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INTRODUCTION TO PEACE THROUGH TOURISM

by

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Abstract

The paper describes the initiatives of the Institute for Peace through Tourism and the vision of its founder, Lou D'Amore. It seeks to clarify the concept of 'peace through tourism' by analysing the practices of pacifism and the Johan Galtung analogy by which peace is compared to health. Tourism is presented as one of a range of therapies by which the likelihood of conflict can be reduced. Responsible tourism and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism are examined as providers of benchmarks, and the involvement of government, tourism industry and other bodies is illustrated through the use of examples. The paper concludes with a review of the Solar Sisters Program in Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION TO PEACE THROUGH TOURISM

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One of the sadder realities of humankind is that national, racial, religious, ethnic and cultural differences have been the root cause of conflict of one kind or another throughout the history of our civilization (Tomljenovic and Faulkner, 2000:18).

Citizens who cultivate their humanity need ... an ability to see themselves as not simply citizens of some local region or group, but also, and above all, as human beings bound to all others by ties of recognition and concern (Nussbaum, 1997:38).

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Background to 'Peace Through Tourism'

Although penned relatively recently, the observations contained in the above quotations are not new. Tomljenovic and Faulkner (2000) remind us of the hope that technological advancement would lead to 'the global village' (McLuhan and Powers, 1989) marked by peace, harmony and mutual interdependence, but now contrasted with the emergence of 'ethnic cleansing' in the human consciousness of the late 20th century.

It was in this climate of contradiction that the concept of Peace through Tourism arose. The International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT)[1] was founded in 1986, dedicated to 'fostering tourism initiatives which contribute to international understanding and cooperation.' The IIPT has sponsored a number of conferences and seminars, addressed and attended by representatives from the tourism industry, governments, academia and environmental and human rights organisations. These have resulted in a range of initiatives concerned with codes of ethics, sustainable tourism and alleviation of poverty.

The IIPT Founding President, Louis D'Amore outlined the potential role for tourism in his landmark article, 'Tourism: The World's Peace Industry', published in 1988. He noted the growing economic significance of tourism and reviewed the problems contributing to violence in the world and the inadequacy of the ways in which these are addressed. He also argued for a vision of peace which transcends the absence of war and incorporates the Russian concept of *mir* - a state of tranquility within individuals, among people and nations, and between people and nature.

However, the concept of 'peace through tourism' receives little attention in the academic literature on tourism and even less in industry publications. It is hoped that this

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[1] www.iipt.org

paper demonstrates the legitimacy and practicality of a focus on the potential of tourism to contribute to a world in which people are less inclined to resort to violence as a solution to their problems.

Problems of definition

> ### The desire among people to live in peaceful conditions is apparent in the evolution of human societies and nations.

Controversy over the potential for tourism to contribute to a more peaceful world may stem, in part, from the perceived vagueness of the concept. What is 'peace through tourism'?

It is easier to start by clarifying what it is not. 'Peace through tourism' is not merely another label to add to the list of 'alternative' tourisms. It is not about the elimination or obligatory conversion of tourist activities devoted to fun and entertainment. Nor does it require the subordination of normal business objectives to the pursuit of some 'higher good'. Mainstream tourism practices and activities are not placed under threat by the 'peace through tourism' message. Indeed, a number of contributors to this book make it clear that adoption of the strategies recommended do not conflict with, and are likely to facilitate the achievement of all triple bottom line objectives - economic, environmental and social.

Similarly, the pursuit of peace through tourism is not analogous with pacifism. While it is difficult to find anyone who is opposed to the pursuit of peace, it is easy to find people who are critical of pacifists. Pacifists have been accused of cowardice and treason (and punished accordingly) and even in these more enlightened times they are frequently dismissed as idealists or, more contemptuously, as 'peaceniks', 'lefties' or 'do-gooders'.

And yet, although the term 'pacifism' is comparatively recent, the desire among people to live in peaceful conditions - if only for economic, security or social reasons - is apparent in the evolution of human societies and nations. Despite the conflict associated with exclusivity and claims to universalism, all major religions encourage their adherents to adopt non-violent attitudes.

Indeed, many wars, including some in modern times, have been fought in the name of peace, or of similarly commendable objectives such as recognition of human rights, freedom, independence, justice or national defence. It is clear that there is one form of pacifism which would preclude the use of violence completely, and another form which accepts that the use of violence is justified in certain circumstances.

There is also a distinction between pacifism as a personal attribute and pacifism as national or organisational policy. For an individual, avoidance of violence is likely to be a matter of conscience, whereas for the policy-maker pacifism may be a way of avoiding the suffering, loss of life, and physical, economic and social damage which war inevitably causes. Despite this, history is replete with examples demonstrating acceptance of these by governments (and by those opposed to them) as the price to be paid for some higher goal.

The aim of 'peace through tourism' is to reduce, if not eliminate, the conditions which lead to a perception that violence is necessary. It stems from a belief that the

circumstances in which resorting to violence appears to be appropriate can be ameliorated or avoided, and that tourism is one channel for bringing this about. It is also argued in this book that peace through tourism is more likely to be achieved if it is pursued by both governments and individuals.

Defining peace

> **A state of peace exists where conflict is unlikely**
> **to occur, or where conflict can be resolved**
> **without recourse to violence.**

Galtung (1996) argues that to understand peace we have to understand violence. He distinguishes cultural violence (whereby the use or abuse of power is justified) and its expression in indirect or structural violence (repression and exploitation) and direct violence (war and warlike actions).

However, he recognises that peace is not merely the absence of violence - cultural, structural or direct. He compares peace to a state of health which incorporates not only the absence of illness but also a physical and mental condition conducive to the avoidance of illness. A state of peace exists where conflict is unlikely to occur, or where conflict can be resolved without recourse to violence.

He also recognises that a completely peaceful world is unlikely to eventuate. A realistic objective is a world in which there is a more positive balance between peace and conflict and progressively less suffering from violence.

The pursuit of peace, therefore, is not directed merely to the elimination of war. Measures to bring about a more harmonious world may address such concerns as poverty, injustice, inequity, intolerance, ignorance, prejudice, marginalisation, unwarranted domination and chauvinism. To continue the analogy with health, if these are regarded as contributors to violence (illness), then tourism offers a range of therapies through which they may be treated.

The goal of Peace through Tourism is to move tourism from practices marked by insensitivity, inequity and short-term maximisation to a broader view which recognises long-term obligations to travellers, destination and wider communities, and succeeding generations. At the very least, providers and consumers of travel experiences could adopt the principle, 'Do no harm.'

Issue in focus: Responsible Tourism

The term 'responsible tourism' has been widely adopted. In some cases, it is used merely as a marketing device targeting travellers seeking an alternative to the experiences offered by mass tourism. However, even misuse of the term demonstrates the extent to which the concept has penetrated the tourism industry, and there are now many operators and associations dedicated to the aims of responsible tourism.

In 1990, Community Aid Abroad issued a booklet, *Travel wise and be welcome: A guide to responsible travel in the 90s*. It draws attention to the hidden (and not so hidden) costs associated with tourism and provides advice on how these may be alleviated.

Travellers are encouraged to learn about the destination to be visited, learn a few words of the local language, respect local customs, use locally owned accommodation and services, deal fairly when shopping, avoid offensive behaviour and minimise waste.

The aim of the booklet is consistent with those of other tourism organisations, including those promoting sustainabilty and peace. For example, the UK Federation of Tour Operators (FTO),[2] through its Responsible Tourism Committee, confirms its commitment to sustainability, and practices which prevent economic, environmental, social and cultural degradation and make a positive contribution to the livelihood of the local people.

Another British-based organisation, Tourism Concern[3], in its mission statement, seeks 'to effect change in the tourism industry by campaigning for fair and ethically traded tourism.' The organisation works with the tourism industry to eliminate social and environmental problems associated with tourism, and a central concern is the reduction of poverty, especially in developing countries. Campaigns have focused on the injustices generated by forcible displacement without compensation for the development of resorts and conservation areas in East Africa; the use of forced labour for infrastructure projects in Myanmar (Burma); and the conditions which porters endure in providing services for Himalayan trekkers.

Tourism Concern makes available a range of resource materials on:
- fair trade in tourism (and how the individual traveller can contribute);
- development of community tourism (and enhancement of local benefits);
- raising public awareness (and support for ethical travel); and
- inclusion of the UK Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) perspectives in project planning.

The organisation emphasises the following:

We seek to work with the tourism industry rather than against it. We don't believe that considering the welfare of local people has to mean a 'worse' holiday. Indeed, we would like to convince those who run and manage our holidays that tourism can support local people, cultures, environment and economies, and still be exciting and enjoyable.

Political and industry initiatives

**Nothing in the pursuit of peace through tourism
is inconsistent with good business practice.**

There is considerable support at a global level for the view that tourism can make a difference. For example, in April 1999 the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development endorsed the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism[4]. Although the primary

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[2] www.fto.co.uk
[3] www.tourismconcern.org.uk
[4] The full text of the document is available on the World Tourism Organisation website at

focus is on sustainability, there are elements distributed throughout the ten Articles which relate to the ability of tourism to bring about improved relationships among the world's people. These are directed to the following.

1. Mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies, pursued through:

- promotion of the ethical values common to humanity;
- encouragement of tolerance and respect for diversity in religious, philosophical and moral beliefs;
- recognition of the worth of social and cultural traditions, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples;
- tourist activities consistent with the attributes, traditions, laws, practices and customs of host regions and protection of the destination environments;
- host community hospitality based on knowledge of the lifestyles, tastes and expectations of visitors; and
- provision to tourists of information about the regions and communities they visit.

2. Individual and collective fulfillment, pursued through:

- minimisation of travel restrictions;
- measures to ensure the safety of travellers;
- provisions for travellers with disabilities;
- travel with an open mind; and
- travel as a learning experience.

3. Equitable distribution of benefits, pursued through:

- avoidance of exploitation, especially of children;
- optimisation of local employment;
- protection of and appropriate conditions for the providers of tourism services with respect to status, payment, job security and career opportunities;
- significant reinvestment of multinational enterprise returns in the destination regions;
- establishment of partnership agreements among enterprises in generating and destination regions;
- development which ensures that the needs of present and future generations are met;
- measures to conserve resources and minimise waste; and
- acceptance of necessary constraints on, and more even spatial and temporal distribution of tourism activities.

The Code states (Article 7) that people have a right to participate in tourism as a form of the rest and leisure guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and calls for the establishment of a World Committee on Tourism Ethics to provide impartial conciliation in the event of disputes.

There is a view that governments focus on the economic value of tourism to the exclusion of other, perhaps more significant, contributions. This is not an unwelcome development, since the pursuit of economic objectives may, even inadvertently, contribute to the beneficial outcomes identified by the proponents of peace through tourism.

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www.world-tourism.org.

Indeed, despite concerns about the focus on commercialisation of tourism, there may be some room for optimism in what Bobbit (2002) sees as an evolutionary progression from the 'nation-state' paradigm towards that of the 'market state.' In the latter, governments aim to maximise the opportunities available to their citizens and to emphasise market responsiveness rather than welfare. Part of, and a contributor to the globalisation process, this development may lead to a world marked by high levels of interdependence, strengthened transnational bonds (increasingly involving non-government actors) and greater economic and social cooperation (Amstutz, 1999).

For example, a number of commentators (Henderson, 2002; Kim and Prideaux, 2003; Young-Sun, 2003) have noted that political, economic and peace objectives are combined in efforts to encourage movement of tourists between North and South Korea. These developments have involved government and industry representation, the most notable example being the Mount Gumgang project north of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), initiated by the Hyundai Corporation and now partially funded by the South Korean Government.

Bilateral cooperation in the Korean Peninsula is tentative, and hindered by mutual suspicion, restrictive regulation (especially in North Korea), disparities in living and technological levels, and low visitation. Nonetheless, there appears to be hope that tourism can help break down the barrier between the two political entities and that the Korean experience can provide a model for other divided states such as Cyprus.

In a Foucauldian analysis of tourism, Winter (2004:884) describes tourism as

> *a broad and expansive phenomenon involving the travel and associated activities of million of individuals on a global scale, linking government, large and small businesses, host communities and academics. It is a highly productive and growing system, incorporating multiple activities directed to the creation of diverse social, cultural, ecological and economic aims … **where no one is in charge** (emphasis added).*

Nonetheless, she refers to the 'technologies of power' in the tourism industry (marketing, public relations and advertising) which are directed to the control of consumer behaviour and a purposeful depiction of places and people. Indeed, it is claimed that tourism contributes to the creation of nations, products of the mind rather than nature, and uses the myth of the Australian Outback as an illustrative example.

However, Winter recognises that the exercise of such power can be both positive and negative, and there are encouraging signs of a commitment to peace through tourism within the industry. For example, there is the work of the International Youth Hostels Federation, a body whose concerns now go well beyond the provision of inexpensive backpacker accommodation and incorporate the aim of fostering peace and understanding throughout the world. The IYHF is a global body representing associations in 85 countries. Its mission statement reflects a philosophy of 'youth hostelling for peace and understanding' and 'building bridges', and some hostels have become learning centres for peace. Support is provided for exchange and volunteer programs, and profits from peace-logo T-shirt sales are donated to World Vision. Projects mounted by the IYHF demonstrate very clearly the value of 'thinking globally, acting locally.'

Blanchard (2004) focuses on education with reference to the operations of the Peace Boat (Japan), a cruise liner whose visits and on-board activities are designed to inform and encourage travellers wishing to acquire clearer understanding of the world's problems and possible solutions. She commended the Peace Boat for its recognition of the tourist as someone who wants to learn.

There are adventure tourism companies aiming to make a contribution in places where the tourism dollar does not normally reach, and to build chains of cooperating operators by working 'from the inside out.' The travel companies become involved through recognition of the need to protect destinations on which they depend for their livelihood, the value of the positive profile thereby gained, and the failure of governments to effectively address problems. They play an important role in providing travellers with immersion in communities and cultures, celebrating diversity and 'seeing for themselves' and emphasise experiences which remind the traveller of how inhumane people can be. They recognise the importance of local guides in demystification of the unfamiliar, and the need to recognise that we share our planet with other people and other species.

Airlines have cooperated with individuals and organisations in the delivery of much-needed items to schools, orphanages and hospitals in developing countries, focusing on places not reached by mainstream tourism and with problems not addressed by governments.

The adoption by tourism businesses of triple bottom line (TBL) accounting is a major shift in business practice and a reflection of what has been termed 'enlightened economics'. Returns on investment are expressed in financial, social and environmental terms and the identification of these is an inducement to change attitudes, apparent, for example, in the adoption of 'green' policies by hotel chains. Measurement of social and environmental elements in the TBL is difficult, but this is an area to which academic research can make a meaningful contribution.

Although it is not an industry initiative, an example of 'philanthropic tourism' is Project MARC (Medical Assistance to Remote Communities) which involves 'yachties' in the delivery of medical supplies and services to the outer islands and settlements of Vanuatu. The brainchild of a yachting couple, the Project demonstrates the impact which can stem from the commitment and inspirational efforts of individuals.

In summary, it is clear that:
1. major positive impacts can be achieved through the inspiration and dedication of individuals and companies, operating perhaps at a local level, but sending a message throughout the world; and
2. nothing in the pursuit of peace through tourism is inconsistent with good business practice.

Case Study: The International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) Program*

As noted above, tourism organisations are not alone in the pursuit of peace. Although the IFYE program is not designed for tourists, it is clear that visitation to other countries is central to the achievement of its objectives.

In 1948, the IFYE programme was developed as a way of building relationships

between young people from the USA and countries all around the world. Some of the participating countries also developed exchange programs with other countries, while some maintained only the bilateral exchange with the USA.

Common to all the member organisations of the IFYE network is the theme of fellowship and understanding, with the first line of the European IFYE constitution referring to the development of "Peace through understanding". The philosophy is based on a recognition that that living with families from another country or state enhances one's understanding, and therefore appreciation of another way of life and belief system, and this underpins the exchange program around the world.

The program has been through highs and lows, with the number of programs diminishing as funding becomes more difficult to source and young people in rural areas more sparsely spread. Nonetheless, exchange programs still operate in and between many countries.

An important element of the program is the follow-up arrangements. European IFYEs meet annually for a week each Northern summer, and welcome IFYEs from countries outside Europe as participants. Initially including only those who had exchanged with the USA, the network now includes all those who have participated in exchange programs through their own organisations, both within Europe and outside of it. USA IFYEs also meet annually while groups in other countries meet at regular intervals.

The first World Conference was organised in Switzerland in 1965, gathering IFYEs from around the globe. In 1998, the 50th anniversary of the program was celebrated with the seventh IFYE World Conference in Washington DC (USA). In 2003, the eighth IFYE World Conference was held in Sweden, with the ninth to be held in Adelaide (South Australia) in 2008. These events have grown to accommodate more than 500 participants from as many as forty countries each time they are held.

In Australia, the Australian Rural Exchangees Association (AREA), a member organisation of IFYE, meets every two years. Membership is open to anyone who has participated in an exchange program within or outside of Australia. In some states, membership is open to past members of the state body (Rural Youth or Young Farmers), whether they have been on exchange or not.

By participation in the exchange program, young people learn about another state or country, and by living with families they learn to appreciate how people form their opinions and why they have them. Of course, they also meet many people, make lots of friends and have an enormous range of experiences throughout their exchange program.

From their exchange, people make lifelong friends and may also join organisations such as AREA to meet other people who have had similar experiences and maintain a network. By participating in IFYE events, past exchangees can maintain contact with other exchangees, make new friends, travel to many countries around the world and continue to build on the experiences of their exchange program. They might mix with people who travelled 50 years ago or people who were part of the program last week.

The IFYE exchange program provides wonderful opportunities for young people from many countries around the world to have new experiences and become part of the philosophy of Peace through understanding.

* Contributed by Deb Clarke, Chair of the Organising Committee for the Ninth World IFYE Conference, to be held in Adelaide in 2008.

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Action agenda: Solar Sisters*

The ability of tourism to contribute benefits is now widely accepted. However, there is clearly room for improvement in the form of these benefits and the way they are delivered.

Programs such as the Solar Sisters Program offer international travelers an opportunity to create real, tangible and positive social change while also having an unforgettable and life-changing experience abroad. Whether you are a librarian dabbling in Tibetan Buddhism, an accountant in search of the white blossoms of the Magnolia Campbelli in the Bhutanese Mountains, or a feminist activist who wants to spend time with women leaders in a rural Sri Lankan community, the Solar Sisters Program will give you the opportunity to explore some of the most majestic places in the world while contributing to the environmental, economic and social empowerment of rural poor in developing countries.

Solar Energy: Grassroots Change with Global Implications

With the Himalayan Light Foundation's Solar Sisters Program, volunteers travel to rural Himalayan and Sri Lankan villages and stay with a community while donating and installing a solar-powered electric system in health centers, schools, monasteries and community centers. Depending on the location and scale of the solar installation, the program ranges from 10 days to three weeks, beginning with a simple training on solar energy at the host country manufacturers/suppliers, and then traveling to and staying with the community during the installation process. Participants can volunteer as individuals or in groups and they work with HLF to select a village, type of project, or region based on their interests.

Solar energy is a crucial solution to the social, environmental and health crisis brought about by the use of petroleum and wood for energy. In many countries throughout Southeast Asia's remote areas, people live in extreme poverty, with electricity available to less than 5% of the population. With no fossil fuel reserves, villagers rely on kerosene, fuel wood and batteries that are expensive, dangerous contributors to adult and infant mortality, time-consuming to obtain and damaging to health and the environment.

Grassroots renewable energy programs are a practical solution to the environmental and social crises brought on by energy consumption. The effects of solar energy range from improving the quality of life for a handful of rural community members to demonstrating a viable alternative to powerful nation-states competing for the world's depleting cache of natural resources. Solar energy costs nothing once it has been installed

and requires little ongoing maintenance. Community residents no longer need days of people-power to transport petrol into the remotest of communities, nor do they risk blindness caused by burning coal or wood for lighting. On the broadest scale, the threat to world peace attributable to the quest for petroleum is reduced as consciousness about the value of renewable energy is raised worldwide.

Details About the Solar Sisters Program

The Solar Sisters Program allows international volunteers to have the opportunity of a lifetime by establishing unforgettable connections with an indigenous community while contributing to the community's welfare and the international campaign for environmental and human rights.

Highlights include:

- the cultural experience of being a part of a vibrant indigenous community with thousands of years of history and traditions;
- acquiring the ability to make a tangible, grassroots change towards restoring the environment and improving the quality of life in remote communities through the use of alternative energy; and
- the aesthetic experience of visiting some of the most majestic and remote places in the world.

The itinerary can vary with the site location. Generally, the program begins with a HLF office visit, a day's solar training in Solar Systems manufacturer or the distributor's office in Kathmandu, and some sightseeing. This is followed by travel to the community and installation. The program takes place on an ongoing rolling basis, and the HLF currently has a waiting list of communities wishing to receive solar installations. Many volunteers choose to extend their stay in the community or in surrounding areas.

At the time of writing, the cost per participant is US$1300. This price covers a Solar Electricity System (either a 36-watt system or equivalent funding towards a larger system), local ground transport, hotel accommodation in Kathmandu, and food in the village (drinks not included), and staff (translators, technicians, porters and local coordinator).

HLF coordinates all travel, food and accommodations for the volunteer for the duration of the program. The volunteer is responsible for selecting and paying for his/her own flight to the country, thereby having the opportunity of extending their stay beyond the program. HLF can help find discount international flights and travel and lodging, and also send someone to meet the volunteer at the airport upon arrival. If a domestic flight to reach the project site is required, the volunteer has to cover the domestic fares involved.

Past participants have successfully fundraised through grants, scholarships, and benefit drives to help meet the program cost. HLF can assist with advice on this. HLF is a certified Non-Governmental Institution, accredited and supported by a number of bodies, including Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Program, the British and German Embassies to Nepal, Solar Development Foundation, Virtual Foundation, and the Threshold Foundation.

Time well "spent"…in every way possible!

The mere fact that someone is willing to travel to the other side of the globe to spend their "leisure time" demonstrates a desire for more than the traditional resort-style vacation and a strong degree of appreciation and interest in a completely different culture and world. The socially conscious implications of this decision are implicit, and it is only natural to choose to "give back" to the amazing community they are visiting while simultaneously experiencing its benefits.

Additionally, the social concerns associated with travel to exotic and adventurous locations are abundant. Unmonitored tourism has a knack for wreaking havoc on a country's environmental resources and negatively impacting on or exploiting native cultures. For example, the people who possess such a strong interest and fascination with Mount Everest that they will travel thousands of miles to experience the majesty of the tallest peak in the world are also those responsible for giving Everest the reputation of "the world's largest trash dump."

As citizens of the world with a responsibility towards future generations and the privilege of traveling to such beautiful places as Nepal, we must not continue this pattern. The value of organisations such as Solar Sisters Experience cannot be overstated.

* Information was supplied by Dawn Peebles of the Himalayan Light Foundation.

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