PLANNING TOURISM FOR PEACE

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As the world rushes toward tourism development as an economic measure, issues of conflict, war and peace make up an important hidden agenda. At the same time that tourism creates new jobs, new income and new tax revenues, tourism can foster also world understanding and peace. The more that the body politic understands the many dimensions of tourism, the more it can plan tourism toward the constructive goal of cultural exchange. This paper examines the role of planning in tourism development in order to foster world peace.

Characteristics of Tourism

At the outset, key characteristics of tourism development need to be understood if it is to be used as a tool for stimulating peace. When nations and regions are fully aware of these characteristics, many pitfalls and disappointments can be averted.

Tourism functions in a manner just the opposite of manufactured products. Manufactured products are distributed to markets. For tourism, however, the market (travelers) are distributed to the products (destinations).

Because of this difference, travel destinations take on great importance. Destinations, the areas toward which traveling is directed, are not as easily defined, produced and controlled
as are manufactured products. Destinations contain a complicated and abundant mix of attractions, transportation, services, and information systems. But, from a resident perspective, the structure and amenities of destination areas are viewed as primarily their own.

The several resources are part physical and part intangible. Physical attributes, such as water, forests, wildlife, topography and climate are often critical to tourist attractions. The cultural background, language, customs, beliefs and goals of the residents of the destination area also are important factors.

Because these factors are different among destinations, each destination area has its distinct foundation for tourism. Clearly, because of the differences among destinations, some are far more receptive to tourism development than others.

Perhaps most important is the host-guest relationship. If it is positive, the cultural exchange necessary for fostering peace can take place. If not, new understandings between peoples of different nations may be impossible. Tourists are visitors to another land and as such may or may not be considered welcome by the host destinations.

The social and cultural impact of tourism is not uniform. Anthropologist Valene Smith has observed that host-guest conflict is greatest when the economic conditions between tourist sending and receiving nations differ the most. (Smith:1977,4) Stress within the host destinations is acute when the tourist "haves" confront the local "have-nots". Particularly in areas where barter is the norm and a money-economy does not exist, tourists are seen as hedonistic aliens. Social conflict is exacerbated
where foreign multinational firms bring in their own managers and workers rather than employ locals as promised. When tourist market and destination countries are more similar in economic levels and political ideologies, less stress occurs between hosts and guests.

Prerequisite, therefore, to tourism functioning as an agent for better world understanding and peace is the personal, social and political acceptance of tourism on the part of the host destination. Functionally, tourists are trespassers, intruding upon another society. Years ago, travel writer Victor Pritchett characterized himself as the offensive traveler. "By 'being offensive' I mean that I travel, therefore I offend. I represent the ancient enemy of all communities: The stranger...We are looking in on the private life of another people, a life which is entirely their business, with an eye that, however friendly it may be, is alien". (Pritchett:1964,i) Whenever host areas voluntarily agree to be hospitable to strangers, the doors are open to communication, the first step toward cultural understanding.

Tourism Communication and Planning

Although communication between hosts and guests is the first step toward international understanding, it rarely happens by chance. Some planning is necessary. If tourism is to be used as a vehicle for world understanding and peace, there must be an accord between tourism--its planning, development, and management--and the local establishment. Especially important in planning for tourism are three predictable impacts.
1. **Economic.** A destination area must be prepared to expend funds on a number of essentials if tourism is to be successful. Few communities are "ready-made" for tourism. In order to accept thousands of visitors, it is likely that moneys, public and private, will need to be spent on expansion, remodeling or new development of:

* infrastructure—water supply, waste disposal, police, fire protection;
* transportation—highways, vehicles, airports, airlines;
* attractions—visitor services at natural and cultural sites;
* services—lodging, food service, travel service, entertainment;
* information—atlases, guidebooks, signage, videos;
* promotion—advertising, publicity, public relations, incentives.

While it may be argued that new economic returns will offset these expenditures, they nevertheless must be considered in plans to develop tourism.

2. **Environmental.** Precautions must be taken at the planning stage for the potential erosiveness of tourism. Without planning to avoid these issues, tourism can:

* change or destroy the natural scenery of a destination;
* increase wear and tear of roads, airports, vehicles services;
* change or destroy historic and archeologic sites and artifacts;
* change or destroy the attractiveness of a community.

3. **Social and Personal.** Perhaps the most difficult to plan for is the avoidance of negative social and personal impact. This is likely the most critical if communication between hosts and guests is to occur and thrive. Host areas must be willing to tolerate competition for local services, increased congestion of streets and shops, and sometimes culture shock.

If a destination area has committed itself to plan, develop and manage tourism in order to avoid these problems, the opportunities for cultural exchange are open. However, there is no guarantee that this ideal of cultural exchange will actually result, even if many conditions are favorable.

**Fostering Cultural Exchange, for Peace**

Typical tourism today, for business and pleasure, does not tend to foster deep cultural exchange. For many reasons, most of which are economic, destination areas create situations whereby visitors tend to be screened from free contact with hosts. Package tours, for example, offer tour managers control over tourists, keeping them in prescribed channels—sightseeing, lodging, food service, entertainment. Government planners sometimes create "enclave" tourism, guiding development only in those areas where tourism is decreed by policy.

One may well question whether these forms of tourism development truly provide for freedom of cultural exchange. There is danger that such tourism is so staged that it becomes a "pseudo-event" as Boorstin described it many years ago. (1961,1)

The events or settings are completely contrived for tourists and
may not be genuine representations of the local culture.

The conditions for fostering the communication between host and guest must be accomplished so freely that the conditions for better understanding and peace can occur. One-on-one, face-to-face contact between hosts and guests that is free from coercion and constraint is most ideal. Peace, or freedom from violence and war, does not necessarily mean agreement and harmony between peoples. Debate, lawsuits, competitive sports and political contests allow differences of opinion but are peaceful means of dealing with conflict. Tourists and host areas need not subscribe to the same values, beliefs, traditions or political ideologies in order for worthwhile cultural exchange to take place. On the contrary, tourism is one form of contact between peoples whereby the tourist can gain better understanding of why things are done differently or similarly in another country.

Role of Rotary, an Example of Service Club Travel and Peace

Rotary International, composed of over one million business and professional men and women in over 22,000 clubs in 160 countries and geographical regions, has as one of its main functions the promotion of world peace and understanding, mostly involving travel. Citing a few of its programs may suggest ways in which the managers of tourism could make greater effort to foster peace-oriented travel through greater cooperation with service organizations.

While the popular image of Rotary may be a luncheon-speaker organization, it actually spends many millions of dollars annually on programs directed toward fostering peace in the
world. Perhaps more important is the dedication and commitment of members toward the goal of peace. An example is the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park that bridges the border between Canada and the United States. The concept of such a park was initiated by Joe Low of the Cardston, Alberta, Rotary Club on July 14, 1931 and it became law in 1932 in both countries.

When a member is accepted into Rotary, he accepts certain charges, among which is the following:

"Each Rotarian, wherever located, working as an individual should help to create a well-informed public opinion. Such opinion will inevitably affect governmental policies concerned with the advancement of international understanding and goodwill toward all peoples."

(Manual: 1986, 83)

Further to this charge is the following eight-point expectation of Rotarians as world-minded individuals:

1. He will look beyond national patriotism and consider himself as sharing responsibility for the advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace.

2. He will resist any tendency to act in terms of national or social superiority.

3. He will seek and develop common grounds for an agreement with peoples of other lands.

4. He will depend on the rule of law and order to preserve the liberty of the individual so that he may enjoy freedom of thought, speech, and assembly, freedom from persecution and aggression, and freedom from want and fear.

5. He will support action directed towards improving
standards of living for all peoples, realizing that poverty anywhere endangers prosperity everywhere.

6. He will uphold the principles of justice for mankind, recognizing that these are fundamental and must be worldwide.

7. He will strive always to promote peace between nations and will be prepared to make personal sacrifices for that ideal.

8. He will urge and practice a spirit of understanding of every other man's beliefs as a step towards international goodwill recognizing that there are certain basic moral and spiritual standards which, if practiced, will ensure a richer, fuller life. (Manual:1986,83)

Several programs within Rotary are directed toward world understanding and peace. (Statistics:1987)

Now in its 40th year, the Rotary scholarship program is the largest privately-sponsored activity of its kind in the world. In 1986-87, more than $14.3 million was invested in 1,300 scholarships—for graduate students, undergraduate students, journalists, and teachers of the handicapped. Since this program began, more than 17,000 scholars from 110 countries have studied in 90 countries at a cost of over $126 million. Even though these are related to academic work, the purpose is to further understanding and peace between peoples of different nations.

A program called Group Study Exchange is proving to be effective in gaining better understanding between nations. Two Rotary districts in separate nations agree to exchange teams of
five young men or women (non-Rotarians), age 25 to 35, and of
diverse occupations, for a period of six weeks. In 1986-87, 303
such teams, supported by $2.5 million from Rotary, stayed in
homes of foreign Rotarians, traveled to many locations and
learned about the nation’s resources, historical development,
government, justice, education, health, social services,
agriculture, commerce, industry, research, religion, culture,
recreation, sports, and amusements. After returning home, the
team members are obligated to tell of their experiences to local
organizations throughout the Rotary district. Through 1987, more
than $18.5 million has been invested in this program of more than
2,500 exchanges.

By means of Special Grants (over $6 million on 900 grants in
113 countries to date), matching fund support is provided for
projects such as for medical care and equipment, clean water and
sanitation, vocational training, and agricultural assistance.

Large-scale and long-term projects in the Health, Hunger
and Humanity program, initiated in 1977-78, are advancing human
development throughout the world. These projects, amounting to
over $16.7 million to date, are increasing food production and
family income in Bangladesh, Mexico, and Colombia; providing
agricultural and other training in Kenya, Portugal, Ghana,
Honduras, Guyana, Pakistan, and Ecuador; assisting village
development and water resources projects in India, Cameroon,
Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and Haiti; and improving health
care in Turkey, Korea, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines,
Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Malawi, and South Africa.

World Community Service includes projects directed toward
improving the lives of people. A central office clearinghouse matches requests from Rotary districts with districts and clubs able to carry out a needed project.

The **Rotary Award for World Understanding** has been established to recognize an individual or organization that has demonstrated exemplary and worthy promotion of international understanding, goodwill, and peace.

February of each year is observed by Rotarians the world over as **World Understanding Month**. Special programs emphasize the need for goodwill as a foundation for peace.

February 23rd, the anniversary of the first Rotary club meeting, is observed as **World Understanding and Peace Day**.

The **International Youth Exchange** program offers an opportunity for young people to spend time in a foreign country, sometimes for a full high school academic year.

In 1985, the ambitious **Polio Plus** program to eradicate polio throughout the world was initiated. A total of $120 million is being raised for this program. It includes providing all the polio vaccines necessary for up to five years for any approved city, state, country or regional immunization program. It also provides equal assistance to any less-developed country to help assess, plan, implement and evaluate a plan for annual national days of immunization against polio. To date, some 66 million children have been protected against this disease.

Finally, Rotary in 1985 initiated a **Disaster Relief** program in the amount of $500,000 for immediate assistance to an area in case of disaster.
While it is important for governmental policies to provide the framework for better international understanding, more may be accomplished through organizations such as Rotary. Journalist Bill Moyers stated, "I think that service organizations such as Rotary can make the big difference... Volunter organizations have the motive; they have the flexibility; they have the commitment to truly act more rapidly and do more effectively what other huge, complex institutions can't do." (Pratt:1986,29)

As an example, Rotary Clubs of Turkey in 1986 invited sixteen German couples and four French couples to visit Turkey to better understand each others cultures. In the same year four "goodwill" conferences were hosted in the Mediterranean area, drawing together 330 Rotarians and guests from fourteen countries. (Levin:1987,36)

It should be noted that all Rotary programs of world peace and understanding involve acceptance and sponsorship by districts in both sending and receiving countries. Again, this endorses the functioning rule of tourism, that there must be hosts if there are to be guests. Otherwise, travelers are merely spectators, and at the worst, trespassers.

Planning Tourism for Peace

Can tourism be planned for the express purpose of fostering world understanding and peace? Probably, but the success of such planning requires the willingness of the sending nation and the receiving nation to cooperate. Cooperation on travel need not mean total agreement on economic, political, social, or religious issues. Rather, it means that host areas will not only accept
foreign visitors, but also will provide for a variety of opportunities for cultural exchange. Further, this cooperation means that sending areas will accept some responsibility for educating, guiding and stimulating markets on how to travel in foreign countries.

Strong local input must accompany all tourism planning strategies. For example, special ethnic ceremonies, arts and crafts may have strong meaning and empathy locally, only to be destroyed if viewed by masses of tourists. When planned jointly between local, regional and federal tourist authorities, the invasion of tourists need not be disruptive. This has occurred in several countries such as Bali. (deKadt:1979,201) In fact, the tourist incomes from their cultural resources are channeled back to strengthen local cultural foundations. The influx of tourists into Cyprus has actually stimulated a revival of local drama, flower shows, art festivals, folkloric dances, and other spectacles important to local residents. (deKadt:1979,253) A seminar on tourism development in eighteen countries (eleven developing nations) in 1976 concluded that national tourist offices (or destinations) should pay greater attention to person-to-person contact and offer an adequate but not distorted view of the nation. Furthermore, sending nations need to better educate their out-bound tourists on travel behavior while visiting foreign nations. (deKadt:1979,344)

The planning of tourism to stimulate better cultural exchange requires sensitivity to the conditions that will favor such exchange. It must be recognized that pleasure travelers are involved in less-structured behavior and better host-guest
relations can be pushed only so far. Tourism often stimulates seasonal peak use, creating demand for seasonal workers who are often poorly trained in cultural exchange. And the very transitory nature of much of tourism limits the development of strong bonds between hosts and guests. (Pearce:1981,51) Recognizing these issues is essential to the planning of tourism for greatest cultural understanding as a foundation for peace.

Destinations could foster greater one-to-one opportunities for communication between visitors and hosts. The trend toward bed-and-breakfast lodging offers this opportunity. The private sector or government could structure more visits to homes of receiving nations. Japan’s tourism agency has initiated a "home visit system" whereby residents agree to host foreign visitors. By 1985, almost one thousand Japanese in fourteen areas have registered to receive over 2700 guests. (Tourism in Japan:1966,69)

Planning should encompass sufficient market research to provide better understandings of travelers’ desires to truly learn more about other peoples of the world. It might be a surprise to discover that underneath ideological differences between nations may lie many common threads—health, family love and affection, human dignity, security, justice, honesty, happiness, achievement, and creativity.

More specifically, several strategies for stimulating greater world peace appear feasible:

Host countries:

* Declare, by federal policy, the willingness to accept and
host visitors, not merely for economic gain but for cultural exchange.

* Establish local host-guest programs that provide an open forum for group-to-group and person-to-person cultural exchange.

* Encourage tourism industry leaders to become involved in improving their services for better cultural exchange.

* Stimulate local business and industry to add to their congresses the holding of post-convention tours and meetings directed toward cultural exchange.

* Provide hospitality training programs for local citizens and especially tourist industry business people.

* Provide language interpreters in all hosting areas.

* Encourage all service organizations to follow the lead of Rotary to place greater stress on programs of world understanding and peace.

Sending Countries:

* Establish educational programs in elementary schools that include the geography, economics, politics and religions of foreign nations.

* Establish educational programs in elementary schools that train children on how to travel and particularly travel etiquette.

* Set up cooperation between travel systems in hosting and sending countries to facilitate foreign travel for cultural exchange.

* Create stronger cooperation between travel trade
organizations and the many civic and service organizations that have concerns over world understanding and peace.

* Establish public lecture series, films and video programs that provide insight into the characteristics of foreign countries.

* Encourage all service organizations to follow the lead of Rotary to place greater stress on programs of world understanding and peace.

Conclusions

This review of planning tourism for peace is merely a beginning foundation. Obviously, the issue of international cultural exchange is complicated and not easily accomplished. It is equally evident that all public and private tourism policies are de facto involved because travel is a major factor of world understanding and peace. No other form of communication—not even telecommunication—is a substitute for a person to walk on foreign soil and communicate with the natives. There is no question about tourism having an important role. The question today centers on the willingness of nations to commit themselves to use the tourism system for the goal of world understanding and peace.

References


