



The Role of Tourism in Rural Development

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Traditionally – rural tourism fell into four categories

- **Sporting tourism** – fishing and stalking
- **Agri-tourism** – accommodation, sale of farm produce
- **Education, healthy living and / or nature based activities** (e.g. writing and painting retreats, yoga, meditation retreats, mushroom picking, bird watching, etc.)
- **Volunteer experience** – e.g. WWOOF (ers) (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), Restoration and Conservation (e.g. NTS, RSPB, SWT, etc.)



Now –greater variety of experiences, services and diversity of products

Experiences: Moto cross racing,
Bootcamps, 4 x 4 tours,
Adventure play areas

Services: from Glamping (e.g.
wigwams and yurts) to 5 *
accommodation in reconstructed
brochs

Products: Cold pressed rape seed
oil, Chocolate coated
strawberries, Ice cream



Business models

- a) Life Style or Satisficers (Selby *et al.*, 2011)
[\(http://www.lamabalade.fr/;](http://www.lamabalade.fr/)
- b) King pin
- c) Community based (Jones, 2005; Simpson, 2008;
 Kim *et al.*, 2012; Velandar *et al.*, submitted 2012)



Positive Impacts of tourism on local people

Environmental

- Improve local environment

Socio-cultural

- Increase confidence of local people / better opinion of themselves / community empowerment

- Increase in population

- More activities

- More lively areas

Socio-economic

- Jobs / Opportunities
- Improved transport
- Better services



Desirable Changes

COMCOT project (Velder et. al.)
Võrtsjärv, Maidla, Setomaa (Estonia)
(n = 235)

Environmental	6.7 %
Socio-cultural	35.3 %
Socio -economic	58.0 %

Negative Impacts of tourism on local people

Environmental

- Littering, habitat damage, interference with natural behaviour of species

Socio-cultural

- Marginalisation of locals
- Living history museum / Disney effect
- Reduced access to popular areas/ facilities
- Loss of traditions / respect for elders
- Conflict of interest between private sector, foreign aid & public services



Socio-economic

- Profits not benefiting locals
- Increased crime
- Shortage of food and merchandise in shops
- Facilities and Services created to suit tourist rather than local needs
- Issues related with economic migrants (e.g. Housing, services, employment)



Some problems facing rural tourism providers

- Lack of market awareness –entrepreneur has an idea (or passion), but have they considered demand, local competition and/ or future developmental potential?
- Lack of suitable training – business support, but what about client needs?
- Product - Fit for purpose / location?
- Cost of getting heard in the market place
- Standards – accommodation and tours – Visit Scotland versus trip advisor (others include: Green Tourism Business Scheme, European Ecotourism Labelling Standard, Nature's Best, Green Globe, etc.)
- Economy in general and particularly fuel prices
- Product placement – National/International? Where do you fit in?

<http://www.green-business.co.uk/>; <http://www.ecotourism-network.eu/en-about-us/en-ecolnet>;
<http://www.naturesbestsweden.com/>; <http://greenglobe.com/>

Conclusions

- Tourism is part of the solution, but it's a volatile industry – everyone is chasing the golden goose
- Still suffers from entrepreneur lack of knowledge about tourism, lack of overall direction and leadership, fragmentation of locations, access to appropriate skills and training
- However, no matter of how good the product is, without customers it is valueless



‘Tourism is like a fire, you can cook your food or burn your house down’ Anonymous



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Thank You

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