TEARFUND
CHRISTIAN ACTION WITH THE WORLD'S POOR

Worlds Apart

A call to responsible global tourism

A report from Tearfund

Tearfund is one of the UK's leading relief and development agencies, working in partnership with Christian agencies and churches around the world to tackle the causes and effects of poverty. Tearfund works with partners in over 80 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Central America, the UK and Ireland. Around the globe, many of Tearfund's partners work alongside poor communities that are affected both positively and negatively by tourism.

For further information on Tearfund's work on responsible tourism, visit www.tearfund.org or contact Graham Gordon on 020 8943 7863 or graham.gordon@tearfund.org

Foreword

Welcome to the Global Holiday Village

I have travelled all over the world and am always a curiously thoughtful traveller. For me it has been my university without walls. Last year we British took nearly 38 million holidays abroad. The global village in which we live is also rapidly becoming a global holiday village.

More of us than ever before are venturing to the developing world. Places like Thailand, Egypt and South Africa, with their diverse histories, cultures, breathtaking mountains, rivers and safari parks. And of course hot weather, beaches and luxury hotels.

Our holiday snaps may not reveal that some of these popular holiday destinations are in some of the poorest countries in the world. In fact, as we enjoy our well-earned breaks in the sun, we may not know whether the nearest villages have access to clean water, while our luxury western hotel boasts several swimming pools. We may not know whether the young man serving us drinks on the beach is able to support his family on the wages he takes home.

As more of us travel abroad, tourism becomes an ever more powerful tool for tackling poverty. It can provide jobs, support local businesses, and provide money for schools, hospitals and roads. But too often the benefits of tourism bypass local poor communities in the developing world. Money is sunk into western-owned hotels, with little profit staying in the country. Western food and luxury goods are imported to cater for our every need. And as tourists we seldom venture off the well-worn trails to meet and trade with local people.

That is why this new research from Tearfund is timely. It shows that the majority of us do not want our holidays to be at someone else's expense, particularly when we go to developing countries. As consumers we have the right to know the impact that our money and holidays have on people in the destinations. And tour operators have a responsibility to supply us with information so that we can make informed choices.

Tourism cannot escape the ethical consumerism debate. In a world where more and more businesses are pursuing and reporting on ethical practices, the tourism industry has some way to go. The industry has made the global holiday village a better place for us fair weather visitors – now it is time to do the same for those who actually live there.

As tourists we can also play our part. Go out and ask tour operators for their responsible tourism policies before you travel. And don't leave all your concerns behind when you go overseas - ask the reps some searching questions to ensure that tour operators are held accountable for their actions!

Anita Roddick OBE
Founder of The Body Shop

Contents

"Tourism is like fire. You can cook your supper with it, but it can also burn your house down." - Anonymous, Asia.

Executive summary

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries on the planet. In 1950 around 25 million people travelled abroad. In 2000 that figure was nearly 700 million[1]. The tourist industry employs 260 million people, and the World Tourism Organisation has predicted that by 2020, 1.6 billion people will be undertaking foreign travel each year.

- Globally, the tourism industry received £329 billion in 2000, an increase of 17% on 1995.

In the UK we are in the vanguard of this exploding horizon. Holidays abroad are no longer seen as luxuries. They are necessities. And as tour companies reveal ever more of the global holiday village in which we now live, we are looking to new exotic locations – including Thailand, Egypt, Brazil and South Africa.

- One in 10 holidays taken by British people in 2001 were to the developing world – a total of 4.3 million holidays.

But some of our favourite new destinations are also among the poorest countries on the globe. Places like India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru and Mexico, where millions struggle for survival on less than a pound a day[2]. These countries rely heavily on tourism and it can bring many benefits. But too often it brings negative effects or the benefits simply bypass poor people.

- In the Gambia, all-inclusive hotels cut out local traders. Yet UK holidaymakers spend an average of £834 per African holiday, over £120 more than the GDP per head in the Gambia.

New research by Tearfund reveals that holidaymakers do not want to enjoy themselves at the expense of those in destinations. They are willing to favour companies that can offer ethical guarantees.

- More than half (52%) of those questioned in a news survey by Tearfund said they would be more likely to book a holiday with a company that had a written code to guarantee good working conditions, protect the environment and support local charities. This is a rise of 7% in the two years since Tearfund last asked the same question.

- Nearly two out of three people (65%) would like to know from travel agents and tour operators how to support the local economy, preserve the environment and behave responsibly when they go on holiday.

British tourists would like to know – and have a right to know - just how their holidays affect people in the destinations. And tour operators surely have a responsibility to tell them. Then holidaymakers can make informed choices about which company to travel.

With a few notable exceptions[3], tourism has been one of the slowest industries to adopt corporate social responsibility practices. Research in 2001 by Tearfund revealed that, of 65 tour companies, only half had responsible tourism policies – and many of these were so brief as to be virtually meaningless[4].

- Many countries need tourism to survive. It has the potential to bring huge economic and social benefits to millions of people, including the poor. However, tour operators must now take their social responsibilities more seriously. They must also report more comprehensively on their practices in destinations, particularly in the developing world.

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[1] Tourism Market Trends, World Tourism Organisation, 2001.
[2] Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor, Ashley, Rowe, Goodwin, 2001.
[3] Positive initiatives include the AITO Responsible Tourism Code, The Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development and the launch of responsibletravel.com.
[4] Putting Ethics Into Practice, Tearfund, 2001.

Recommendations

Tearfund is calling on tour operators to become more socially responsible so that their holidays bring greater benefits to people living in the destinations.

Tearfund is also asking tour operators to report on these activities so that consumers can choose their holidays based on ethical criteria, and investors can choose the most responsible companies.

The following 10 points cover the priority areas for action for tour operators:

1. **Establish a clear policy for responsible tourism** and ensure that it covers operations both in the UK and in overseas destinations, right through the supply chain. Ensure that any charitable giving is integrated into the business process and is focused on improving the situation in the destinations.

2. **Appoint a responsible tourism staff member** who will oversee the development and integration of these issues throughout the organisation. Ensure that there is also support for this at board level.

3. **Commit funds to becoming a more responsible operator** in the areas of charitable giving, developing local business partnerships, training and giving advice to clients.

4. **Write down best practice and seek to learn from it,** publicise it to clients and share it with others.

5. **Produce and disseminate a code for tourists** to help them travel in a more informed and responsible way. Include advice on how they can support local charities.

6. **Take time to research destinations** and speak to local development and environment groups and tourism associations, not just to the hotels. Find out which local businesses can be used, and with whom a partnership may be developed. This will enable the provision of better quality holidays.

7. **Work throughout the supply chain** to develop and implement policies that will use local labour, local foods and local crafts. Make these policies available to suppliers.

8. **Build on health and safety guidelines for hotels** to include social and environmental issues such as labour standards, minimum wage levels and good recycling and waste disposal systems.

9. **Set clear targets for year-on-year improvement** in terms of building partnerships, using local suppliers and improving social and environmental conditions in hotels. Evaluate activities regularly, so that lessons can be learned.

10. **Use annual reports** to publicise steps taken to promote responsible tourism, and to gain support among key stakeholders.

Part 1
New Research: consumers want responsible tourism

Attitudes are changing. New research[5] from Tearfund shows that the holidaying British public wants more information about how their breaks in the sun affect local people and their environment. They do not just want to switch off while on holiday. They are keen to behave in an appropriate manner and bring benefits to people in the destinations they visit.

Ethical Attraction – survey finding 1

Just over half of consumers (52%) would be more likely to book a holiday with a company that had a written code to guarantee good working conditions, protect the environment and support local charities in the tourist destination. This proportion has risen from 45% when Tearfund first conducted the poll two years ago. It shows rising demand from tourists for responsible behaviour by tour operators.

Figure 1: Would you be more likely to book a holiday with a company if they had a written code to guarantee good working conditions, protect the environment and support local charities in the tourist destination?

Don't know
15%

No
33%

Yes
52%
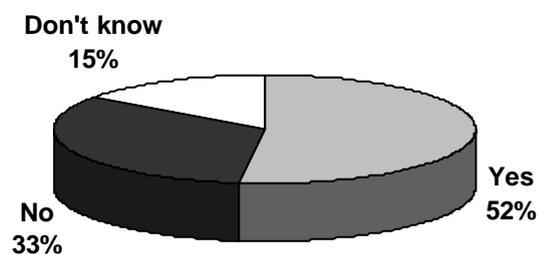
When Tearfund last polled holiday makers two years ago, three in five of those questioned (59%) said they would be willing to pay more for their holiday if the money went to the preservation of the local environments, good wages and working conditions for workers, or to a local charity. The average amount people would be prepared to pay was 5%, or £25 on top of a holiday costing £500.

The evidence is clear. Holidaymakers are beginning to realise that their visits to exotic, sun-baked paradises have an impact on local people and environments. Increasingly, they want to ensure their holiday makes a positive contribution to local development. People appear willing to favour companies that can show they are bringing real benefits to those living in the destinations - and even to pay more for this peace of mind and better quality product.

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[5] A nationally and regionally representative sample of 927 adults was interviewed in-home by Ipsos - RSL between 30 November and 10 December 2001.

Evidence of this trend is the recent launch of responsibletravel.com. The website features holidays that have reached certain minimum criteria of responsibility. These include an ethical code and published details of how local people and their environment benefit.

"'Responsible' will become to travel what 'organic' is to food – a mainstream consumer favourite that is more enjoyable for you and better for local people and the planet" – Justin Francis, founder responsibletravel.com.

When in Rome – survey finding 2

Nearly two out of three people (65%) would like to know how to support the local economy, preserve the environment, and information on local customs, politics and religious beliefs so they can behave responsibly when they go on holiday.

This finding is up 2% on two years ago. It is also backed up by independent research commissioned by ABTA in November 2000 which showed that 62% of those questioned would be interested in finding out about local issues before travelling and 70% think it is important that the holiday benefits the country you are traveling to.

Figure 2: If you were going on an overseas holiday, what type of information would you want to have concerning your holiday?
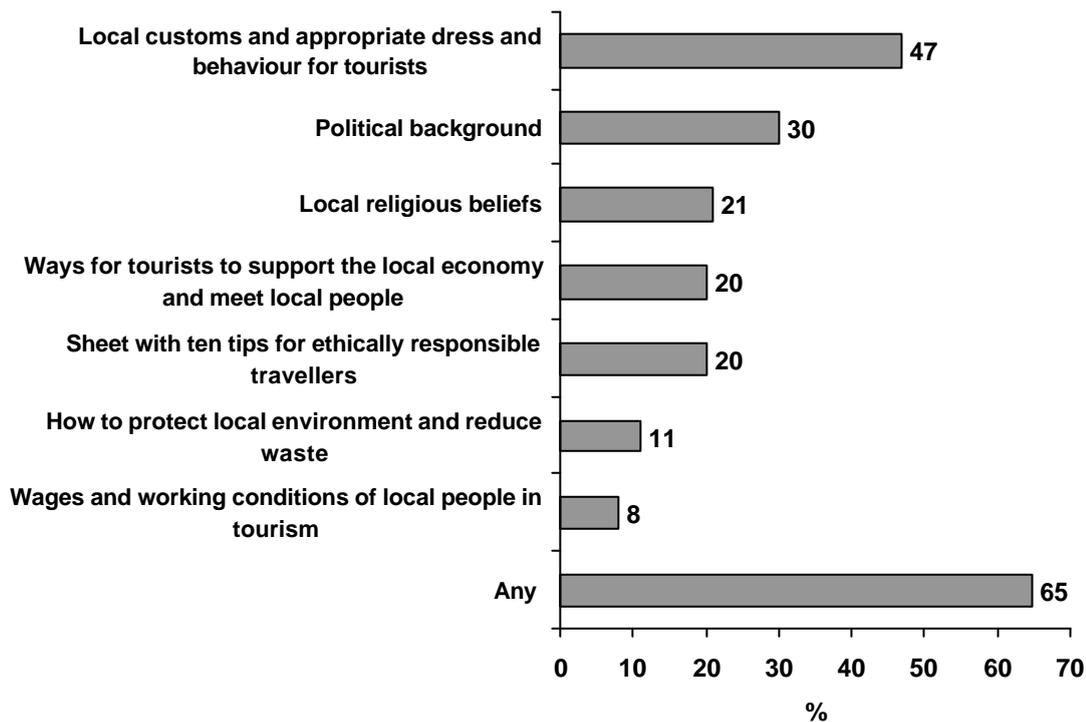

Almost half those polled (47%) would like to know about local customs and appropriate dress and behaviour for tourists. Just under a third (30%) would like to find out about the political background to the country. One in five (20%) would like to receive a sheet with 10 tips for ethically responsible travellers. The same number would also like to know ways that they can support the local economy and meet local people.

Demand for information about the country visited is greater among younger than older people. Just over two-thirds of those aged from 15 to 54 (69%) would like to receive some information, compared with just over half (54%) of those aged 55+.

Tourist Information – survey finding 3

When asked who has the responsibility to provide the information tourists are looking for, there was an overwhelming vote for tour operators and travel agents to fill this role. Just over half of those interviewed (55%) think travel agents have a responsibility to provide the information, while 48% think tour operators should provide this. This bears out the findings of the Tearfund poll conducted two years ago (52% and 54% respectively).

Figure 3: who do you think has the responsibility to provide this information?
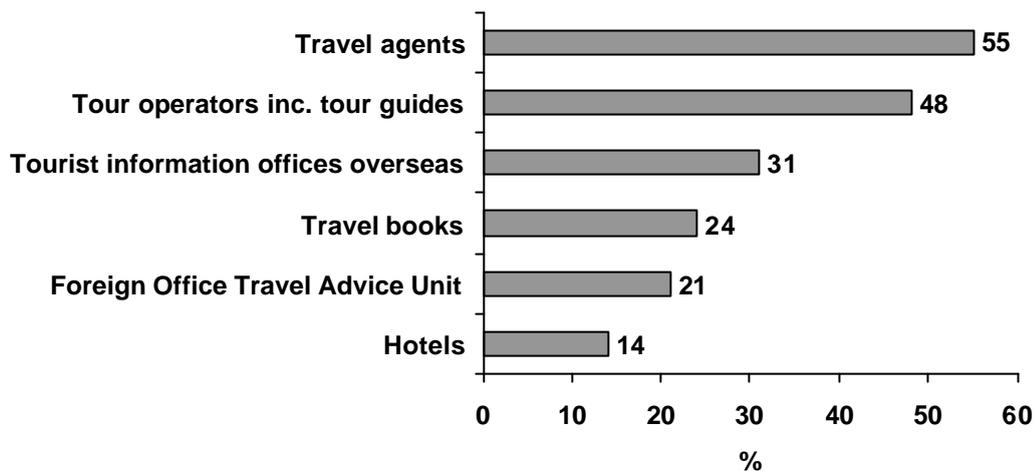
The tourism industry needs to take heed of public opinion and respond to consumer demand for more information. Since the same question was asked of the public two years ago, some operators have made more information available in their brochures, or on their websites, but the majority is still not providing the information that tourists want.

This not only prevents tourists getting the most out of their holiday, but also prevents those in the destinations gaining from responsible tourist behaviour. Tourists must also take their responsibility seriously, and we have reproduced Tearfund's code for tourists in the appendix.

"We were given a lot of helpful information about how to dress and behave on our trip to Zambia. Our tour company, Sunvil, had links with a local village that we were able to support in a low-key way and visit for half a day if we wanted to." – tourist Kathryn Scherer, London.

Part 2

Corporate Social Responsibility and Tourism

What is corporate social responsibility?

Once there was just the financial bottom line. Now, companies recognise they must be accountable for the way they affect people, the community and the environment – the new triple bottom line.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) calls for consistent sets of policies, practices and programmes that guide business operations, from head office and throughout the supply chain. CSR covers areas like:

- training of employees .
- environmental management systems, including recycling, waste management and energy usage.
- conditions throughout the supply chain on issues such as health and safety, pay and labour rights.
- contributions by companies to community development, both at home and overseas.

Not just workers, consumers and local communities benefit from CSR. Companies themselves do too. Investment in infrastructure and training can provide a better product and a more committed and qualified labour force. Socially responsible behaviour can even help to differentiate a product for consumers and investors alike; environmental improvements can save money; better internal management can improve efficiency; staff training can improve morale and commitment. In tourism, responsible behaviour is essential to preserve the environment upon which the whole industry depends.

- There is an inexorable move towards CSR. The Industrial Society reports that one in four companies are now measuring their environmental and social impact.

And it is increasingly common across all industries for companies to have responsible business policies or codes. Examples include oil companies like Shell, airlines like British Airways and the supplier codes of UK supermarkets.

The Co-operative Bank is well known for its ethical approach, which is based on customers' views on key issues such as the arms trade and animal welfare. In 2001, the Bank put a price on its ethical stance for the first time. It calculated its policies made it £16 million better off in 2000. That was about 16% of pre-tax profits and comes even after extra costs because of specific environmental policies. The figures are based on detailed analysis of the bank's brand value, including market research findings that more than a quarter of current account customers cited ethics or the environment as the reason for opening their accounts[6].

'Reporting' is the public – and very crucial - face of any company's socially responsible actions. It encourages a company to monitor and evaluate its own activities, improve performance, and bring greater benefits to workers, people in the supply chain and in communities where the company operates. Reporting also means that a company is more transparent and accountable to external stakeholders, enabling investors and consumers to support responsible companies.

- A third of FTSE companies issue environmental reports, while only 4% produce fully verified social reports[7].

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[6] Roger Cowe; Investing in Social Responsibility: Risks and Opportunities . Association of British Insurers, 2001
[7] Corporate Spin, New Economics Foundation, 2000.

"We need to assure and demonstrate that our performance matches our aspirations…And for the last three years we have published the Shell Report, giving an annual update of our performance against our principles, with independent verification where this is possible." Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, Chairman of The Royal Dutch/Shell group of companies[8].

There are currently three converging pressures on companies to become more socially responsible and to report on their activities - from consumers, investors and businesses, and the government.

Consumer pressure for CSR

Consumers are becoming more critical and aware. They are concerned about more than price and will increasingly question corporate practices behind the brand names. They want to know that their purchases are not at someone else's expense.

- A Millennium Poll conducted in 1999[9] carried out the largest ever survey of global public opinion on the changing role of companies, interviewing over 25,000 people in 23 countries. The poll found that: "two-thirds of citizens want companies to go beyond their historical role of making a profit, paying taxes, employing people and obeying laws. They want companies to contribute to broader societal goals as well."

- In a MORI poll, 71% of the British public felt that "companies do not pay enough attention to their social responsibilities"[10]. Consumers are increasingly prepared to take power into their own hands and refuse to buy from companies whom they object to on principle. Almost three in ten (28%) among the British public have either boycotted a product/service or chosen one on ethical grounds.

- According to the Future Foundation[11], just over a third of UK consumers (37%) are now influenced by ethical concerns such as fair trade, the environment and poverty when making a purchase.

Tearfund's own market research in 2000 found that consumers are discerning about tourism. While they still choose holidays based on price, weather and facilities, they are concerned about the ethical issues of travel. People said that receiving information about the country, reducing environmental impact, and meeting local people while on holiday, were all more important factors when it came to booking than whether or not they had used the company before.

- Such low brand loyalty, combined with the fact that over half the public would now be more likely to book through a company with a written ethical code, represents a clear challenge to tour operators. Change in line with public attitudes or be left behind!

"International travel is one of the fastest growing industries, and it is making a growing contribution to international economic development. Many travellers and tourists like to feel that their visits, particularly to developing countries, make a contribution toward this. One way of ensuring this is to find out about the ethical policies of the organisations that provide travel services including those of the partners they use overseas. The more enquiries they receive, the more likely it is that the providers will make sure that their services come up to the highest social, environmental and ethical standards." - Simon Webley, Research Director of the Institute of Business Ethics

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[8] Quoted in *Visions of Ethical Business,* vision papers from the Financial Times Prentice Hall.
[9] Millennium Poll on Corporate Social Responsibility, conducted by Environics International in cooperation with the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum and The Conference Board.
[10] MORI, September 2000
[11] Citizen Brands, the Future Foundation and the Consumers Association, 1999.

Investor and business pressure for CSR

Pressure for companies to be socially responsible is also increasing among investors, who want a good return for their money but not at the expense of people or their environments. Socially responsible investment (SRI) is fast becoming part of the investment mainstream. In the last five years, investment in SRI and ethical funds has quadrupled from £791 million to £3.3 billion. [12]

The Ethical Investment Research Service shows that 77% of pension fund members want their funds to develop an SRI policy, as long as it does not hurt their financial interests[13].

"As a large institutional investor we believe that effective governance with regard to social, environmental and ethical issues contributes to the creation of long-term shareholder value. We therefore consider it to be in our interests to play a part in encouraging accountability for effective corporate governance in this area." Friends Ivory & Sime, institutional investor[14]

In June 2001 the FTSE4Good index was launched which is a FTSE index based on corporate social ethics. Only those companies that meet social responsibility criteria are eligible. Its constituents are drawn from the 700 or so companies in the FTSE All-Share, meaning that it extends to relatively small quoted companies. From June 2000-2001 shares of the FTSE4Good companies out -performed both the FTSE 100 Index and the FTSE All-Share Index[15].

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has recently issued new guidelines for companies on the effective governance of risks and opportunities arising from social, ethical and environmental factors. These guidelines are to be supported by many of Britain's largest institutional investors and call for additional disclosures in company reports on the social, environmental, and ethical impact of their operations. The ABI intends to monitor compliance with these disclosures.

Government pressure for CSR

The most recent White Paper on International Development suggests that the private sector should play a key role in poverty reduction and sustainable development in developing countries, through the adoption of CSR principles[16].

Although the government has few laws to encourage CSR, new regulations were passed in July 2000 that required pension funds (which own around a third of the UK stock market), to disclose whether their investment strategies take ethical and social considerations into account. The regulation is limited in that there is no guidance about how pension funds should invest, although it is a step in the right direction. However, the regulations have had a significant effect on the investment community. The majority of trustees have incorporated reference to social, ethical and environmental issues in the annual statements in 2001[17].

The Department of Trade and Industry has initiated a fundamental review of company law, which has resulted in a report recommending that companies take into account "environmental, reputation and business probity issues" when considering internal controls. The final report of the Company Law Review group[18] published in July 2001, requires directors to report annually on social and environmental matters. The report concludes that directors must recognise: "the need to maintain a reputation for high standards of business conduct, and the impact of their actions on the community and the environment."

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[12] Quoted in Responsible Business; FT Guide, November, 2000.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Governance, Risk and Corporate Social Responsibility - A snapshot of current practice. Friends Ivory & Sime / SustainAbility October 2001.
[15] www.ftse4good.com
[16] Making Globalisation Work for the World's Poor, DFID White Paper on International Development, 2000.
[17] Roger Cowe: Investing in Social Responsibility: Risks and Opportunities. Association of British Insurers, 2001.
[18] www.dti.gov.uk/could/review/htm

CSR in tourism

Tourism has been one of the slowest industries to adopt CSR strategies for business. In January 2001, Tearfund published a report into the responsible business practices of 65 UK-based operators.[19] It found that "*the tourism industry has made some good progress on environmental issues but lags behind other industries in terms of fulfilling its social and economic obligations.*" The report also found that "*only half the companies questioned have responsible tourism policies, and many of these are so brief as to be virtually meaningless*".

Figure 4: Do you have a responsible tourism policy?

The tourism industry has a long way to go to catch up with other industries, and much to do to satisfy consumer and investor pressure for responsible behaviour. CSR is here to stay and the pressure to adopt responsible business approaches will only increase.

However, some progress has been made:

- The Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) has developed a responsible tourism policy. Its implementation is likely to become a condition of membership in the future. Currently, it is the smaller operators, rather than market leaders, who are offering a more ethical experience to holiday makers. For example, paying a higher proportion of profits to charity, offering more training to local operations and developing more local partnerships (www.aito.co.uk).

"***Thomson recognises the importance of conducting our business responsibly towards the environment and in the communities where we operate. The nature of our business means that we must ensure our activities have the least possible negative impact on the environment, now and in the long term. We also recognise that the protection of the social and cultural diversity of destination communities is of equal importance.***

Thomson works with those in destinations to develop and provide a sustainable quality holiday, which meets customer expectations. As market leader in a fragmented industry, we see the vital importance of working with all those with an interest in the tourism industry. This is why we joined the UNEP Tour Operators' Initiative and are committed to working with other tour operators to raise awareness and develop good practice." - Hilary Robinson, Sustainable Tourism Manager, Thomson Holidays

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[19] Tourism - Putting Ethics into Practice, Tearfund, 2001.

- The United Nations Environment Programme has a Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI), which is open to any international tour operators. They regularly publicise best practice among members and they are developing guidelines for measuring and reporting on their responsible tourism practices. By June 2002 these guidelines will be ready and tour operators will be able to start reporting in a more systematic way (www.toinitiative.org).

- Responsibletravel.com was launched in 2001. All tour operators who offer trips on the site must produce a code of practice and meet certain minimum standards. Consumers can then choose any holiday from the site, knowing that it has reached their ethical criteria. Tourists also get the chance to feed back comments on the site, as a way of assessing a company's responsible behaviour.

- Eco-tourism has been heralded by some as a new approach to socially responsible business, and 2002 has been designated the UN Year of Ecotourism. However, although ecotourism has potential to bring benefits to certain areas, it is limited in the change it can bring. It is small-scale tourism, visiting places away from the crowds, where local communities may be living alongside wildlife. Ecotourism is not the same as responsible tourism, and it cannot apply to mass scale tour operators, only to small specialist ones.

Part 3

# Up, up and away – the growth of tourism

Tourism has come a long way since the advent of the jetplane and the creation of the commercial airline industry in the 1950s. Tourism is one of the largest industries and largest employers in the world. It currently accounts for 10.7% of the world's GDP[20], and employs 260 million people.

It is the number one ranked employer in Australia, the Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Jamaica and Japan. It is the major source of income in Bermuda, Greece, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and most Caribbean countries. [21]

World tourism is measured in tourist 'arrivals' to a country[22]. During 2000, almost 700 million tourist arrivals were recorded globally[23]. This is a staggering increase from just 25 million in 1950, a seven per cent annual growth rate. During 2000, nearly 50 million more tourist arrivals were recorded compared with the previous year. This is the same number of new tourists as Spain receives in a whole year.

- At the same time, international tourism receipts have also risen steadily. Globally, the tourism industry received £329 billion in the year 2000, an increase of 17% on 1995. Each tourist arrival during 2000 was worth on average £471.

Figure 5: International Tourist Arrivals and Receipts 1990-2000[24]
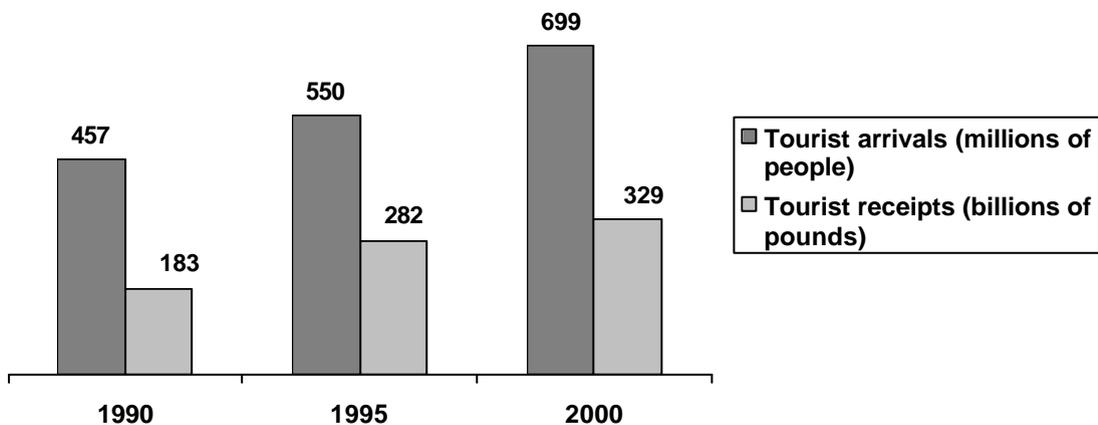
[20] United Nations Environment Programme, 2001, www.unep.org
[21] Tourism Market Trends, World Tourism Organisation, 2001.
[22] The term does not cover the number of persons. If the same person makes several trips to a given country during a given period this will be counted each time as a new arrival.
[23] Tourism Market Trends, World Tourism Organisation, 2001.
[24] Ibid.

Ticket to Ride – developing destinations

Travel to developing countries is booming. More than 30% of all international tourists visit the developing world on holiday, and this proportion is growing. All tourism is growing year on year, but long haul travel is growing at the fastest rate.

- The number of tourist arrivals in Thailand, for example, has grown from almost 7 million in 1995 to 9.5 million in 2000, a rise of 38%. In Brazil, arrivals have more than doubled, from 2 million in 1995 to 5.3 million in 2000.

A total of 12 countries account for 80% of the world's poor (who live on less than a dollar a day). In 11 of these countries, each with over 10 million poor people, tourism is significant to the economy or is growing[25].

Figure 6: Number of tourist arrivals to some developing countries 1995-2000[26]
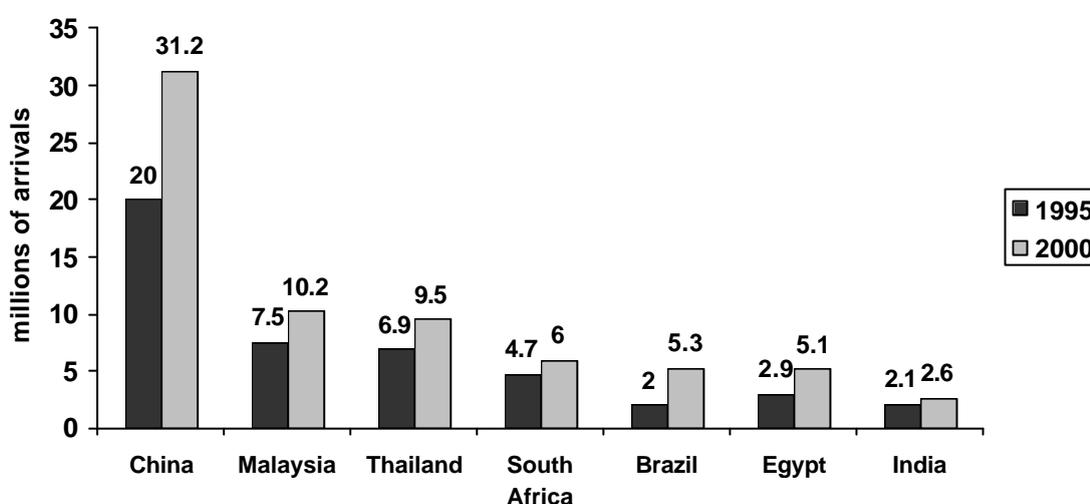
East Asia and the Pacific is the part of the world expanding fastest. The growth rate for this region as a whole was 15% from 1999 to 2000 and it is predicted to hold 25% of the world tourism market by 2020[27]. Tourist arrivals in Malaysia grew by a staggering 29% between 1999 and 2000[28]. China hosted 31.2 million tourist arrivals in 2000 and over 5 million tourist arrivals were recorded for Korea, again a substantial increase on 1999 (14%).

Other countries where tourism is expanding rapidly are Egypt, where arrivals are up from 2.9 million in 1995 to 5.1 million in 2000 (a growth rate of 57%) and South Africa, where arrivals have increased from 4.7 million to 6 million (28%).

Here comes the sun – UK tourists

Meanwhile, UK citizens have maintained their appetite for tourism since the days of the first Thomas Cook tours of the 19th Century. European destinations are still the most popular for British holidaymakers, with Spain the most visited country, followed by France. However, other countries are developing as year-round destinations,

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[25] Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor, Ashley, Roe, Goodwin, 2001. The countries are: India, China, Kenya, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Brazil, Peru, Philippines, Mexico.
[26] Tourism Market Trends. World Tourism Organisation 2001
[27] ibid.
[28] ibid.

and these are becoming increasingly popular - for example the Caribbean, South Africa, India, Malaysia, Thailand and China.

As with the rest of the world, long haul travel is the fastest growing section of the UK market. Of the 37.7 million foreign holidays taken by Britons in 2001, 4.3 million were to places outside Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, accounting for 11% of the market.[29] The number of such long haul holidays has almost doubled in the four years since 1997.

Figure 7: Number of UK long haul trips (excluding North America, Australia and New Zealand) 1997-2001[30]
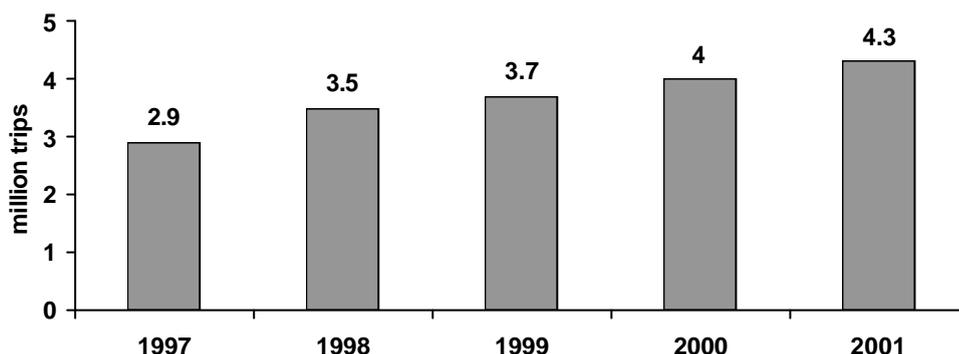
Package tours account for approximately 55% of the holidays taken by UK tourists, but the building blocks are in place for independent arrangements to become more commonplace.

Direct booking through the Internet (one in four of every travel purchase is now carried out on-line[31]) and cheap airfares offered by low cost airlines are making an impact. The continued dominance of the package tour is by no means assured. However, package holidays still account for a greater proportion of trips to developing countries. This may be because the majority of new tourists tend to be less adventurous in their choice of holiday.

- Two-thirds of the total number of trips abroad made by UK residents in 2000 was to go on holiday (65%)[32]. Fifteen per cent of travellers went abroad on business, and one in five for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives.

Hard currency – what we spend

The UK is the third biggest tourism spending country, after the US and Germany, with an international holiday market worth £27.1 billion in 2001[33]. This is an increase of 43% in just four years.

- UK tourists spent around £3 billion in 2000 on overseas holidays in developing countries[34]. This is about the same amount that the UK government gave in official overseas aid during the same year[35].

- In India, UK travellers on holiday in 2000 spent on average £648 on the total trip[36]. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person in India is just £1,245 for a whole year[37], equal to the total amount spent by a UK couple on

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[29] Holiday Purchasing Patterns Market Assessment, Key Note, 2001.
[30] ibid
[31] World Tourism Organisation website
[32] Travel Trends 2001. Report on the International Passenger Survey. National Statistics, 2000.
[33] Holiday Purchasing Patterns Market Assessment, Key Note, 2001 (estimated value for 2001).
[34] This includes lodging, food, drinks, airfares, fees to travel agents and tour operators, fuel, transport in the country, entertainment, shopping etc. World Tourism Organisation.
[35] Exact amount is £2.94 billion. DFID, April 2001.

holiday. In Africa (excluding North and South Africa), UK holidaymakers spend on average £834 per trip – more than the GDP per head in the Gambia (£712).

Paradise gains …

Huge increases in visitor numbers are bound to have a major effect on destinations. In the UK, we have our own anxieties about the impact of thousands of visitors on the footpaths in National Parks.

- Tourism does bring many benefits to developing countries, and it is this potential Tearfund is keen to see exploited. Here are some examples:

Employment: Hotels are the main employers in many developing world destinations, often with up to two people employed per guest. Possible jobs include managers, cooks, cleaners, and receptionists. But unfortunately foreign nationals often take senior posts in hotels. Better tour operators will invest in training for local people so that they have access to some of the better-paid jobs.

Explore Worldwide train up local guides who they believe are better than those from the west due to their local knowledge and understanding of the culture. Recently they took a guide from Sri Lanka over to the UK during the low season in Sri Lanka. He went on other Explore trips to help him understand the market and to understand the European tourists, and then went back to lead tours in Sri Lanka.[38]

Local development: Income from tourism can be used to support local development, such as building schools and improving healthcare and sanitation. Las Marias in The Mosquito Coast of Honduras has received tourists for seven years, enabling them to improve their sanitation system and dramatically reduce illness in the local population. The money has also helped more children to attend the local secondary school.

Supporting local industry: Tourists and tour operators can link up with local business such as guides, local hotels and restaurants. This enables communities to stay together and can provide an alternative income, particularly in rural economies where agriculture is often the only viable alternative.

Dragoman trips to Tanzania offer tourists a guided tour through the mountains and forests, experiencing the daily life and farming methods of Wasamba farmers. They get the chance to accompany a village group collecting medicinal herbs and all the profits are used to assist local primary schools in the area.[39]

Protecting the environment: CAMPFIRE works with over 30 communities in Zimbabwe, helping them to use the wildlife and local scenery to attract tourist revenue, thus providing an economic incentive for preservation.

… And losses

Despite these many positive projects, one of the main problems is that the potential benefits of tourism continue to simply bypass the local population:

Water depletion: Tourists demand much more water than local communities are used to supplying. In the Caribbean, hundreds of thousands of people go without piped water during the high tourist season as springs are piped to hotels. Village wells in Goa are running dry, and rivers are being poisoned by effluent released from hotels. An 18-hole golf course can consume as much water as a town of 10,000 people.

[36] Travel Trends 2001 Report on the International Passenger Survey 2000. National Statistics. Crown copyright 2001
[37] Lycos information website, latest figures for 1999.
[38] Tourism – Putting Ethics into Practice, Tearfund, 2001.
[39] ibid

"Tourists in Africa will be having a shower and then will see a local woman with a pot of water on her head, and they are not making the connection. Sometimes you will see a village with a single tap, when each hotel has taps and showers in every room." - Tricia Barnett, Director, Tourism Concern.

Damage to the environment: swimmers and snorkellers irreparably damage coral reefs. In the Gambia, forests have been chopped down to make way for tower blocks. Construction of resorts has led to coastal erosion in the Caribbean. The sea around Barbados has been polluted by waste from cruise ships.

Disturbance and displacement of local people: Masai people in Kenya were evicted from their lands to make way for safari tourism in the 1980s. Local people are often excluded from beaches eg Goa in India and the Red Sea Coast in Egypt. A development is currently planned in the Nungwi peninsular of Zanzibar, which threatens the eviction of up to 20,000 people to develop a stretch of 5 star hotel complexes.[40]

Money does not reach local economy: Poor governments often offer tax-free incentives to developers, who build all-inclusive resorts where very little of the income reaches the local economy. It is estimated that in Thailand 60% of the £4 billion annual tourism revenue leaves the country[41].

All-inclusives exclude the locals: Holidaymakers spend their money in western hotels, consuming western food and drink. Therefore the little money that does reach the destination often leaves again as profits return to western companies.

Struggling to combat high levels of poverty, while repaying burdensome foreign debts, The Gambia in West Africa has long promoted its tourism industry. Most foreign visitors are European, staying in hotels along the coast and booked on a two-week package through a home tour operator. Although there are plenty of markets and trading enterprises in The Gambia, they cannot supply many of the things demanded by international hotels. So a high percentage of the money paid to tour operators leaks out of the country again, to pay for everything from tins of tomato juice to the wages of foreign managerial staff. The government misses out on taxes, and the country remains poor. Away from the coastal strip, candles not light bulbs are still the norm, and water is drawn from wells.

The Gambian government, in a bold move, banned all-inclusive hotels in 2000, to try to support employment in the tourist area. If people still wanted to go to The Gambia, the move would benefit the local economy, they reasoned. However, due to pressure from tour operators and airlines, they reintroduced all-inclusives a few months later, deciding that it was better to have tourism bringing a few benefits, than no tourism at all.[42]

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[40] Tourism Concern website, www.tourismconcern.org.uk
[41] ibid.
[42] Tourism - Don't Forget your Ethics, Tearfund, 2000.

Conclusion

By Graham Gordon, Tearfund Tourism Policy Officer

Last year we Brits took 4.3 million trips to countries where people struggle to feed their families and make a living. We went there on holiday, but we remain worlds apart. Many of us are aware and uncomfortable with the disparity. We do not want our holidays to be at someone else's expense.

No one claims that tourism alone can beat poverty. But much more can be done. Research from Tearfund and others confirms that we tourists want to know more about the likely impact of our holidays on poor communities before we travel.

It is now time for tour operators to adopt a more ethically responsible approach to tourism by responding to this demand and reporting on their responsible business activities.

The September 11 attacks in the USA were devastating for the tourism industry. Jobs have been lost and more than 10 UK operators have been forced to close. The events are also potentially devastating for the millions of people in the developing world whose livelihoods depend on tourism. In this climate responsible tourism is, if anything, more crucial.

All sectors of the industry, including tourists, governments and local business, have their part to play in making tourism more responsible. It is tour operators, however, who are in the best position to effect lasting change. For it is they who are the main brokers of the services we use on holiday.

If tour operators do not have an ethical code and are not providing information to tourists on the benefits they bring to people in the destinations, it is doubtful whether they know themselves what impact they are having.

Tour operators must report, firstly so that they can understand the impact they themselves are having. Then they can address their contribution to development and the greater good. Once reporting is happening, then customers will then be in a position to choose holidays based on ethical criteria. There is surely a market opportunity awaiting tour companies who become more ethical throughout their operations and can differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive industry. By reporting on their responsible activities the best companies will begin to attract more of the tourists and investors who demand ethical criteria for their holidays or their investments

Obviously not everything can be done at once. First steps for tour operators identifying priorities for change, would include appointing a responsible tourism staff member and to spending time researching destinations, speaking to local businesses, environmental and community groups.

The challenge is for tour companies to be bold enough to adopt such a longer-term view and to become flag bearers and leaders of socially responsible British business in the 21st century.

"If tour operators do not have an ethical code and are not providing information to tourists on the benefits they bring to people in the destinations, it is doubtful whether they know themselves what impact they are having." – Graham Gordon, Tearfund.

Appendix: code for tourists

Make the Most of Your Holidays…………………..

1. **Find out about your destination** - take some time before you go to read about the cultural, social and political background of the place and people you are visiting.

2. **Go equipped with basic words and phrases in the local language** - this may open up opportunities for you to meet people who live there.

3. **Buy locally made goods and use locally provided services wherever possible** - your support is often vital to local people.

4. **Pay a fair price for the goods or services you buy** - if you haggle for the lowest price your bargain may be at someone else's expense.

5. **Be sensitive to the local culture** - dress and act in a way that respects local beliefs and customs, particularly at religious sites.

6. **Ask permission before taking photographs of individuals or of people's homes** - and remember that you may be expected to pay for the privilege.

7. **Avoid conspicuous displays of wealth** - this can accentuate the gap between rich and poor and distance you from the cultures you came to experience.

8. **Make no promises to local people that you can't keep** - be realistic about what you will do when you return home.

9. **Minimise your environmental impact** - keep to footpaths and marked routes, don't remove any of the natural habitat and reduce the packaging you bring.

10. **Slow down to enjoy the differences** - you'll be back with the familiar soon enough.

…..……..….And ensure that others can too.

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