

FROM INTER-INDIVIDUAL PEACE TO GLOBAL PEACE: The Role of Tourism as International Intervention

Prepared by Bob Zimmer

The Impact of Tourism

A. The worldwide span of tourism

With some \$463 billion of economic activity in 2001 – or roughly 11 percent of the planet's gross product – tourism is the world's largest industry. In 2002 alone, the World Tourism Organization recorded more than 639 million international tourist arrivals. Tourism is estimated to provide 200 million jobs, directly and indirectly, representing 8 percent of world employment, or one in every 12 jobs.

As a result of its size and global scope, tourism is a great opportunity for national economic expansion. Increasingly, developing countries in particular are turning to tourism as a way to diversify their economies, stimulate investments and generate foreign-exchange earnings.

B. Tourism as a disruptive force

Although the tourism industry offers numerous positive prospects for development, it is also a highly disruptive force. Tourism has serious implications for ecosystems and communities around the world. By bringing a large number of foreign people, goods, concepts, and habits, tourism effectively alters the existing balance of the host land. Two of the most frequently mentioned areas vulnerable to tourist disruption are the natural environment and the local culture.

The impact of tourism on the natural environment is a major issue. Hotels, tourist transport and related activities consume huge amounts of energy, water and other resources and generate pollution and waste, often in destinations that are unprepared to deal with these impacts. At destinations where fresh water is scarce, over-consumption by tourists and tourism facilities can divert supplies from local residents or farmers, exacerbating shortages and raising utility prices. Waste disposal is always a major problem and many tourist facilities in the developing world possess limited or no sewage treatment facilities, in part because of weak environmental legislation or a lack of money, monitoring equipment and trained staff.

Tourism also has significant impacts on local culture. As noted in the World Watch *State of the World 2002 Report*, on the one hand tourism can heighten respect for minority groups, helping, for display purposes, to revive languages, religious traditions, and other practices that might otherwise be lost. Unfortunately, more often than not, indigenous communities end up the 'featured attractions' of ventures they have had little input in designing.

Industry promoters may reduce entire cultures to brochure snapshots, a depiction of local culture that can ultimately affect community self-perception and behavior. In certain countries, for example, traditional and festival rituals have been shortened and adapted to reflect tourist attention spans and demand for entertainment. In addition, tourism nowadays, in an epoch of cultural domination by the West, can significantly accelerate the influx of western values and material goods into indigenous areas, spurring changes in eating, dress, and other daily activities at the detriment of local cultures.

C. Tourism's slaves

Tourism's effect on the natural environment and local culture tends to become more important gradually over time, and although it disrupts the natural balance of the community, it does not rob local people of their pride, humanity and life. However, certain sorts of tourism, which take direct advantage of the poverty and desperation of the people of the host country, can leave profound scars and devastation. Prostitution and child pornography are by far often the worst products of tourism. Poor countries are often under strict economic pressure to develop tourism as a source of income. Sadly, sometimes those governments "turn a blind eye" toward this devastating problem in pursuit of that income. In a faraway land, consumers of sex-tourism experience a new freedom from the social and legal constraints of their home countries.

UNICEF estimates that there are approximately 10 million child prostitutes worldwide. In 1994 the nonprofit organization End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Exploitation (ECPAT) provided the below noted estimates on the number of children involved in the sex industry: 500,000 children in Brazil, 400,000 children in India, 200,000-850,000 children in Thailand, 100,000 children in Taiwan, 200,000 in Nepal. ECPAT has stated that the tourism industry is the largest employer of child labor in the world. According to one estimate, in 1993-1995 the world-sex industry generated an estimated \$20-23 billion income. And since then, it is likely that the figures have grown.

Along with work in the sex industry comes even more devastating and life threatening consequences. Drug use and sexually transmitted diseases, most importantly HIV, spread rapidly leaving dying people with no access to treatment, while orphans and families have to survive alone. According to ECPAT the average rate for HIV infected children rescued from brothels is 50 percent, and some rates are as high as 90 percent.

Despite some of the great disruptive effects and problems that tourism can bring, and despite its immense size and reach, the industry is the least regulated in the world. It is therefore crucial for actors and agents within the industry to realize that these unwanted, negative effects are present in order to prevent them - or at least, minimize them. Only through the creation of a positive interaction with local communities and a healthy, balanced environment, can tourism continue to flourish and benefit not only the visitors but also the investors, tour operators and host community, in harmony.

II. A Bridge across regions and cultures

A. Tourism from the rich to the poor

As expected, like for most industries, tourist flows follow closely the international distribution of income. Nearly 80 percent of international tourists come from Europe and the Americas, while only 15 percent come from East Asia and the Pacific and 5 percent come from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia combined. And as the world sinks deeper in a time of discount airline tickets, air miles memberships, online bookings and all-inclusive package tours, more and more tourists from the developing world are choosing far-from-home, exotic destinations. In 2000, developing countries had 292.6 million international arrivals, an increase since 1990 of nearly 95%. The absolute earnings of developing countries grew by 133% between 1990 and 2000, compared with 49% for EU countries. Rapidly growing destinations include Cambodia, Egypt, Thailand, Turkey and Viet Nam. In Asia and the Pacific, the share of international tourists rose from just 1 percent in 1950 to 16 percent in 2000. By 2020 this region is expected to be the most popular destination after Europe.

Tourism has an immense global potential for real positive change in the world, especially for the regions most in need. A recent report by the World Tourism Organization made a strong case for tourism as a development strategy for the poorest countries of the world. According to the report, 80% of the world's poor, those living on less than \$1 a day, live in 12 countries. In 11 of these countries, tourism is significant and is growing. As an industry, tourism is already a principal export for 83% of developing countries.

B. Tourism towards a culture of peace

Globally

Tourism, if introduced in the right way, can be an awesome wave of global consciousness towards understanding and peace. It is a bridge between cultures, a great enlightening and educational force. It is a channel through which to prevent the next pattern of world conflict, the dooming "clash of civilization", as Samuel Huntington, a leading scholar at Harvard University, has termed the growing tension between the West and the Islamic and Confucian worlds. According to Huntington: "the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural... The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future." Huntington identifies seven or eight civilizations across which conflict will occur, including Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization. Between these, he argues that "central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be the conflict between 'the West and the rest' and the responses of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values," in particular that of the Islamic and Confucian worlds.

Indeed, as has been sensationally proven a year ago, a deep animosity is present for at least some segments of the population between civilizations. Such tensions arise from a lack of personal understanding from individual people across the world who resort to seeing foreigners through the eyes of their own government, media manipulation and propaganda included, and through the foreign policy of others, which may not necessarily reflect the views and intentions of the majority of the people they are representing, sadly enough, even under the most democratic systems. But a personal understanding is crucial. The more opportunities individual citizens of nations from different civilizations have to come into contact directly, the less they need to rely on the media or on their government to understand one another. Through personal contact, individuals can open themselves to other cultures and realize in the end that we are not so different, that we are all human and that our differences are only minor compared to all that brings us together as one. Tourism has a great role to play in the development of personal contact, understanding and awareness. If the consciousness of all tourism industries, the airlines, developers, operators, is one, their totally of vision will become the powerful force needed to propel our world to the right place, closer to global peace.

Locally

Locally too, tourism can play an important role in enhancing prospects for the future. Tourism can help alleviate poverty by developing local economies. By bringing people to more remote and preserved areas, tourism can also help redistribute income, not just internationally but also regionally, away from the cities and towards rural, secluded areas. Tourism can contribute to local peace by bringing together different ethnic groups in realizing their potential as hosts, and helping them work together toward this common goal. Tourism can work for peace building, conflict prevention and reconciliation. Tourism can also help women, not just through poverty reduction but also by providing them a larger percentage of jobs, which in turn will work toward the protection and better living conditions for children. Tourism can help bring back humanity in this world, especially for those most in need.

III. Tourism as International Intervention

One way to begin to look at tourism as a positive force for the countries most in need is by treating it as a form of international intervention. International intervention is defined as "the spectrum of possible actions that are intended to alter internal affairs in another country." As such, international intervention is very similar to the state practice of diplomacy. The use of this term in describing international tourism is adequate for several reasons. First, tourism in the developing world is usually contracted and purchased by outsiders, usually from the developed countries. Second, although the end goal of tourism is not to alter the internal affairs, or local realities of a country, as the discussion above pointed out, in effect it does anyway. Third, if the tourism that enters the country is organized in such a way that it limits negative local disturbance and increases positive ones, then the "intent" to help the country, or to 'intervene', independently or in accord with the host government, is clearly present. As with any sort international intervention, whether it is humanitarian, military or other, the goal of tourism can be to provide positive advancement for the host country, in addition to a rewarding trip for visitors.

A. Adapting locally

Increasingly in the study of international humanitarian intervention, researchers are pointing out that the key to successful results lies in the ability to adapt each project to the local realities of the land, and to make it work in harmony with all aspects of the community. Because all communities are different, even within the same country, increasingly the move is away from standardized approaches that often cause more harm than good, and toward tailor-fit projects that are suitable only for one place and at one time. In order to produce such harmony between projects and the receiving community, prior in-depth research is necessary on topics as broad and specific as the local distribution of income, according to age groups, areas, ethnic or religious groups, to societal structure and traditions, to the distribution of fresh water and the supply of foods and other goods. And the best way to conduct this research is by contacting and conducting it directly with the local population, empowering it to contribute to the project from the beginning.

A similar approach of understanding the host area must also be applied to tourism to minimize negative disturbance and increase positive action towards the community. By being aware of local specificities, the tourism industry can not only better preserve the local diversity and enrich tourism, but it can also ensure that the local people are open and accept the foreign intervention, that they want to become partners, and that they will work for the success of the industry and their community. Indeed, according to the *State of the World 2002 Report*, when local communities see the desire by tourism industry workers to respect the land and when they realize the financial benefits from tourism, they are, for example, more likely to slow resource use and to actively protect natural areas. Alternatively, studies show that when tourism initiatives exclude local people from participating in the management and use of natural areas where they grow food, raise livestock and gather fuel, they are more likely to resent these efforts and seek to undermine them, ultimately compromising conservation goals. Areas that exclude local participation and use have seen rising incidences of poaching, vandalism, and even armed conflict.

B. A Holistic view of the community

When conducting prior in-depth research on various aspects of the community, it is also important to realize the interconnectedness of each aspect, whether it is the land, the people, the history, the legacies and how these interact and each affects one another. This allows a holistic approach that is essential for overall balance of the different components of the community.

Communities are living patterns of relationships. They are comprised of individuals, families, friends and institutions all relating with their environment, in a carefully ordered way, according to local customs,

legacies, and habits determined by local history, geography and environment. In a community everyone and everything is connected, changing one element of the community will have an impact on every other aspect, both in direct effects and in the indirect, chain reaction effects. Thus, building a new hotel will affect the natural environment, it may displace some farmers while at the same time raising the revenue of other local workers, it may increase the demand for certain types of foods while reducing the amount of firewood available for the poor to cook with. Similarly, the construction of a new road by the government for trade purposes may increase the number of visitor as a result of better access which will create a new market of supply and demand in response to tourists, the income of which may ultimately decide if one family's child can go to school or remain in the field.

Clearly any single new element that tourism brings into the host land will affect the community as a whole. And in turn, in an age of globalization and increasingly pressing moral concerns such as poverty and hunger and world-threatening, and survival issues like environmental degradation, it is crucial to realize that what affects people in any country and in any community affects us all in the end. Ultimately, a positive prospect for any of us will depend on thinking in global terms when undertaking any tourist project, no matter how far removed the land may be.

C. Sustainable tourism

Adapting locally and taking into account a holistic view of the community leads to what is often termed as sustainable tourism. The WTO defines sustainable tourism as follows: "sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetics needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems."

In other words, for sustainable tourism to be realized, several objectives need to be achieved. First, the natural, historical, cultural and other resources for tourism are conserved for continuous use in the future, while still bringing benefits to the present society. Second, tourism development is planned and managed so that it does not generate serious environmental or socio-cultural problems. Third, the benefits of tourism are widely spread throughout society. Fourth, new development projects are assessed not by their contribution to growth in international arrivals or contribution to gross revenue alone but by their effects on sustainable development. Such objectives will help ensure that tourism continues in a positive way in the future.

IV. **Tourism beyond just economic development**

By using a holistic view of the community, by focusing on sustainability, tourism can do much more than simply inject foreign dollars into an economy. It can in fact contribute to true poverty reduction, to income redistribution, to the betterment of the status of women and children, to local mediation, conflict resolution and peace building. Below are a few examples and approaches on how these positive developments can be created within the host community.

Concrete steps and examples

Focusing on empowering local people

One of the most important first steps when entering a foreign land for development is to focus on the local people, those who work to bring and welcome the tourists and those who make up the rest of the community. From the beginning, the key tool is communication. As mentioned above, it is crucial to involve the people in the tourist project from the beginning, to allow for their views and concerns to be expressed, and to benefit from what they have to bring, so that the project is in harmony with the community and the visitor's experience truly a local one. Working with locals to identify a set of values and standards embedded in the local culture and suitable for a business relationship will prevent

misinterpretations and promote greater understanding. Keeping the community updated on activities, decisions and plans through meetings on a regular basis, community presentations, a newsletter and open dialogue are good ways to maintain an open line of communication. Collaborating with various segments of local civil society, including non-governmental associations can also significantly enhance communication by using already established channels and by gaining a better understanding and awareness of responses. Indeed, local culture often influences how individuals, communities, informal and formal institutions respond to developmental changes, and local organizations can help in understanding these responses.

With communication, concrete action will help build the confidence and trust of the population and its well-being. Projects can include a health and wellness program for employees, where they are able to express their concerns and through which they can learn to take better care of themselves and their families. The encouragement to reach out for treatment in cases of drug or substance abuse will contribute to local stability. Counseling can also be an extremely powerful tool provided for tourist employees, the benefit of which will affect directly their families and surroundings.

Incorporating locals in the management structure

It is also important to place members of the local population in the managing hierarchy of tourist projects. Today, roughly 65 percent of the new jobs created by the tourism industry annually are found in the developing world, such as positions in restaurants, tour companies, and construction. Yet more often than not, foreign or city-based workers hold the more lucrative management positions in tourism, leaving residents with low wage service jobs like porters, maids and laborers, that offer little opportunity for skill building. As a result labor is divided along foreign versus local lines, which alienates the community. If locals are part of the higher ranks of management however, then the sense of domination diminishes and more interactions on equal levels can take place. Furthermore, tourism has a significant role to play in skills building. By incorporating locals in the management structure, the tourism industry is essentially teaching the community how to create its own projects and how to run them in the future. It is helping locals help themselves.

Buying locally

The WTO estimates that as much as 50 percent of the tourism revenue that enters the developing countries ultimately leaks back out in the form of profits earned by foreign owned businesses, promotional spending abroad or payments from imported goods and labor. This happens because there are often few linkages between the formal tourism sector and the local economy. Many hotels and other tourism businesses in the developing world rely heavily on foreign inputs either because the host country lacks the luxury goods and services that many tourists demand or because the tourism sector is so poorly linked with other sectors like fishing, agriculture, manufacturing, and transport that it is difficult to procure supplies. Similarly, many tourists consume little in local restaurants and stores, especially those in all inclusive resort packages where it is difficult for local entrepreneurs to access the tourist market.

The result is a frustrated local population who hosts foreigners and benefits from little of the profit earned on their land. Yet several steps can be taken to increase the local revenue from tourism and to ensure that the community truly feels implicated with the tourist projects and benefits from foreign presence. First, industry contractors can increase the amount of supply goods and materials it purchases locally, such as local produce, meats and fish from local farms and fishermen. The industry can also focus on hiring locally for all steps of projects from construction, to maintenance and daily tourist activities. Second, tourists can be given more opportunities to purchase locally made products, by organized visits to markets or special agreements with vendors through permits and licensing, and can be encouraged to eat in local restaurants by giving them "free" nights out. Tourism by definition has a high potential for such local linkages between visitors and local enterprises because customers come to the destination and consume at the very point of production.

Focusing on disadvantaged groups

Tourism can be a force for poverty reduction, not just by developing the economy but also by helping disadvantaged groups gain greater access to income, in particular the poor. Tourism diversifies the economy, makes the poor less vulnerable by increasing the range of opportunities available to individuals and households. Tourism offers small-scale, labor intensive, opportunities in many different areas, from souvenir selling, to story telling, to tours, or even food preparation.

Today, 20% of the global population lives under \$1 a day and nearly 50% under \$2 a day. Yet these populations, highly concentrated in some of the poorest countries of the world, do have access to tourism. As previously mentioned, 80% of the world's poor, those living on less than \$1 a day, live in 12 countries. In 11 of these countries, tourism is significant and is growing. The poor have the advantage that its assets are the country's natural capital and beauty and that little prior investment is necessary. Increasingly it is argued that strategies for pro-poor tourism must focus specifically on unlocking opportunities for the poor within tourism, rather than simply expanding the overall size of the sector.

Tourism can help narrow, even if just slightly, the gap between national income distribution. The poorest can benefit from the development of infrastructure necessary for tourism, such as roads, electricity and communication networks. At the same time, certain types of tourists are particularly attracted to remote areas because of their high cultural, wildlife and landscape values. By traveling to these, tourists effectively bring their spending away from the highly touristy areas of beach developments and cities, into the poorest regions. Wages in regular formal tourism employment are enough to bring the core earners and their families above the poverty line and for the informal workers too, tourism can make the difference between buying a pair of shoes or not. And, taking into account the multiplier effect of an increase of one's income in a small community, the earnings of one person can support many more. In one case study it was found that for the monthly wages of 48 official tourism industry local workers, 720 people felt the financial benefits of these wages.

Finally tourism can also contribute to the betterment of poor women's life and indirectly of children. Tourism is one of the few industries that helps promote gender equality, employing a relatively high proportion of women compared to other sectors, from maids to cooks, waitresses and tour guides. In turn, it is argued that in general women spend more of their earnings on education for their children, medicine, and clothes, than men.

Respecting nature

One of the most disturbing aspects of tourism is its impact on the natural environment. An increased number of visitors leads to needs for more housing, food, transportation and results in more waste. One of the best ways to prevent environmental degradation in large scale that can come especially with, for example, large tourist resorts, is to draw a land use plan that calls for a minimum of development, and use environment preserving technologies such as solar energy, water and waste recycling. On a smaller scale, measures like asking guests who stay more than one night if they wish to reuse their towels and linens can reduce water consumption by hundreds of gallons per day.

Another way to respect the environment is to adapt plans to fit and blend in harmony with local architecture, landscape and design standards that ensure that what is planned will fit and what is built belongs. To prevent the disruption of national treasures and history, contracting with experts at local museums to survey the land and to identify archaeological sites can ultimately preserve and enhance the site for the locals and guests.

Finally, it is important to preserve resident access to the natural beauties of their lands as much as tourist access. Tourist contractors can work with the community to provide residents with maintained use of shoreline access for fishing and recreation for all time to come.

V. Conclusion: Acting as a positive force of intervention

Ultimately the success and sustainability of any tourist project will depend on whether the benefits engendered by the development of tourism in the region spread to all aspects of the community and whether the benefits are sustainable. By teaching the local community and workers invaluable work and business skills, by bringing business into the local economy and by adapting locally, tourism can truly help regions develop a better future. Tourism can be a major force in the fight against poverty, in the goal for more education, and for greater dialogue between members of communities and members of different civilizations.

The examples and steps mentioned are good starting points for understanding the sort of thinking and awareness the tourism industry needs to have when approaching a new development. Ultimately however no blueprints exist on how to best introduce tourism to ensure the minimum of adverse local effects. But it is worth to explore further the idea of defining tourism as international intervention, and the sort of action that can be undertaken to deepen this intervention. Successful international intervention by the tourism industry is about thinking in positive terms, being aware of one's impact. It is about adopting the right mentality, one that takes into account a holistic view of the community and of the world rather than simply through the lens of profit.

Framework for the rest of workshop:

Exploring further the idea of tourism as international intervention

- What do you think about defining tourism as international intervention?
- What are the disadvantages in defining tourism as international intervention?
- What new ideas can be drawn from it?
- What ideas does the term trigger?
- Deepen the discussion about the ways in which tourism can help children, women, poverty, conflict prevention, mediation