
Taking Responsibility for Tourism

8

Harold Goodwin

8 Conclusion	240
The ethic of responsibility	242
A Responsible Tourism movement?	243
What we can do	248
The next 10 years	249

8

Conclusion

We have learnt, rather too late, that action comes, not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer¹

This has been a personal journey, one that has enabled me, with many others, to explore the concept of responsibility, to apply it in the context of tourism and to explore its relevance in a number of different societies.

I have sought to report here on the development of a broad movement in thinking about how to address the consumption of tourism, and how responsibility can be taken by individuals and groups in businesses and local government, encouraged and supported by their peers. Above all, I have tried to emphasise that with opportunity comes the responsibility to act. In many other areas of concern from banking and politics to fishing and farming we need more responsible approaches. Responsibility is free, we can have as much of it as we can handle: we can all take some, we can all take more; we should all take some.²

The experience of pursuing the Responsible Tourism agenda has frequently reminded me of the socio-cultural and religious diversity of our world and that it is individual people who make our species more sustainable. There are global problems and issues, but solutions are generally local, although we can learn from each other and translate solutions from one place to another. There are few if any global solutions, although there are global threats in our finite world.

During my years as a tourist and tour leader, I felt a mounting unease about the experience of tourism – which is what drove me to research and teaching on tourism. My disquiet stemmed from the chasm between claims about the benefits of ecotourism and the reality, so I began to look into the impacts of tourism in and around national parks in Africa and Asia. The result was empirical confirmation that the benefits of ecotourism were not to

1 Letters and Papers from Prison

2 I am grateful to Denis Wormwell, of Shearing Group for formulating this so powerfully. It is also used in the title of a paper by John Peters

be found in the destinations and that there was little point in dealing with the niche of ecotourism. In destinations, ecotourists are indistinguishable from all the others. The challenge was how to manage all forms of tourism to make them more sustainable, and many individuals had to take responsibility for that. At the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology I met national park wardens who clearly had very little understanding about how tourists arrived at the park gates – I realised that, if they did, they would have a better chance of managing both the tourists and their impacts. The resulting courses we developed on tourism and conservation were designed to empower national park managers. Participation in the VSO and Tearfund campaigns, and subsequent work with Association of Independent Tour Operators, led me to the realisation that Responsible Tourism offered an approach which could engage all the stakeholders – and this also led me to the discovery of Krippendorf.

In the course of debate in the classroom Greenwich University in 2000, the Masters students identified three objectives for the development of Responsible Tourism, three things we aspired to see achieved: the creation of a marketplace for Responsible Tourism products; a charity to support people in destinations in managing tourism for the benefit of their community and their place; and awards to provide recognition and encouragement for those businesses which were changing. I co-founded ResponsibleTravel.com with Justin Francis in 2001³ and in 2004 we launched the Responsible Tourism Awards. The Travel Foundation emerged out of the government's Sustainable Tourism Initiative and TravelPledge was launched in 2007 with another of our alumni, Nick Chaffe. Scores of students⁴ of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism now work in the field of Responsible Tourism – they work for UK outbound operators, tourist boards, governments, NGOs, tourism businesses, trade associations and consultancies around the world.

My work on tourism and poverty reduction grew out of a request from the UK's Department for International Development for a working paper on tourism and poverty elimination. Those were heady days; but the 2002 WTO policy paper, of which I wrote the initial draft, committed only to alleviation. The foundation of the Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership was remarkably productive and demonstrated the value of open access publication on the Web, although there was considerable disappointment in the unwillingness of donors to demand evidence that the interventions which they funded had made people less poor.

3 I subsequently sold my shares.

4 There is a list of current students and alumni at www.artforum.info/ICRTAlumni.html

Chapter extract

**To buy the full file, and for copyright
information, click here**

[http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/academic-publishing.php?promoCode=&partnerID=&content=story&st](http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/academic-publishing.php?promoCode=&partnerID=&content=story&storyID=253)

[oryID=253](http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/academic-publishing.php?promoCode=&partnerID=&content=story&storyID=253)



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the written permission of Goodfellow Publishers Ltd

All requests should be sent in the first instance to

rights@goodfellowpublishers.com

www.goodfellowpublishers.com