 February 2013) Developing a Cornwall Tourism Strategy

The review did recognise that

"It is critical that Cornwall secures its competitive strengths and position by protecting the key assets that attract and interest its visitors, especially the distinctive landscape, heritage, cultural strengths, beaches and protected areas. These make up the unique 'Cornwall Offer'.

Equally important is to keep Cornwall's reputation as a quality destination and to ensure the quality of the visitor experience within the private and public product (the public realm) is maintained and continuously improved.

To achieve these goals it is important to work effectively across Cornwall as well as at the local town/parish level. Equally, the needs of the tourism sector must be integrated within the localism agenda as well as generic economic development and investment initiatives such as key transport infrastructure, superfast broadband, skills and staff development."

Despite recognising that tourism can be used for economic development, employment generation, contributing to culture, wellbeing and quality of life and that tourism "acts as a driver to protect, maintain and improve the quality of the landscape and environment" and that

"Tourism impacts on, and contributes to, many aspects of Cornwall and it is important that the principles of effective destination management, marketing, planning and sustainable tourism are embedded."

The strategy paper reports that tourism contributes 10.9% to GVA, generates £1.5bn of visitor spend and according to the ONS tourism constitutes 14.9% of employment. The DMO function is limited to marketing. Three key activities were identified and prioritised:

- i) attracting first time visitors to Cornwall through appropriate promotions including targeted PR, media relations, TV/Film production support and relevant major festivals/events with a view to optimising the environmental and cultural offer"
- ii) "development and improvement of its award winning digital marketing, social media, content production and sharing" and
- iii) "targeted research and market intelligence activities to drive Cornwall's marketing and product development, communicating that knowledge to the private sector and local delivery partners."<sup>193</sup>

The case against tourism is also well made in the strategy paper. It has low productivity compared to high-tech engineering and agri-food production; it contributes to congestion; places strain on the management of the public realm and provision of public services; contributes to the shortages of affordable housing and there is a need for

<sup>193</sup>Ibid. 2 a-c

improved training and employment practices and the development of better career paths and progression.

The strategy describes sustainable tourism and VERB<sup>194</sup> and points out that “a truly sustainable tourism offer” is necessary to be consistent with Cornwall Council’s environmental aims and recognises the need for “local effective destination management” and for “all key stakeholders from the private and public sectors plan and work together to deliver quality visitor service, facilities and customer experience”, in order that Cornwall remains competitive. These elements of the strategy remain unfunded, unbudgeted and inoperative.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP recognises “key market sectors such as the creative industries, marine, food and drink, agricultural, **tourism** and environmental, many of which are experiencing high growth.” But there are as yet no tourism initiatives.<sup>195</sup>

## Structure and Governance

Newquay Town Council was established in 1985 but has recently been expanding the services it provides. The Council took over the running of the Tourism Information Centre in May 2010<sup>196</sup>. In 2011-12 the Council spent £49,700 on Tourism and Leisure and the TIC, in 2012/13 the budget was £70,100; 13% of total council expenditure. In March 2013 Newquay Town Council is planning to take over the maintenance of the town’s toilets from Cornwall Council. VisitCornwall has supported the creation of VisitNewquay as the official resort and destination marketing organisation for the town and surrounding area through staff and expertise provision. There has also been a transfer of tourism marketing assets to the Town Council, the formation of a Business Improvement District with a strict SLA on roles and responsibilities with VisitNewquay. The Town Council has invested in printed and digital guides, digital apps and a new destination website linked to the Cornwall Destination Management System.

The Newquay Town and Parish Plan published in November 2010 reports the results of a local survey showing that parking and congestion and the balance between family and the nightlife tourism markets are both issues in the town. In the 2012 residents survey only 33% of respondents in Newquay reported that tourism was good for their area. The lowest in Cornwall, the average was 89% good for their area. At the county level the biggest negative impacts identified by residents were the pricing goods and services where 55% thought that the impact was negative; litter 61% and noise 40%.

## Current Situation

There is talk about the “greatest return for the lightest footprint”. In Newquay the number of better quality hotels and upmarket apartments is increasing.

<sup>194</sup> VERB model – Visitors, Environment, Residents and Business

<sup>195</sup> <http://www.cornwallandislesofscillylep.com/what-is-lep/introduction.html>

<sup>196</sup> Visit Cornwall withdrew from funding TICs in favour of digital marketing

**Public Realm:** there is widespread recognition of the importance of the public realm to tourism and of the importance of keeping tourism special but funding for the maintenance of beaches and other public facilities is under real pressure and the legacy of the urban public realm in Newquay is unattractive. Cornwall is beginning to look at innovative ways of engaging volunteers in managing the public realm, particularly beaches.<sup>197</sup>

**Beaches:** in Cornwall as a whole 85% of respondents in the 2012 residents' survey said that they would be happy for the Council to support the cost of maintaining the cleanliness of local beaches and footpaths. In Newquay there are a range of ad hoc processes for the management and cleaning of beaches and there are reported to be no major problems. Cornwall has six Blue Flag beaches<sup>198</sup>, none of them in Newquay. South West Water is offering advice on overflows at 21 of the South West's best loved beaches.<sup>199</sup>

**Derelict Hotels:** There has been a reduction in the serviced accommodation bed stock in Newquay as struggling hotels were closed and purchased for conversion to apartments. Estimates suggest that 69% of the bed stock was taken out of the market. However, before the conversion could be completed the recession struck, in 2008 developers went bankrupt and Newquay was left with 19 derelict sites in 2010 posing a fire hazard. Most have now been levelled but a fire at the Cedars in March 2013 required 50 fire fighters to bring it under control and 30 neighbours had to be evacuated.<sup>200</sup>

**Second Home Ownership:** widely recognised as an issue Cornwall Council is seeking planning powers to address this issue.

**Car parking:** car parks are an important revenue source for Cornwall Council and some are being sold for development as retail parks or supermarkets.<sup>201</sup>

**Airport:** located at Newquay the airport is still subsidised and remains contentious because of its carbon footprint and the emissions from aviation. The residents' survey reports 82% support for the airport and increasing the number of routes available from it.

The REAP methodology was used to determine the overall carbon footprint of the 2011 Boardmasters Music Festival. The festival annually attracts 150,000 visitors<sup>202</sup>, in 2011 30kg of greenhouse gases were emitted per visitor per day – only 21% of this was accounted for by travel<sup>203</sup>. The carbon impact was off-set by protecting 40 acres of rainforest through Cool Earth. In 2011 visitors were encouraged to travel by bus and to

<sup>197</sup> They are looking at the Scottish Trail Fairies model <http://7stanesmountainbiking.com/Glentress---Innerleithen/trail-fairies> & <http://www.glentresstrailfairies.org/about>

<sup>198</sup> [http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/ImgLibrary/Award%20Winners%202012%20070912\\_3646.pdf](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/ImgLibrary/Award%20Winners%202012%20070912_3646.pdf)

<sup>199</sup> <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=18369>

<sup>200</sup> <http://www.newquaypeople.co.uk/Action-derelict-sites-urged/story-18401021-detail/story.html>

<sup>201</sup> See for example Launceston <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=01f37e4d-ac6d-4ab2-91a4-b8056eee83f3&version=-1>

<sup>202</sup> Research conducted in 2009 suggests that the festival created £5.8m of visitor spend and a total business turnover of £7.5m creating 129 FTE jobs during the festival.

<sup>203</sup> 43% of emission were accounted for by shopping and 27% by food, Green Events Pathfinder, Boardmasters 2011, Cornwall Development Company, Cool Earth and Visit Cornwall

car share and to walk and cycle locally, local contractors were used to reduce transport emission and there were efforts to reduce waste and increase recycling. A green car tax of £5 per day or £8 per weekend was levied.

### **Newquay Safe**

Cornwall has long attracted a clientele with alternative life styles, the St Ives artists' colony and the wealthy at Rock Polzeath in the Camel Estuary have been referred to variously as Britain's Saint-Tropez and Kensington due to its popularity with the very affluent and upper-class holiday-makers.

In July each year around 6,000 post-GCSE students have been arriving in Newquay to celebrate the end of their exams, the vast majority staying at campsites on the outskirts of town or in budget accommodation in the town's surf lodges. In July 2009 in two separate incidents, two teenage boys were killed in falls from cliffs at night, and another teenager was seriously injured.

The Newquay Safe Partnership<sup>204</sup> was established in July 2009 and consists of approximately 30 officers and members from 15 different Council services and partner agencies.<sup>205</sup> The partnership was established to address alcohol related anti-social behaviour in order to enhance Newquay's environment and atmosphere for everyone. Working with Devon and Cornwall Police a zero tolerance policy has been adopted, visitors arriving by rail and car are searched for alcohol and where underage children have alcohol it is confiscated, plastic glasses have been introduced, licensing laws and proof of age checks have been rigorously enforced and parents are called to collect drunk children.<sup>206</sup> Details of the young people returned home are passed to their local police or safeguarding agencies as part of Newquay's 'Follow you home' scheme to ensure anti-social behaviour that occurs on holiday does not stay on holiday.<sup>207</sup> Newquay has been recognised as one of 12 National Neighbourhood Agreement Pathfinders.

Street Safe runs alongside Newquay Safe and is designed to help young people, who get injured, become ill or get into difficulties while out at night in Newquay. Street Safe Scheme has helped between 4 and 5 teenagers back to their accommodation in Newquay every night and has taken care of many others who were being sick or were unwell from too much alcohol. Medics took care of minor injuries and police and youth workers provided practical help and advice.<sup>208</sup>

### **Industry Engagement**

There has been remarkable industry engagement with the broad sustainability agenda

204 South West Councils (2011) Newquay Safe Project

205 [www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=20130](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=20130)

206 Parents of over 60 young people were contacted during July and August 2011. In 2010 the parents of 24 young people drunk or incapable were contacted to collect their children.

207 [www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24587](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24587)

208 South West Councils (2011) Newquay Safe Project

in Cornwall. This was variously ascribed to the culture and character of Cornwall<sup>209</sup>, the kind of incomers attracted to the county, and to peer group pressure amongst businesses. Simply Green Cornwall is an example of this:

"a group of forward thinking businesses in Cornwall who share the common desire to preserve, conserve and sustain all that is unique and exceptional about Cornwall. From green BnBs to bush craft courses in remote woodlands to quality locally sourced products and services, Simply Green Cornwall is a showcase for the innovation, responsibility and idealism of some great people, businesses and organisations in Cornwall."<sup>210</sup>

Cornwall Council runs and organises the Cornwall Sustainability Awards which tourism businesses enter,<sup>211</sup> and the Green Cornwall Show attracts some tourism business. A few of those interviewed referred to actions taken by various local authorities in Cornwall before the country became a unitary authority and pointed to the significance of Cornwall's Green Infrastructure Strategy, which includes as an objective: "Supporting and increasing the tourism offer by making environmental improvements that increase the setting, functionality and accessibility of destinations"<sup>212</sup> It is clear from the relative lack of activity by Cornwall Council that Cornwall's reputation for sustainable tourism cannot currently be attributed to local government. It has probably been assisted by the availability of European Objective 1 and Convergence Funding. Whilst CoaST itself was reluctant to accept credit, nearly everyone else interviewed recognised the importance of their endeavours over the last 10 years.

The CoaST<sup>213</sup> network now comprises 1,340 members, it has 25 Ambassadors and 450 people now have the BTEC in Sustainable Tourism, 240 accommodation providers use laundry cards and they are in 1,967 rooms. In the first five years CoaST raised £750,000 to put towards delivering sustainable tourism in Cornwall, little of it from public sources in Cornwall. CoaST has been invited to work with 23 other destinations. There are 114 GTBS certified businesses in Cornwall, 423 (Gold and 48 Silver) 13 of them in Newquay. In Newquay there are outstanding sustainable tourism businesses including the Scarlet and Bedruthan Steps Hotels, Fifteen Cornwall, the Venus Café and the Watergate Bay Hotel, Perran Sands, Merlin Farm Eco Cottages, Hendra Holiday Park with its 10 acre solar Park Meadow a 1.5 Megawatt facility.

It was not possible to determine what the impacts and results of the various initiatives in Cornwall have been.

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<sup>209</sup> "It's Cornwall stupid"

<sup>210</sup> <http://simplygreencornwall.com/>

<sup>211</sup> See <http://cornwallsustainabilityawards.org> and the business awards [www.cornwallbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.cornwallbusinessawards.co.uk)

<sup>212</sup> Cornwall County Council (2012) *A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cornwall*

<sup>213</sup> Described as the grit that makes the pearl

# Reflections on Day 1 of RTD8 (International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations), Manchester in April 2014: 1

*Martin Brackenbury*

Martin, whose career has primarily been in outbound tourism, and who chairs the Centre for Responsible Tourism's Advisory Board, wrote these reflections.

I came up as a tourist yesterday on Virgin trains, an excellent service, and then found myself in The Monastery, a kind of cathedral with an assembled choir.

Yesterday was about how we attempt to manage destinations responsibly, with most of the case studies being from the UK-ranging from England, Northern Ireland, County Durham, Cities: Bath, Manchester, Lincoln, York, National parks and forests as well as connectivity-transport and the internet. They were consistently insightful and in some cases provocative presentations. More they were inspiring and energising, displaying high levels of competence, endeavour, passion and drive.

What was my take on what we heard and what questions did the sessions raise?

- 1 The frameworks outlined for management were not dissimilar: Research; The creation of Brands; Product development; managing the visitor experience; communications; the need for partnerships of trust among stakeholders to create a shared vision, the vehicle for which is a detailed plan, integrating environment/visitors/residents and businesses; monitoring and feedback.
- 2 But there is difficulty in getting stakeholders on-board and gaining consensus to a shared vision. There is a need for passionate committed individuals to be involved. Significant skills are required to lead, influence, cajole and co-ordinate where there is no legislative clout.
- 3 Everyone was concerned with conserving and enhancing the spirit of place for which they were responsible.
- 4 Destinations are places that are living changing entities- they need to be nurtured like gardens if they are not to wither and to die. A constant process of regeneration and renewal is necessary.
- 5 DMO public funding is reducing, if not altogether disappearing. In their current form they appear to be financially difficult to justify. Private sector participation only happens where they see commercial, usually short term, benefits.
- 6 Some of the DMO marketing role has been superseded by a more trusted platform-Tripadvisor.

- 7 The place and role of DMOs within the system of Town planner/local authorities/residents/and businesses need to be reviewed. Local authorities have a massive role but lack the funding for tourism.
- 8 To my surprise, all were interested in more tourism except perhaps York which had some issues of congestion management.
- 9 Research and measurement is vital but performance is patchy.
- 10 Augmented reality through google glasses may yet replace Tripadvisor for the 'here and now' of destinations.
- 11 Managing destinations is evolving, but it is not new. Beau Nash in 1740s and 1750s was a one man DMO for Bath as any reader of Jane Austen, writing 50 years later, can attest.

So what questions were raised?

To my mind there were several:

- 1 For practitioners, would we have got more out of the presentations if we had been able to appreciate some of the tensions and difficulties that arise and how they were resolved? Work arises where there are problems, so for example, how are trade-offs between short term/long-term, private/public strategic/tactical best managed?
- 2 What about the different 'languages' each of the 'tribes' involved speak- the planners, the local authorities, the businesses, the DMOs. How do they overcome their cross-cultural issues and tensions?
- 3 Sustainability was a frequently used word. But were they talking about the destination or the DMO?
- 4 Should DMOs restrict their activities to focus on what is not done well by others? Among which could be perhaps as a facilitator/catalyst, as a developer of products, offering business support, managing Brand development and reputation.
- 5 How can DMOs work more effectively with planners?
- 6 50% of SMEs are not digitally savvy. How can we accelerate them joining in?

## Reflections on Day 1 of RTD8: 2

*Manda Brookman, Director of CoaST and One Planet Tourism*

### **Tourism – it can warm your home, or burn down your house.**

An old adage – with, as always, much truth; and one which resonates with all those of us working in responsible and sustainable tourism. And it reminds me of a moment listening to the news some years ago with my then small daughter, who was listening

very intently and trying to understand the world through her six year old ears. A security alert was announced, and discussed, and sure she had found a foothold in the stream of incomprehensible information, turned to me triumphantly and said, “‘Terrorism’! That’s what you do, mummy, isn’t it?”

“No, my lovely – it’s “tourism””.

From the mouths of babes...

I’ve been asked this evening to spend a few minutes looking under the carpet. Asking us to be big and bold enough to look at the other side of tourism, in order to make sure we know whether we are indeed warming, or burning, our homes. And this is crucial for lots of reasons, and to be honest, if we “responsibleists” aren’t going to do this, then we have to ask, who will...

I have five points that exercise my mind. More philosophy than fact.

**1 – This is not about balance. It’s not about a quid pro quo. A wholesale, destination-sized offsetting exercise. An “I can use and abuse this part of the community/landscape/place because I bring x amount of money or jobs”.** It should, in fact, not be about justifying our negative impacts; but instead be about making the place simply better than before.

Because if not, it just means we’ve accepted that tourism is just another extractive industry (sigh) that we, ideally, try to mitigate the impacts from. Making it all A Little Bit Less bad. Tourism by rights exists in a place because it brings benefit to the place. On many levels. It’s welcomed by all, for all. Otherwise it’s simply a dressed up form of mining.

So “striking a balance – – presumably of good against bad – is not good enough. This should not be about extraction, for a negotiated price. It should be about absolute investment. And by that, I mean tourism being allowed to be there, BECAUSE it’s investing – in every sense - *in* a place, not just making money *from* a place. As I say - be wary with our quid pro quo justifications. Are we saying it’s OK for this young woman over here to become a teenage mum in a seaside resort down to circumstance, because someone somewhere else got a job with a new hotel? That’s what we’re effectively doing when we count only the job numbers or bed nights, rather than looking at the whole picture.

And if we don’t see the whole picture, if we don’t ensure that the whole place is better than before – why are we inviting tourism into a destination? It can be a big boat to steer safely into harbour without damaging the walls. We can’t justify the extraction on the basis that we make a little bit of investment. And this is in this country, where things are much more difficult to unravel; there are plenty of places elsewhere where the industry is clearly, overtly, an extractive one, with the only efforts to “reduce impacts” are lip service and greenwash. We all know them. In this country we have to unravel the

impacts; and there are plenty: on the health service, on our marine environment, on our water quality (we're happy to point fingers at farmers for polluting rivers and waterways, but tourism is more implicated than that, and we do our fair share of pouring our real and metaphorical waste away to end up causing a problem down the pipe elsewhere - and it's worth bearing in mind who the farmers are selling their food to, too – there's a visitor at the end of that chain, as well); there are impacts on how much we landfill, on our rural road maintenance, our house prices, our job choices, the number of supermarkets, our natural habitats. Tourism can make a place contribute excessively to climate change, whether it wants to or not. So I'm not yet convinced we have shown that we can always leave a place better than before.

Which takes me onto point number two:

**2 The Point of Profit.** Our communities (our destinations), are comprised of an immense social and environmental asset, belonging to the communities, which as any good capitalist worth their salt will tell you, needs investing in if you're not going to degrade it. You don't buy a house with the intention of reducing it to a pile of rubble. You invest in it. The same goes for our own social and environmental assets – our landscapes, our habitats, our cultural capitals, our social fabrics. They are our own wealth, first and foremost – NOT a “destination asset”. Tourism is invited in because we hope that it will contribute to those assets; tourism will thrive *if* it does. Both community, and tourism, need a social and environmental return – or profit - to come out of this relationship. It's about ensuring that this investment sees greater economic resilience; environmental growth (I don't mean factories that make green widgets – or even green B&Bs; I mean more of the green stuff: greater flood resilience, better carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity, healthier habitats) ;and social profit, through improved wellbeing of hosts and guests, and through thriving, respected, engaged-with-communities. This is not about gated resorts, or two or three tier societies. How can we be proud to have a thriving tourism industry in an area with increasing use of food banks? Are we really in “profit” if inequality is increasing?

We're not even too clear on the economics: we talk about buying local, but we still want to export – we've only half understood what we need to do. Now is the time to get our heads round truly circular economics. How much economic profit do we actually bring into a community, or how much do we bring into a restricted stratum of a community, who then use that profit to buy their lives, lifestyles and holidays – elsewhere? This is not leaving a place better than when you found it. Second homes are, rightly, an issue of ongoing debate. Yes, they bring work, and money. It can be measured in rent accrued, in tradesmen and women employed, in a proxy for wealth spent locally. But how much does it displace? How much community asset is disrupted – even destroyed? How much of the rent stays locally – even in the same county, or region? What impact does it have on house prices for local people? And this uniqueness, this desirability of a destination, if not managed, can become pernicious. If you're going to sell your house, and you can sell it for more to someone as a second home, is the fact that it's pushing up house prices

for local people worth the fact that you made five thousand pounds more? How much is living in your own place worth? Where does the profit pop up? Where is it made? If, according to the World Health Organization, over a billion people in the developing world lack access to sanitary drinking water, and 2 million people die every year as a result -- most of them children under 5 years old - how come a well known company is **going into poor countries like Pakistan and buying up whatever clean water is available** so they can sell it in plastic bottles to globe-trotters from European, Australia, and Americas? How did we get here? Is this secondary impact of tourism leaving the places we touch better than we found them? A place, a "destination", is an Eco-system. A Community. Not a Mine.

3 The third thought that persists in rapping against the inside of my head, is the future. The possibility of thinking differently. Thinking about the concept of a **place, a community, a habitat, a destination, as a shared asset**. Elinor Ostrom - the first female to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics (as the judges, bless them, have apparently only just clocked that women can add up, too) described this as imagining a place, with all its resource, and potential, and systems as – a pooled resource. A place, and a wealth, for all. Not a playground for the few. And by enabling everyone to be *involved in benefiting from* these resources, collaboration increases, and – crucially – care for, and health of, those investments, increases. I'm not convinced we're anywhere near this yet. Our tourism industry often thinks of the local communities, and places, and environments, as theirs, and theirs to sell; but the places do not always feel the tourism industry is theirs. My teenage student daughter was, until a few weeks ago, working part-time in a new bistro in a local village. Zero hours contract. No training. Lots of the usual teething problems, accommodated by the young staff, to help the business get on its feet. Then they employed a chef who was so rude he made almost every single staff member cry, including the young trainee waitresses. My daughter stuck up for her mates, as they were reduced to tears, and she complained. Her shifts started to reduce, and eventually dried up. Others struggled to juggle their studies with the increase in shifts they were being given. It became clear that the business was keeping the waitresses who tolerated the rude and arrogant chef, and who didn't complain. They kept the benefit, the salary, from those who challenged it. A tiny example of something we all know other, bigger examples of, across the planet. A dysfunctional hospitality operation from the start. My daughter wrestled with this – she needed the tiny amount of work she was being offered; but then finally sat down and wrote them a letter. There was a threshold to her exploitation. She had a target to save up for. But she refused. Her labour – her terms. She said no thank you. Not one to be seen as a resource to be extracted, she resigned. I was proud of her. This was not an example of tourism working to create a shared asset.

A pooled resource would see the bistro as an asset for the village. A contribution to the whole. To everyone. Not just those (hard-working, certainly) owners counting the till takings at the end. Not just those who come to eat and drink there, who come to play. But everyone. At its best, a participative co-design of community wealth. At its worse,

exploitative bullying.

So my fourth point, in essence, is that **this is about enlightened self interest**. We need to do better, because it benefits us all if we do. At the moment we cannot say with any certainty that tourism per se has a categoric benefit because we simply don't measure all the impacts; and tourism itself is the one who suffers from that.

I know there will be arguments in favour of the local quantitative measureable impacts of regeneration effect, of jobs, a qualitative sense of place, a cross-sector effect.. But we live in our communities first; we want to work to make them a great place to live. And we have to keep that sense of being a community, before becoming a destination. If you're not going to the real place, if you're going to somewhere that is controlled and manipulated by some to their own end, that claims to "deliver authenticity", that reduces tourism to a commodification of community, not only are you crushing the place, and its people; you're also crushing that very authenticity you might crave as a visitor, and you're simply visiting a pastiche. A virtual, engineered place. So – the place to live comes first. We can then make it a place to go visit. And the trade, and exchange, that generates, has a role: not to deplete the place, to make it less, to make it not what it was; but to irrigate it. To help it grow, to be what it wanted to be, in its own terms, within its own limits, and in Professor Tim Jackson's words, - prosperous – ie not simply bigger – but pro-prosper – "in accordance with its hopes".

Which brings me to my last, and related point: we would do well not to rely on the numbers. If we define and characterise what we do simply in terms of how many bednights we sell in our communities, then we will be judged on that alone, and succeed and fail on it, missing out on explaining what the real, full extraordinary role of tourism is. Tourism and travel is important per se, regardless of any money it generates. It's important for us as social beings, to understand other. Spending time away together plays an immensely important role in healthy relationships, as anyone working in the field of social tourism with impoverished families can witness – indeed, in any social group you care to mention. Difficult behaviour improves, bruised relationships have time to heal again. It's not a luxury; it's a necessity for healthy minds. You ask someone for their best memories of a day out, and will invariably be a day spent outside, somewhere special, with people you love. That connection with those close to us, with the natural environment, and with other – other place, other people, other experience – is fundamental for social bonds, for tolerance, for patience, for wisdom.

But to answer our question today: we cannot deny that tourism uses the destination. Each destination talks about a **product**, a **consumer**, a **sale**. That is indisputably selling the place. But we cannot say for sure if the destination is able to use tourism, because we simply have no comprehensive metric. We are not playing fair, because we say we are doing good, but we are not feeling the need to prove our point. Yes we can point to economic activity, and jobs, and "regeneration"; but as we see above, that misses out some of the unwanted impacts.

We can bring money in, but we don't know where it all goes; and we certainly know it doesn't always get to those places who need it most. The need for a real, honest, rigorous metric is so categoric, it's hiding in plain sight.. We just don't even measure the social and environmental impact of polluted beaches, of increasing social inequality as we pursue value not volume (wallets not buckets), of water systems blocked by food providers, of elderly people not getting health visits on time, of litter and air pollution and nappies in landfill and rental homes out of reach. We only just managed to keep a grip on understanding the economic impact. What is our impact? What is our overall budget? It's like having a housekeeping budget for your home, and doing really really well on not spending more than you should on bread; but going completely overdrawn on your jam. Overdrawn is overdrawn. And I haven't even touched on environmental limits. Paul Peeters, associate professor of sustainable transport and tourism at the Centre for Sustainable Tourism and Transport, at the Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands notes that aviation alone is responsible for half the sector's carbon, and this share will increase if the development is left to free market forces, which unfortunately, it largely is. Half our carbon impact is aviation. What's our overall budget? We don't even know? How much of it do we want to spend on flying? Is it OK to spend all the carbon on aviation because we bring in x amount of million per year? Are we sure?

How are we doing? Coping with congested streets in a honeypot town in August because you know overall your town, and community, will benefit from increased wealth., jobs, opportunities, engagement with other, is one thing. Tolerating impact because you have no choice, because it's someone else's agenda for growth, and the impact on your social fabric and environmental space is not even considered, never mind measured, is a different thing altogether.

And in exactly the same way, we have also failed to date to measure, and show, the evidence that we are categorically doing good. So – the right metric is crucial. Communities are complex systems. The introduction of tourism into them will have many different impacts. Many of them are damaging, certainly; but there are many, many more that are very very good that we don't begin to articulate. Pride in hosting guests who think where we live is amazing enough to visit, esteem in deriving new skills to gain a sense of self worth; income to care for natural habitats and improve biodiversity; to create better access for individuals with disabilities; underpinning rural bus routes and providing increased community access to our tourism infrastructure through local discounts; contributions to local programmes supporting local community and environmental activities; exposing work-fraught visitors to the unquantifiable health benefits of just spending some time outside, with other people, and re-connecting with our natural systems. It's much, much more than just money. If I want to ensure the overall warmth of my child, I wouldn't base it solely on whether or not he had put his socks on. I would include all his clothes, what he eats, the house, consider the changing weather conditions outside. It's a much bigger picture. We have made poor progress on

measuring, as a planetary community, an income and expenditure budget for tourism that a) includes social, environmental, AND economic columns; and b) shows that the activity in all three columns, in all places, as a profit. Until we do, tourism uses the place and not the other way round. We measure it SOLELY by its numbers; and if we fail to explain the social and environmental benefits it can bring, we will succeed, and fail, on those numbers. We need to be honest and courageous and innovative in our approach, past the shiny surface and to the hidden places underneath. Acknowledge, and design out the bad - the young waitresses being made to cry; **and** the good - the investment in biodiversity and wellbeing, not **just** as the chinking bank accounts of the owners. Once we have acknowledged that these impacts, too – good and bad! - need to be measured, and we find a way to do so, then we can ensure that tourism is indeed irrigating, not draining; investing in, and not extracting; being the force for good that we know it can - leaving a place better than when we found it. Thank you.

## Reflections on Day 1 of RTD8: 3

*Jason Freezer Head of Destination Management April 2014*

The final session of the two days at RTD8 in Manchester featured Martin Brackenbury and myself reflecting on the content of the previous day. A challenge for any delegate to the conference considering that both days had been packed with thought provoking content.

One might argue that a personal perspective from the conference co-chair is biased, especially as I am the destination management lead at the host country's national tourist board; but there was no doubting the calibre of the speakers and presentations. Delegates benefitted from a variety of views from destinations around England, the UK and the rest of the world (although perhaps the latter could have been stronger).

If engagement was a success measure then it was without doubt a resounding success - the energy through the day did not wain and the level of interest both in the room and online was impressive. Social media activity was frenetic during the event and continued for some time after it.

A key observation from day one is that we (destinations/ tourism professionals) need to be having new and different conversations locally (and not just in England). To do this destination managers need to have the skills, knowledge and confidence. In my opening remarks I commented that it was a shame that not more destinations stayed for day two, as this may have inspired them and provided essential information on wide range of topics relevant for those conversations.

In the current environment, it is perhaps unrealistic expecting destination managers to take two days out of the office. It is often the case that the focus has to be on the day job; time is precious and as we heard resources short. As a result many [destination

managers] don't do enough horizon scanning and long term thinking as they should or indeed in many cases really want to. The short term is more critical for some - chasing money and support from local stakeholders.

Rather than picking out favourite sessions there are a number of common themes that flowed through the day:

- Importance of the private sector and communities
- Partnership and collaboration
- Management not marketing
- Focus on Growth
- Sharing lessons (and not just success)
- The purpose and changing nature of Destination Management

### **Importance of the private sector and communities**

In the "what does success look like?" session we heard from a number of examples across Britain where the private sector really are leading and where the interest of the communities are at the heart of destination management. I was asked why there were not more speakers from the private sector if they were so important. This is an important consideration for any future events. The private sector should be involved and active at these events; apart from the OTA session at RTD8 where we had 2 private sector speakers they were sadly missing.

We heard from a number of people that the private sector needs to step up to the plate for funding and get involved in the process of destination management. There was a common belief, however, that they are only interested in the marketing of destinations. Whilst I agree I do wonder how they are being engaged in wider conversations about more than just promotion. Private sector businesses are in the main interested in the quality of product and in the place in which they live (it's in their best interest) but if destinations only ask them about marketing they will only get a marketing response. I gave an example during my slot of Durham (there are others) where businesses are asked to vote on the actions in the destination plan - these are actions about much more than promotion.

### **Partnership and collaboration**

The message here is not new but what came through very strongly is that partnership and collaboration is critical and it needs working at constantly. From my own perspective, in destination management it is key; in particular around the development of destination management plans. It wasn't said at the event but in my opinion that, where a destination management plan is concerned, it's more the process of plan development that is valuable than the document itself.

## "Management not marketing"

This came up from the very outset during James Berresford's keynote; it is a personal frustration that people do not understand the difference between management and marketing and I was delighted that it remained a theme throughout a number of presentations.

It is an interesting thought for many in local areas and a point of confusion about what destination management is all about. My favourite mantra, which I think is true, is "management of a place often includes marketing it, but rarely does marketing of a place include the management of it."

There was a comment during the OTA session about the confusion of the ubiquitous acronym DMO, with lots of confusion to what the M means. A proposal was put forward to just call them all "DOs" (destination organisations) but I'm not keen on that as some have already pointed out that if there are DOs there must also be DONTs. Interestingly from my role at VisitEngland, we are trying to change this confusion with acronyms and not use them. The common name is destination organisations (for those who might just do promotion or for those we don't understand what their function is fully) or destination management organisations, who genuinely do the management function.

What wasn't said is that Destination Organisations generally don't do marketing they focus on PROMOTION elements in the 4 "Ps" of marketing.

I also reflected during my presentation that this misconception of marketing vs. management starts (or is at least reinforced) in universities. There are lots of "destination marketing" courses, which may well cover marketing in its fullest sense but for institutions that pride themselves on accuracy of reporting I feel its misrepresents the role that future destination managers will (or should) have. If this is just an attempt to make the undergrad course more appealing (I appreciate how competitive it is for Unis too) then add the management into the mix - "destination management and marketing". Not all universities are created equal and I know there are some (Manchester Metropolitan and Leeds Met with their Responsible Tourism courses) ensure their students know the difference. Where are the others??

## Focus on Growth

Growth was mentioned by a number of speakers (domestic and international) but there was no attempt to define it. Everywhere is different and some places need more visitors to help support their local communities or indeed their environments but others clearly don't and perhaps should be focusing on growth in value terms. There are of course other places that might need fewer people or else the damage done by tourism outweighs the benefit.

The session with Manda and Jane at end of the day one left us all with some interesting things to think about. The question here that I was left with will be a difficult one for any of us to answer quickly although clearly it needs our joint consideration. Do we need to redefine what we mean by growth- should it just be an economic measure and if not can we consider more circular economic models?

### **Sharing lessons (and not just success)**

It is great to hear the success but we also need to learn what went wrong and why. It was raised as a comment by Peter Hampson from British Destinations but many people acknowledged this point publicly and privately after that. John Swarbrooke's reflection at the end day two also hit home for me. Many people talked about the outputs, in some cases the outcomes but very few talked about the process and what are the lessons to be shared from during that journey?

### **The purpose and changing nature of Destination Management**

Tony Gates, CEO at Northumberland National Park articulated it most clearly for me -Destination Management (the destination management plan in particular) should be about the place not the organisation. It was interesting to note that during some of the sessions where sustainability was mentioned the reference was about the organisation and not the sustainability of the place. Language is important and it is clear that some organisations need to start having a different type of conversation about their places. It's back to the theme of the final session - does tourism use the destination or can the destination use tourism?

The role of planners in destination management was highlighted as critical, perhaps through conversations facilitated by the development of a destination management plan. Having a closer relationship with planners was suggested as a means of ensuring that activities, which focus on improving the place benefited local people primarily, but not at the detriment of visitors. It was also noted that the length of service of most planners outlived the tenure of many politicians – so if tourism features in the local development plans it is more likely to survive long term.

The pace of change was noted and destination management is clearly not immune. Justin Francis raised the increasing role of technology in visitor information provision and holiday booking. He suggested that destination management organisations needed to reflect on their role and move more towards curating experiences and the provision of inspiration rather than the detailed promotional role they currently have. I would go further and suggest that there needs to be a more radical reflection of destination management - can those responsible locally embrace the other "Ps" in marketing more robustly? Is it possible to build relationships with OTAs and other tech providers to address market failures? Can a genuinely holistic approach demonstrate the value of destination management more clearly?

It was also clear that working across sectors will be important. Tourism is special to those of us who work in it but in reality, we are no different to retail, professional services or manufacturing - they all think they are special too. All the sectors in a destination have a common interest; the place and its people (who can be visitors too), that can't be denied and this is the starting point to enable some of these silos to be broken. If organisations want to be sustainable, I think having some of these conversations is a must. Some examples we heard already taking this approach include Jane from Visit York and Emma from the Visit Lincoln Partnership.

What remains constant in destination management is need for passion about the place. Without this you really have to question why we are doing it at all. It was evident in all of our speakers and it clearly makes a difference. It is also evident in my fellow chair, Harold Goodwin, and the team led by John Swarbrooke at MMU whose passion was evident in helping to put on such a successful event.

In my opening remarks as RTD8 officially started, I reflected on the previous RTD events I have had the privilege of speaking at and the comments I have received from the many people I have met over the years, who have spoken or attended the series of conferences. The common theme for all was the degree of inspiration that people took away from the events. RTD8 has been no different, although for me it has been closer to home and much more poignant in many respects. I am not sure what the legacy of RTD8 will be yet but without question it has got a lot of people thinking.

# **Opportunities for tourism businesses to contribute to destination development in the post-2015 era: report on a symposium**

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## **Introduction**

This report highlights key points emerging from a symposium of tourism industry professionals and academics in London in April 2014. All attendees had a strong interest in responsible and sustainable tourism, and several had extensive experience in the tourism industry. The symposium was organised by Professor Regina Scheyvens of Massey University (New Zealand) and Professor Harold Goodwin of Manchester Metropolitan University, both of whom have research trajectories which demonstrated a long-term interest in pro-poor, sustainable and responsible tourism.

The United Nations Global Compact has identified the post-2015 development era as “an historic opportunity for the international business community to contribute to the attainment of worldwide sustainability and development objectives.” Discussions are continuing which are likely to result in United Nations’ commitment to Sustainable Development Goals post-2015. This will create opportunities for the tourism industry, but it might also raise expectations in terms of sustainable and responsible practices.

The symposium commenced with opening comments on the emerging post-2015 development agenda from Harold Goodwin and a presentation from Regina Scheyvens on potential roles for tourism businesses in relation to the post-2015 agenda. This introduction was followed by an open, round table discussion where participants asserted their own views on roles, and barriers for tourism businesses, in contributing to destination development post-2015. The symposium was conducted under Chatham House rules and therefore the names of the participants have been omitted.

This report summarise key points raised in the discussion, in some cases showing areas where consensus was reached and in others indicating different viewpoints of those present.

## **Talking about responsible business: the importance of terminology**

The concept of Corporate Community Development (CCD)<sup>214</sup> defined as deliberate efforts by businesses to direct benefits to communities was introduced. This is a development-first, rather than a business-first approach . One person said that CCD

<sup>214</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/ccd](http://www.massey.ac.nz/ccd)

seems philosophically better than CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), but that it is disconnected from the markets. He continued that managers of companies need a more hardline approach than either CCD or CSR: they need CSO – Corporate Social Obligations, otherwise they will not change: "We need to take CSR away from the softer language of responsibility and more towards obligation".

Another person commented that CCD implies that tourism business is responsible for development, but this is not fair. Other sectors are talking about how businesses can make a positive difference to those at the bottom of the pyramid, by using the supply chain, productivity and efficiency. Thus, it might be more useful to talk about 'inclusive business' whereby the aim is to build sustainable, for-profit businesses that benefit low-income communities by including them either as consumers or producers.

Finding new business models which will ultimately provide advantages for the business, but meanwhile will improve things for the poor, is essential.

## **Voluntary change or compliance as the best way to encourage more responsible practice?**

There were different opinions among participants about the best mechanisms for encouraging, or requiring, more responsible practice from tourism businesses. Generally, however, participants felt that most companies will not significantly change their practice unless a) there is a cost saving for them, or b) there are compliance issues. One person commented, "Even 'goals' isn't strong enough language to use to get businesses to shift their practice".

Another person shared that in their time working for a tour operator, the only thing investors were interested in was the international labour code: they saw this as a concrete obligation where not complying would lead to business risk or reputational risk.

Suggestions for encouraging change included:

- certification schemes involving external auditing;
- self-regulation, but imposed from above by corporate headquarters with mandatory social and environmental reporting requirements that are part of a company's KPIs for key managers.

## **Leaving no one behind: inequality as a central concern in post-2015 discussions**

It is not just economic inequality that is of concern in the SDGs; tourism could potentially contribute to overcoming non-income inequality (e.g. health, education and gender). In terms of 'no one left behind', concerns were raised about gender issues particularly. Women often make up a high proportion of tourism sector workers so it is an industry well positioned to enhance women's opportunities and wellbeing. Women

are working for no pay in some countries, and have fewer rights than men: at least one participant felt that their empowerment could be transformational. Similarly, youth can be targeted as in the Youth Career Initiative, a programme of the International Tourism Partnership.

Inequality was also raised as a challenge for the tourism industry to address: it is extremely difficult for businesses to improve the wellbeing of those at the bottom of the pyramid. This may point to a need for governments, donors and NGOs to apply their specialist skills – meanwhile tourism and other businesses can look to work at the next level up where poverty is also of concern.

## **Working with destination governments**

A big challenge in enabling tourism businesses to contribute to sustainable destination development was identified: the need to build the capacity of governments to engage effectively with the private sector. There was agreement that partnerships with destination governments are important, but they can be difficult due to institutional weakness, lack of local capacity, and – at times - corruption issues.

Participants expressed that we have to ensure that tourism businesses are not just replacing government in some locations, as that is not an appropriate role for them. For example if hotels pay for cleaning up water reservoirs in one location because of a build-up of bacteria in the water, there is displacement because the government is supposed to be charged with this responsibility. Ideally in such circumstances, industry would partner with the government and seek to strengthen local institutions.

One challenge of partnering with destination governments is that tourism is on the periphery within many governments and thus tourism ministers are often not the most powerful politicians. In such circumstances there is a need to connect with different government departments that deal with infrastructure or construction, environment, planning, waste management, environmental health etc. In some cases it could be more important to work with senior people in the environment ministry, public health or infrastructure rather than tourism *per se*.

It is also important to work effectively with destination governments to ensure that tourism is a motor for economic development in a destination region: this is more likely where there is sound planning to encourage diversification and to maximise linkages with associated sectors (e.g. agriculture), otherwise that region could be very vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist numbers e.g. Luxor.

## **Reporting on CSR/business responsibility: the need for higher quality data**

There is growing concern about the standard of reporting on CSR: more detailed, disaggregated data is needed. Reporting is only done well when it is an obligation, or

where there would be very negative image issues for a business if they don't report: this is why one symposium participant claimed "the only thing that key people take seriously at the moment is carbon reporting".

Some large players e.g. TUI are doing very well re reporting, but it's still mainly on environmental criteria; others need to consider ways of getting up to speed, and all need to pay attention to social and economic sustainability as well.

A lot of CSR reporting is driven by Communications units: thus many businesses have achieved the *appearance* of sustainability without necessarily changing their practice e.g. in Cambodia, some big hotels buy produce from several small providers and promote this in their lobbies, but still import most produce more cheaply from large producers in Vietnam.

It is likely that consumers will demand better 'proof' of commitment to sustainability in future: e.g. businesses won't be able to get away with simply putting local honey on the breakfast buffet with a nice label indicating its source; stakeholders will ask for information on what percentage of food served to guests is purchased locally.

## Who is demanding changes and higher standards of reporting?

The **international community**: reporting is likely to be required in more detail in the post-2015 era; building accountability for goals is one of the four key areas gaining traction in discussions on the post-2015 agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals might set a standard against which all companies above a certain size would be required to report.

Some **governments** are requiring higher reporting standards from large businesses, specifically reporting on non-financial performance e.g. India's Companies Act 2013 involves strengthened regulation and higher expectations of reporting.

**Donors** working to enter into partnerships with businesses are asking business for evidence of sustainability achievements to date; they also use specific results-based management frameworks - tourism organisations working in partnership with donors will need to report comprehensively on results.

**Academics/researchers** have noted that current reporting standards in the tourism industry are below par: e.g. reporting by hotels is seem to be superficial and ad hoc, failing to show the extent of implementation or how it contributed to achieving specific goals.

**Clients and shareholders** are showing growing interest in the overall impact of a business – currently tourism consumers see this in terms of 'better holidays' rather than sustainability. Ideally, however, one participant asserted that we should never wait for the consumer to push for change – it has to be a design principle driven by the company.

The **tourism industry** itself: new initiatives such as the certification scheme 'Travelife' are providing clear guidance on how tourism businesses can provide social and environmental improvements throughout the supply chain.

## **Sustainability rests on long term, holistic planning**

We have to learn from examples like Dominican Republic: taking a long term view leads to more sustainable development rather than boom and bust.

Some businesses are seeking to think more long term, and to invest in relationships in destinations: "to be successful in business, we need to engage with people at the local level, winning hearts and minds. If you're not locally engaged it's a hardnosed business link and highly unproductive because of undermining trust".

Companies should aim to work in partnership with other actors in delivering their goals, and should not overlook government e.g. good linkages with government planners can see tourist businesses contributing to improved infrastructure for tourists as well as other segments of the local population, meeting both economic and social goals.

## **Barriers to long term, holistic planning are substantial**

Most businesses focus on the financial side and take a short-term perspective. Regulation and financial markets give managers permission to be short-termist about everything ('just in time') - this lends itself to narrow ways of operating.

The bottom line is far more important to the highest level of decisions makers than what they do for destinations: company management of a brand want to be able to say 'we saved this amount of money a year'. At the local level there is also lots of pressure to deliver on the bottom line; so, for example, while more local purchasing makes sense on many levels, within a hotel there are likely to be debates between chefs versus procurement officers versus managers.

In practice, a number of tourism businesses have built their business models around being short-term operators and having high levels of flexibility e.g. to move in and out of destinations. One participant in the symposium commented that those "with no skin in the game" see it simply as a finance issue and they will purposefully under-invest in destinations.

We are seeing the growth of asset-light tourism companies e.g. hotel companies that own few properties, but manage many. Being nimble is not good for sustainable, responsible destination planning, but it is good for the bottom line when the business can concentrate on aspects that add value, or where it means they can move out quickly when an investment hasn't proved lucrative in the short term. This can be a threat to destination communities and their wellbeing.

It is difficult to get a coordinated focus on long-term investment in tourism, because there are multiple, fragmented players: accommodation, transport, tour operators etc should ideally work together, but there might not be enough incentive for any one of them invest long-term in a destination. In addition, tourism doesn't occur in a vacuum so it's hard to ensure across the board sustainability: e.g. even if your hotel company has great sustainability values and goals running through it, if the company constructing the hotel acts unsustainability you might have little control over this.

## Opportunities for businesses to act in more sustainable and responsible ways

- There is a lot of interest from development stakeholders (e.g. from donors to environmental organisations) in building effective **partnerships** with the private sector, and they often have dedicated resources and personnel with expertise in areas of sustainability and development.
- Regulation that requires **non-financial reporting** from businesses (like the 2013 Companies Act in India) is likely to increase in future: tourism businesses could take the initiative and look to more closely align their business and development goals.
- Progressive companies are developing business models that are embedded within **social values** and seek commercial success alongside positive development outcomes.
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are likely to be applied to both developing and developed countries, so tourism companies working across a range of destinations (e.g. Europe and Africa) can take an **integrated approach** to applying such goals across their organisation.
- The best ways of working in various destinations might differ: there is a need for **flexibility in application of corporate goals** regarding responsibility and sustainability, with local managers empowered to make decisions based on local circumstances and relationships with stakeholders.
- Gaining a **social license to operate** in destinations is very important for many tourism businesses. There are places where consent has been withdrawn e.g. there might be one beachfront hotel that is always targeted by thieves because of local concerns about management's disregard for their wellbeing. Businesses that take a leadership role and engage positively with destination communities are more likely to prosper. In addition, those at the top are interested in what local managers are doing to protect the destination.
- Given increasing expectations and pressures from governments, clients, international agencies and the industry itself, it is strategic for tourism businesses to start collecting evidence that is more comprehensive **on impact and effectiveness** of their responsible and sustainable business practices.

## **Contributions are welcome in three categories**

### **Practitioner Papers**

Written by those actively engaged in managing tourism or implementing Responsible Tourism approaches – 2,000 to 4,000 words with references primarily to grey literature.

### **Academic Papers**

Traditional papers with full academic referencing 5,000- 8,000 words

### **Work in Progress - Notes from the Field**

Reports on new initiatives, work underway or brief comment pieces. Limited referencing, 400-1,500 words.

We anticipate that there will be a section listing new publications and sources relevant to Responsible Tourism.

*Progress in Responsible Tourism* also carries each November a report on the winners and the highly commended in the annual Virgin Holiday Responsible Tourism Awards.

*Progress in Responsible Tourism* will be published annually in November to coincide with World Travel Market, this reflects our intention that the journal should be of interest to the industry, academics and policymakers. Referencing: traditional footnotes, not Harvard, this is to make the papers more accessible to a non-academic readership.

Practitioner Papers will be reviewed by the editors. Academic Papers will be peer reviewed. Work in Progress and Notes from the Field will be reviewed by the editors. The Journal has an advisory board which has the same composition as the ICRT's Advisory Committee.

If you would like to contribute to the next edition to be published in Spring 2015 please write with a brief abstract to Harold Goodwin or Xavier Font.

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