

Challenges of Tourism for Local Communities

The Gambian Experience

INTRODUCTION

It is a widely held view that African countries must engage in structural adjustment and improve their political environment in order to attract foreign direct investment. Reviving trade is considered by many African countries as integral or imperative to Africa's economic turn around, as well as the promotion of responsible fair trading practice without which the revival of trade is inconceivable. Therefore, all those who are interested in Africa's economic development and the eradication of poverty must identify and weigh the potential of *all sectors* in the economies of our respective countries and harness them to combat poverty and marginalisation.

The evolution of tourism in The Gambia reveals that much has been spent all along promoting the building of infrastructure, institutional development, security apparatus and many promotional activities without implementing the right strategies to establish the linkage between the consumption patterns of tourists and local products and services. Herein lies the rationale for implementing strategies that makes it possible for local communities to participate and benefit from tourism development in destination.

Background

Tourism and The Gambian Economy

In The Gambia, it is indicated that tourism contributes between 6.25 per cent GDP (Budget Speech 2000) and 13 per cent of GDP (2004 Master Plan Study) and that it provides 10,000 people with jobs. Taking into consideration that the formal sector, comprising the government, the parastatal and private companies, employs about 16,000 jobs in 2004 and to around 35,000 in 2020 (Master Plan Study) and that the net foreign exchange earnings are projected to increase from an estimated \$40 million in 2004 to \$130 million in 2020. This sector has potential for employment generation, macroeconomic development and can enhance poverty alleviation. How to develop the sector has been a major preoccupation. Many reports have been written on strategy or policy for tourism development as well as its economic, social, cultural and environmental or ecological impact. Surveys have been conducted with the sponsorship of Department for International Development (DFID) and the African Development Bank funded Master Plan Study. What is absent is the summation of all the known and relevant findings into a holistic framework, which would enable The Gambia to know how to utilise these strategies to make The Gambia a better place to visit and live. This necessitated an assessment of the economic, social, cultural and ecological implications of tourism so as to determine how the sector can be made to benefit people who have been subjected to unfair trading practices. Tourism offers immense possibilities to transfer wealth from tourism originating countries to The Gambia through fair trade and pro-poor initiatives. However, despite this assumption it is starkly evident that poverty is increasing.

Why Pro-Poor?

Poverty in The Gambia is a major concern. The Gambian economy experienced a down turn as early as in the 1980's reflected by growing imbalances between revenue and expenditure and between the value of imports and earnings from exports. In 1985, the value of imports stood at 492 million Dalasis (14 million EURO) while value of exports stood at 208 million Dalasis (6 million EURO). The budget deficit stood at 284 million Dalasis (8 million EUR). This deterioration of the

economy gave rise to policy and institutional reforms to attempt to stabilise it. The government endeavoured to create an environment in which the private sector leads in the development of an economy that is market driven. Despite the policy initiatives, which had led to the recording of growth in GDP of five percent per annum, poverty is considered to be in the increase.

According to the participatory poverty assessment survey conducted in 1999/2000, most rural communities attributed an increase in poverty levels due to low crop yields because of soil infertility, lack of financial inputs and equipment. In the urban areas, poverty is mostly attributed to unemployment (The Gambia Human Development Report 2001). Due to the relatively low level of crop yield in agriculture and unemployment the poor constitute 55 per cent of households and 69 per cent of the population. 40 per cent of households in the greater Banjul area; 46 per cent in other urban areas and 70 per cent in the rural areas are below the overall poverty line. 37 per cent of the population are destitute. 82 per cent of them live in the rural area. It is evident that if any advancement in the lives of the poor is to be made in the 21st century, pro-poor and anti poverty strategies must be evolved in all sectors of human development and tourism in particular so as to wage an effective and sustainable campaign to reduce poverty.

The Way Forward

According to Final Draft Report of The Gambia Tourism Development Master Plan Study given the fact that The Gambia is still primarily an agricultural economy, with as yet underdeveloped manufacturing and services sectors, the main scope for developing increased linkages between tourism and other economic sectors lies with the agricultural sector (direct imports represent approximately one-third of the cost of combined food and beverage purchases) and others like the informal sector (where surveys show already captures, on average, approximately one-third of the total out of pocket expenditure by visitors in The Gambia) and the handicraft / cultural services sectors.

It concluded that by strengthening the tourist sector and its affiliated industries, The Gambia seeks to spread the benefits of tourism into broader segments of the domestic labour force. Informal sector and agricultural linkages are a critical element in this benefit spread.

The Gambia Best Practice Story:

The implementation of "Destination Cluster" Strategy:

In our experience in The Gambia, it is becoming evident that community based tourism businesses can make the greatest contribution to the development of their enterprises when they work together and also cooperate with other private sector actors in the industry. We would therefore recommend the use of 'clusters' to serve as a "beacon" to strategy makers in destinations wanting to practice Pro-poor Tourism as a tool to positive development.

This best practice story will highlight methods undertaken in various pro-poor tourism projects implemented in the Gambia from 2000 to date by academics (designing policy guidelines etc.) and practitioners (strategy makers). The projects are: Linking the informal, horticultural and handicraft/ cultural sectors to the tourism industry. The important cross cutting issues of capacity building will also be highlighted.

The method will take a value-based strategy approach looking at

Value retention

- keeping tourism earnings in the country
- minimizing leakages

Value addition

- maximizing linkages within the national value chain

Value Creation

- generating new value within the sector

The objective of creating " Clusters" will be the centerpiece of this strategy.

Working with the informal/Services Cluster

Introduction

The actors in this cluster mainly belong to the Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET). The Association has a membership of 80 small and medium size enterprises who are working closely together to help each other in the area of marketing, product development and training of members, members of the formal and public sectors, the other private sector actors mainly: Gambia Hotel Association, Ground Handlers and Equipment Hirers Association and the UK based Tour Operators; The Public sector: Gambia Tourism Authority and the Department of State for Tourism and Culture.

ASSET

The Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET), resulted from a previous British High Commission sponsored Gambian Tourism Concern Workshop on Private Small Scale and Community-Based Tourism Enterprises held in The Gambia in October 1999. It was established in April 2000, bringing together some 40 small and micro enterprises. These include craft market vendors, tourist taxi drivers, official tourist guides, juice pressers and fruit sellers as well as a number of small hotels, guesthouses and ground tour operators.

The Project

Improving The Linkages Between the Informal Sector (ASSET Members) and The Formal Sector



<http://www.asset-gambia.com>

This 20 month project ran from August 2000 to March 2002 and worked with the Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET) on a series of participative surveys to collect information about the perceptions of the tourists, tour operators, hoteliers and inbound operators (or ground handlers). Each of the informal sector groups participated in the research phase and identified what they saw as the significant barriers to their participation in the industry and reported on their sales during the peak season (the first quarter) of 2001.

An agenda for action was identified for each informal sector group, based on their understanding of the barriers that needed to be overcome in order that they could increase their sales and income. Discussions were held with government and the formal sector about what they could contribute to improving market access and the performance of the informal sector composed largely of poor producers.

Building the right strategies

Consensus Building: project Linkage partners

The Informal Sector is represented by ASSET, the Formal Sector by the Hotel Association, by the Ground Handlers and Equipment Hirers Association and the Public Sector by the Gambia Tourism Authority. Consultations and consensus building was done through sector and inter sectorial workshops.

Value retention, addition and creation:

The results of a breakdown of daily estimated visitor expenditure show that the informal sector captured approximately one third of total tourist expenditure in The Gambia. On average the tourists were spending 596 Dalasis (£25 or \$36) per day; of which 197 Dalasis (£8 or \$12) per day was being spent in the informal sector in the peak season of 2000/1.

In 2002 the airport exit survey was amended to include a figure on average daily expenditure; this figure was significantly higher at over £30, with crafts accounting for 21.8% of in resort expenditure and 53% of cash being spent outside the hotels. The average tourist was taking home £23.14, which they had as surplus spending money. Nearly 30% of people had spent all their cash; nearly 40% of respondents were leaving with between £11 and £50 in cash. Clearly there is scope for both the formal and the informal sector to be selling more goods and services to tourists in The Gambia.

In order to help in the retention and creation of value the following formal sectors best practices were suggested:

Tour Operators

- Providing information at the Welcome Meetings about the fruit pressers, fruit sellers, local guides and craft markets,
- Encouraging tourists to encounter and engage with local people in the markets and on the beach.

Ground handlers

- Calling at craft markets during excursions,
- Visiting villages, schools and agricultural communities during excursions – and working with the hosts to counter 'bumstering' and begging by children.

Hoteliers

- Locally sourcing fruit and vegetables, crafts and soft furnishings,
- Allowing fruit and fruit juice sellers into the hotels to deliver to established clients,
- Inviting in craft workers on a roster basis to sell one day per week in the hotel grounds.

Success Stories:

Poverty Impacts: The tables below gives an indication of the level of success in terms of earnings for the Juice pressers, licensed guides and craft market vendors

Juice presser earnings at Kotu Beach 2001/2

	2001	2002	Change
Mean daily turnover	66.7	148	132%
Mean daily surplus	47.5	105	128%
Weekly Income Dalasis	333	736	121%

Source: TCF surveys. These reflect only peak season earnings

Increase in licensed guide earnings at Senegambia and Kotu Beach

Senegambia	2001	2002	Change
Mean income per trip	D144 (8.8 USD)	D174 (10USD)	▲ 20.8%
Trips per week	2.38	2.49	▲ 4.6%
Mean weekly income	D345 (21.1 USD)	D408 (24USD)	▲ 18.2%
Kotu Beach			
Mean income per trip	D93 (5.7 USD)	D94.2 (5.5USD)	▲ 1.3%
Trips per week	3.06	4.2	▲ 37.25%
Mean weekly income	D285 (17.4 USD)	D380 (22USD)	▲ 33.33%

Source: TCF surveys. These reflect only peak season earnings.

Earnings comparison for Kotu Beach Craft Market 2001/2

	2001 Mean	2002 Mean
Sales	96.5	335.3
Cost of Goods	55.3	209.4
Commission Payments		1.3
Income Dalasi	41.2	122.8
Income USD	2.5	6.46

Source: TCF surveys.

Earnings comparison for Senegambia (Kololi Beach) craft market 2001/2

	2001 Mean	2002 Mean
Sales	162.13	316.92
Cost of Goods	97.94	194.79
Commission Payments		2.01
Income Dalasi	162.13	316.92
Income USD	9.9	16.68

Source: TCF surveys.

Implementation of the agreed agenda for change

Activity	Done	Ongoing	Remarks
Development of Codes of Conduct for each informal sector group	✓		
Licensing to be extended and backed up by badging	✓		
New destinations and products to be developed		✓	<i>F&P/ASSET is a follow up to this recommendation</i>
Insurance to be required for 'high risk' informal sector activities – particularly the fishermen and accommodation providers		✓	<i>Gamstar Group Insurance Policy</i>
Local sourcing of food, supplies and soft furnishings		✓	<i>GiG and BF are a follow up to this recommendation</i>
What's On information to be placed in hotels and a regular publication to be produced		✓	

Other Linkages:

WORKING WITH THE AGRICULTURAL CLUSTER

The Project: Gambia is Good (GiG)



www.haygrove.co.uk/development.php

GiG is a horticultural marketing company in The Gambia that provides tangible economic and social benefits to poor rural Gambian Communities – specifically:

1. To use the Fair Trade Marketing Company as a catalyst to stimulate a vibrant Gambian Fresh Product market that develops local livelihoods inspires entrepreneurship and reduces the environmental and social cost of imported produce.
2. To establish best practice and up-take of low cost, appropriate packing, storing and grading of fresh produce at garden level.
3. To leverage technical excellence in horticulture as a major catalyst to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor and to use the '**Gambian is Good**' approach as a replica table model in other countries in West Africa

Consensus Building: Project Linkage Partners:

The origins of the project stem back to early 2000, when Haygrove, Concern Universal and the Linkage Partners commissioned two key market appraisals. A series of consultations were undertaken after this in designing and implementing the project.

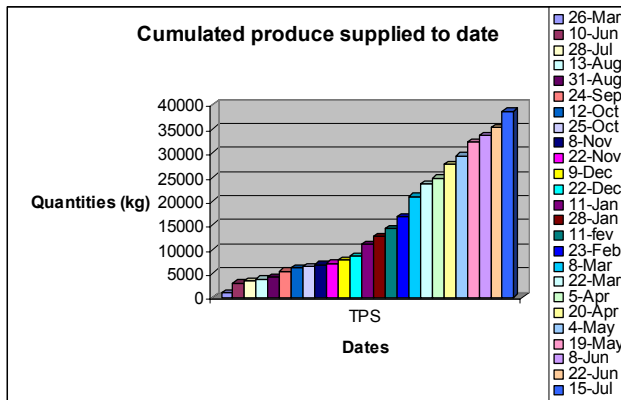
The project linkage partners are Haygrove, Concern Universal, Gambia Tourism Concern (GTC), Methodist Mission Agricultural Project (MMAP), Njawara Agricultural Training Centre (NATC), St. Joseph Family Farm (SJFF) and Farmers' Associations.

Value Retention, addition and creation

Gambia is Good is a horticultural marketing company in the Gambia, which is currently waiting on its application to become a fully registered fair trade business. GiG's project partners include the UK based charity Concern Universal, which has an office in Gambia, and Haygrove Development, a fresh produce business in the UK, which is supporting development projects in Africa. Funding has been raised from Dfid' BLCF (Business Link Challenge Fund). The broad objectives of the initiative were to stimulate a vibrant Gambian fresh produce market that develops local livelihood, inspires entrepreneurship and reduces the environmental and social cost of cheaply imported produce. This integrated production and marketing company, which aims to become a fully sustainable and self-sufficient business, is already providing a tangible economic and social benefit to poor rural Gambian communities. While the first two years of the project have certainly borne fruit, there still remains a serious need to increase local production, both in terms of quality and quantity, and to help affect a transition from subsistence farming to market-lead, commercial farming. In the long term, the business is to be owned and run by the farmers on a cooperative basis.

Success Notes:

Evolution of production and turnover up to 15th July 2005



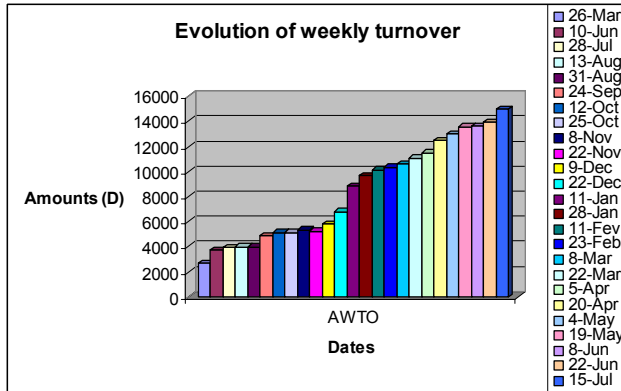


Table 2: Details on vegetable sales (23/06-15/07/05)

Items	Quantities (kg)	Turnover (D)	Average Prices/kg	% in Quantity
Radish	22	670	30.45	0.62
Tomatoes	1502.9	48,370	32.18	42.98
Carrots	376.9	12,136.00	32.19	10.77
Cabbages	440.1	15,947.00	36.23	12.58
Cucumber	225.25	7470.75	33.16	6.44
Egg plants	63.55	1733	27.26	1.81
Onions	474	6722.5	14.18	13.55
Hot pepper	87.2	5,502.00	63.09	2.49
Sweet pepper	208.5	9,288	44.54	5.96
Others	182.1	8,592.50	47.18	5.2
Totals	3496.95	114,028.25	32.60	100

- In July 2005, the projects were forced to purchase from Senegal (to ensure continuous supply) of an average 60% of its supplies mainly due to short supply from local producers. Traditionally, women who form the bulk of our producers work in their rice fields during the rainy season. The project is trying to change this tradition and it is archiving great success. By the end of September, 60% of its produce is now coming from local Gambian producers.
- Presently over 60 tons is supplied with 70% of GiG produce supplied to the following hotels and restaurants: Bungalow Beach Hotel, Kairaba Beach Hotel, Paradise Suites, Sun Set Hotel, Tafbel (now Sarge's) hotel, Sun Beach Hotel, Ocean Bay hotel, Safari Garden Hotel, Atlantic Hotel, Paradise Suites, Seaview Hotel, Kololi Beach Club, ROC Heights, Ali Butcher Restaurant, Weezos, Grand Place Restaurant and Ali's Restaurant. The 30% is sold to Supermarkets, wholesale dealers and retail sales from stall owners, NGO staff like Concern Universal and other individuals.
- The project hopes to increase sales and add value by introducing Kiosks in Kololi and Senegambia areas which operate as vegetable depots for the restaurants around these catchment areas and through introducing **vegetable boxes (with organic produce)** to the expatriate community and top class restaurants.

- **Showing by doing:** The project is helping to build the capacity of farmers in all aspects; in providing soft loans to buy seeds and other inputs; in training on appropriate farming techniques etc. With funding from *The Travel Foundation*, GIG will acquire approximately two-hectare piece of land. Once this site has been secured, the baseline farm design will be established with training facilities, which will be built using simple low cost local materials. Three vegetable retail kiosks will be built within the tourism development area, with the secondary function of providing information on the project. On the site, best-practice cropping systems will be initiated and maintained for commercial production and marketing, ready to supply an exciting new range of high-quality fresh produce in time for the 2005/6 tourist season. Production will focus on high value vegetables and herbs and will be linked to the tourism sector.

DEFINITIONS:

The Concept of Responsible Tourism

Responsible Tourism is about stakeholders taking responsibility in destinations to make a better form or forms of tourism. It is more like an ethical movement that calls on the conscience of tourism stakeholders to assume their responsibilities of taking the right choices and steps towards making destinations better places to visit and live. (Goodwin 2002)

Responsible Tourism Policy of The Gambia

This Responsible Tourism Policy of The Gambia has been prepared by the **Responsible Tourism Partnership** and has been produced and agreed through a multi-stakeholder process. The Responsible Tourism Partnership is a national partnership between different government ministries, NGOs, the private and public sectors and communities formed to promote our shared vision for tourism in The Gambia.

The policy vision is to make The Gambia a better place to visit and a better place to live in – recognizing that it is the interaction between guests and hosts in a secure and enjoyable environment that is the experience of The Gambia and which encourages people to return.

Holistic Approach: Triple Bottom Lines

A manner of meeting the needs of the "whole" across 3 major areas of development in general terms referred to as the "Triple Bottom Lines" -

Economic/ business - Who controls? Who benefits? Leakages and linkages

Socio-Cultural- traditional/ customary/ spiritual value systems; Respect and relationships

Environment- Ecological considerations

Integrated Approach/ 'Destination Cluster'

A joining together of all stakeholders in participation and partnerships designed to meet the total needs of the whole. A cluster is a group or network of firms usually in a specific locality, which interact with one another to bring wealth into the area. As Lazama (2001) notes, by co-operating with each other, companies can achieve economies of scale and so reduce cost, work on joint projects and exchange information. This allows them to meet challenges, which would be difficult to cope with individually. Furthermore, high levels of competition provide the impetus to continually upgrade and innovate.