

Pro poor tourism

Justin Francis



Founded in 2001

Seed investor Dame Anita Roddick

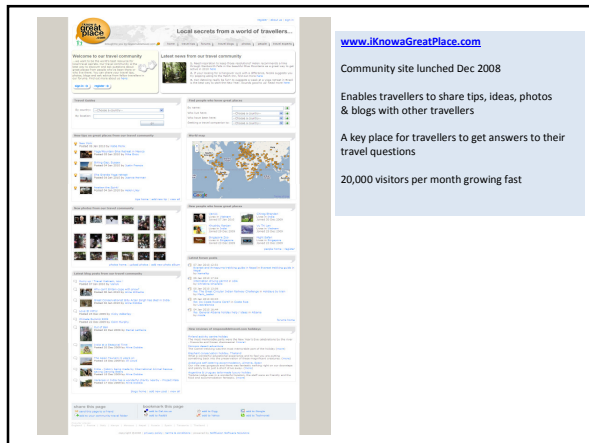
"One day responsible will be to travel what organic is to food"

Holidays from over 350 carefully screened tour operators & 1000 places to stay

The leading travel agent for green, eco, sustainable or responsible tourism

350,000 unique site visitors per month

Annual sales circa £15m



www.iKnowaGreatPlace.com

Community site launched Dec 2008

Enables travellers to share tips, ideas, photos & blogs with other travellers

A key place for travellers to get answers to their travel questions

20,000 visitors per month growing fast

Context - Copenhagen

Gutless, yes. But the planet's future is no priority of ours

While Copenhagen may fall far short of the deal we need, leaders know voters are not prepared to change their lifestyle.

Most leaders in Copenhagen were out ahead of their people. Most understand the crisis better than those they represent, promising more sacrifice than their citizens are yet ready to accept. NGO protesters make much-needed noise, but they wouldn't have to if most people were already with them.

Polly Toynbee, The Guardian

Copenhagen - context

- Consumerism met environmentalism and consumerism won
 - In my view in part due to the hectoring and guilt driven campaigning and language employed without success for so long by campaigners
- If we want to convince politicians to act we need to reach out to more than a minority of (often relatively wealthy) liberal minded people and win hearts and minds

Pro poor tourism

- Our choice
 - Go on talking with minorities of tourists and tourism businesses prepared to act
- OR
- Find new ways to engage more widely...

Three questions

- Why should the industry bother?
- What is necessary to reduce poverty?
- How is this most efficiently achieved with the lowest cost and the least risk?

Pro poor tourism

- 'An approach to tourism development and management that results in increased net benefits for poor people'
- Why would any tourism organisation – other than an NGO paid to do so and a tiny number of passionate entrepreneurs – do this?
 - Businesses primary stakeholders are customers, shareholders and staff
- It seems to me that the case needs to be made to tourists and to the industry about how pro poor tourism benefits them too....

Pro poor tourism

I understand its not intended to be a brand – but in the absence of anything else it IS how you have branded this issue

It is *not* language to engage tourists, the tourism industry or local communities

Tourists

- Tourists care about *experiences* more than pro poor tourism
- We market many 'pro poor' tourism businesses (and evaluate projects for The Responsible Tourism Awards)
 - Many as part of a community tourism program with Conservational International
 - We repeatedly have to wade through reams of information about stakeholder participation etc. to get to any exciting stories about the experiences presented professionally as products that people can buy
 - The experiences are remarkable but are mostly undersold (or not sold at all)
 - The average occupancy is 6% (appalling)
 - Marketing and market access is the biggest cause of failure

Tourism businesses

- Most tourism businesses don't really care about increasing the net benefits of tourism to the poor
- They care about
 - Tourists and their expectations
 - Creating points of difference
 - Retaining reliable, professional staff that make tourists feel special
 - High quality food and produce available quickly and cheaply
 - Protecting the tourism assets that tourists see and experience
 - Natural and cultural heritage
 - Reducing risks or time consuming issues associated with community relations
- Of course 'pro poor' tourism can contribute strongly to all these objectives and we must communicate how

Local community

Is talking to them about 'pro-poor tourism' respectful, helpful, empowering, realistic, exciting and engaging?

What is necessary for tourism to help reduce poverty?

- Capacity building?
- Participation in decision making process?
- Stakeholder engagement?
- Training?
- Empowerment?
- Improved access to services and infrastructure?
- Addressing competing demands of natural resources?

What is necessary for tourism to help reduce poverty?

To find the *lowest cost, least risk* way for local people to earn more money

How business evaluates opportunity

- Cost
- Likely return
- Risk – chances of success based on case histories?
- Timescale for return
- Investment required, over what period
- Competitive analysis
- Do we have the skills, products, markets?
- Do we need partners?
- Alternatives

This is how communities should evaluate how they make most money from tourism

Some options to consider

Their own enterprise	Partnership in a new tourism enterprise	Jobs with established ventures	Service providers to established ventures	Excursions	Craft sales
High risk of failure	Still high risk	Quick results – fast income	Established market	Access to tourists from established ventures	Established market
High up front capital investment	Spreads risk and costs to a partner	Limited risk - depending on track record of venture partner	Proven demand	Can sell different products and services to spread income through community	Different sections of community can actively participate
Likely need to finance losses for several years	Retains ownership Brings in skills and resources				

Which options, combinations will produce greatest returns for the greatest number of people at least risk?

Pro poor tourism

- **In summary – be more market and commercially driven...**
 - Focus on ways to make the most money at the lowest risk and cost
 - ‘Building an eco-lodge’ is not always the best option!
 - Focus communications on the benefits of ‘pro poor’ tourism to tourists and tourism businesses rather than the process needed to create it
 - Think carefully about the language/branding you use..
 - We have to reach out to more tourists and tourism businesses...