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

(http://clifftopdiscovery.co.uk/; http://www.mainsfarmwigwams.com; http://www.creamogalloway.co.uk)
Business models

a) Life Style or Satisficers (Selby et al., 2011) 

b) King pin 
(http://www.oak-tree-inn.co.uk; http://www.creamogalloway.co.uk/)

c) Community based (Jones, 2005; Simpson, 2008; Kim et al., 2012; Velander et al., submitted 2012) 

d) Destination development including resorts and cluster tourism 
(Briedenhann, 2004; Deery, 2012) 
http://www.visitaviemore.co.uk/
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 (Velander et. al.)
Vörtsjärv, Maidla, Setomaa (Estonia)
(n = 235)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>6.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural</td>
<td>35.3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
<td>58.0 %</td>
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</tbody>
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(Deery et al., 2012; Nicholas et al., 2009; Kim, et al., 2012; Velander, et. al., submitted, Lepp, 2007, Lindberg and Johnson, 1997)
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?

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
References


Thank You

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