Taking Responsibility
Moving Sustainable Tourism from Alternative to Mainstream

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Earthrise Apollo 8 1968
Finite world

- Population
- Soils & Food
- Fish and oceans
- Water
- Energy
- Oil, minerals & metals
- Pollution/Waste
- Climate change
- Poverty
- Food shortages, famine
- Conflict
- Refugees
- Non-linear change
Sustainable Development: a long history?

• **1972** World Commission on Environment & Development
• **1980** World Conservation Strategy
• **1987** Brundtland Report & Our Common Future
• **1992** Rio Environment & Development – UN Commission on Sustainable Development
• **2000** Millennium Development Goals
• **2002** World Summit on Sustainable Development
• **2012** Rio+20
• Sustainable Development Goals

Very little to show for it........
40 years

• 1972 World Commission on Environment & Development
• 1972 Publication of the Limits to Growth
• Four World Summits

• We are not making progress fast enough
• Overtourism is a consequence of doing no more than paying lip service to sustainability
Business as Usual


What is the problem with sustainability?

It is a vague aspiration

• optimal use of environmental resources
• Respect the socio-cultural authenticity
• providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed
• strong political leadership
  http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5
• It defies technical definition
Squeeze or stretch the graph in either direction by holding the Shift key while you click and drag. The bright red line (source data) shows monthly average carbon dioxide at NOAA’s Mauna Loa Observatory on Hawai’i in parts per million (ppm): the number of carbon dioxide molecules per million molecules of dry air. Over the course of the year, values are higher in Northern Hemisphere winter and lower in summer. The dark red line shows the annual trend, calculated as a 12-month rolling average.
Responsible Tourism

Is about
• Making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.
• in that order
• Must involve local people in determining their local priorities.

Characterised by
• Minimising negative impacts
• Maximising positive impacts
• Making a contribution to conservation
• Enjoyable experiences and meaningful connections
• Culturally sensitive and based on mutual respect.
• Accessible to all
Using Tourism to Make Better Places to Live In

• To use tourism to achieve sustainable development
• Sustainable development through tourism
• the aspiration of Responsible Tourism is to use tourism rather than to be used by it.

Tourism is like a fire – you can use it to cook you food or it can burn your house down.
Why Responsible?

**Accountability**
Actions and consequences can be attributed to individuals or legal entities, who can be held accountable, and legally they are liable.

**Respons-ability**
Individuals and organisations are expected to respond and to make a difference. This requires partnerships, a plurality of relationships, learning, praxis, and critical reflection.

**The Ostrich problem**
- They’ll sort something out

*Responsibility*
“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.”
~ Abraham Lincoln ~
Critical Difference

• Sustainability is an aspiration
  – It is vague and incapable of operational definition
  – It is generally inoperative

• Responsibility is what you take to achieve the aspiration
  1. the state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone.
  2. the state or fact of being accountable or to blame for something.
The antonym is Irresponsible
Responsible Travel takes a variety of forms, it is characterised by travel and tourism which

1. **minimises negative environmental, social and cultural impacts**;

2. **generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the wellbeing of host communities**, by improving working conditions and access to the industry;

3. **involves local people in decisions** that affect their lives and life chances.

**Cape Town Declaration 2002**
Responsible Travel takes a variety of forms, it is characterised by travel and tourism which

4. makes **positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage** and to the maintenance of the world’s diversity;

5. provides more **enjoyable experiences** for tourists through more **meaningful connections** with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural and environmental issues;

6. provides **access** for physically challenged and socially disadvantaged people; and

7. is **culturally sensitive** and engenders **respect** between tourists and hosts.

[https://responsibletourismpartnership.org/cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/](https://responsibletourismpartnership.org/cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/)
Sustainable & Responsible

• Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Tourism are not the same thing.

• Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility for achieving sustainable development through tourism – it is about what you do beyond the legal requirements.

UNWTO definition

• "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities“

http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5
The Business Cases for Responsible Tourism

• The right thing to do
• Minimising risk
• License to operate
• Product quality
• Cost savings
• Staff morale
• Market Advantage

• Market Advantage
• Experience
  – richer
  – more authentic
  – guilt free
• Differentiation and PR
  – Reputation
  – Referrals
  – Repeats
Our holidays their homes

• “Your everyday life is someone else’s adventure”
Whenever a place gets spoilt, we move on!

Cricketer Holidays

Old Town in Prague
Overtourism

• Overtourism is what happens when tourism is not managed sustainably

• Overtourism is the opposite of Responsible Tourism – the antithesis.

• It is the consequence of not having placed sufficient priority on sustainability.
RTNews Monthly 10 stories
responsibletourismpartnership.org/

http://haroldgoodwin.info/links/

http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/

Blog
https://news.wtm.com/category/responsible-tourism/

Resources
https://responsibletourism.wtm.com/discover