Peace Through Tourism: Commerce Based Principles and Practices

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While tourism’s positive contributions to societies have long been debated, commerce based tourism activities can strengthen peaceful societies by adhering to sustainable tourism principles. This study utilizes content analysis to examine 136 tourism practices from four major awards programs for their contributions to sustainability and peace. Specific practices which illuminate each of these contributions are highlighted. The findings reveal the most common initiatives focus on environmental quality, economic development, and community nourishment efforts, with substantially less focus on initiatives to engage citizen diplomacy and increase transparency. The use of awards programs to further sustainable tourism is discussed, and suggestions for future research in this important area of study are shared.
Although tourism’s positive contributions to societies have long been contested (e.g., Ap and Crompton, 1998; Liu and Var, 1986; Pizam, 1978), tourism has been accepted as one of the world’s more important economic sectors. In the post World War II era, demographic shifts, technological innovation, paid vacations, and discretionary income have increased consumer demand for long distance travel (Poon, 1994; Weaver and Lawton, 2002). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported that international tourist arrivals increased exponentially from 25 million in 1950 to 903 million in 2007, with the expectation that arrivals will reach 1.6 billion by 2020, as illustrated in Figure 1. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), a forum of global tourism and travel business leaders, reports that travel and tourism is expected to directly account for over US$2 trillion, or 3.4%, of the entire world economy’s gross domestic product in 2008, as well as directly employ 80 million people, or 2.8% of total employment worldwide. Although international tourism growth has stalled since mid-2008 due to the worldwide economic slowdown, overall growth for 2008 was projected to increase approximately 2 percent from 2007 levels. The UNWTO has initiated a “Resilience Committee” to support its members with accurate economic analyses and response mechanisms. Use of the term resilience reflects the UNWTO’s confidence that tourism flows and expenditures will recover as in the past when confronted with economic crises, terrorism, natural disasters, and disease epidemics.

As countries seek to take advantage of tourism’s economic potential, more attention is being given to the development and implementation of sustainable tourism, which is increasingly being driven by corporate commitments to a wider range of stakeholders beyond owners and shareholders, including consumers, employees,
residents, non-government organizations and activist groups. (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). As stated by the UNWTO (2005), “Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry... Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.”

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices can be applicable to all forms of tourism, including mass tourism and the various movements linked to ethical responsibility and environmental conservation including ecotourism, geotourism, and responsible tourism. Tourism development that fails to consider sustainable development goals can be a disruptive force by degrading the natural environment, commercializing culture, reinforcing negative host-guest stereotypes, and creating an economy over-reliant on services and sensitive to seasonal variations, among many other negative impacts (e.g., Burns, 1996; Getz, 1994; Krippendorf, 1987). On the other hand, a sustainable tourism approach can provide a higher quality tourist experience, an improved quality of life for local residents, justification for environmental protection, and enhancement of cultural pride (e.g., Ap and Crompton, 1998; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2004; Liu and Var, 1986). In particular, tourism’s private sector has the potential to stimulate local commerce, improve the standard of living, provide employment opportunities and generate foreign exchange (e.g., Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Weaver and Lawton, 2001).

The private sector has begun to take stock of the balance between sustainable and unsustainable tourism approaches which have influenced tourism companies' corporate
social responsibility (CSR) programs. Although contemporary CSR first emerged in the 1950s, it gained popularity during the 1970s with the goal of maximizing profits while conforming to the laws and ethics of society (Carroll, 1999; Baron, 2007). However, during the 1990s and more recently, consumer pressures have generated a CSR movement (Brammer and Millington, 2003) which emphasizes company responsiveness and performance (Carroll, 1999) as well as a focus on business practices that promote societal, economic and environmental sustainability (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Although CSR in the tourism and hospitality industry grew out of a concern for the environment (Holcomb et al., 2007), the trend is now being integrated into the foundational elements of contemporary tourism development through adopting sustainable tourism practices (Henderson, 2007). However, there continues to be a need in the tourism industry to formalize and communicate CSR strategies, methods and results of tourism companies (Dodds and Joppe, 2005; Henderson, 2007).

Tourism’s capacity to generate positive and negative impacts on countries and local destinations creates challenges in describing the relationship between tourism development and peace (D’Amore, 1988; Litvin, 1998). The establishment of a casual relationship between peace and tourism is particularly difficult as peace is usually framed in a negative way—i.e.: as an absence of war or an absence of violence (D’Amore, 1988; Galtung, 2005). However, a positive framework of peace can include influences such as transparency, material well being, culture, and education⁴, and represents a new paradigm for sustainable tourism approaches which foster peace on a local, regional, national and global level (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008; Poon, 1994). Despite the emergence of this positive definition of peace, there remains skepticism about tourism’s ability to promote
peace (Kim and Prideaux, 2003). Attention in the literature is given to the vulnerability of the sector to conflict (Lisle, 2000; Nelson, 2000; Sonmez et al., 1999; Taylor, 2006) and tourism’s responsibility for the creation of conflict (Nelson, 2000).

During initial stages of conflict at tourism destinations, tourists and basic infrastructure (i.e., airports) can often be the target of violence or terrorism as a way of gaining media coverage, foreign government involvement and pressure or disrupting the economies of nations or tourism destinations which rely on tourism (Hoffman, 1999; Lisle, 2000; Litvin, 1998; Sonmez et al., 1999). As a country moves into a high conflict period, tourism is virtually non-existent; the few tour operators that provide conflict or war-zone “rest and relaxation” tourism usually do little to promote peace (Lisle, 2000; Stephens, 2007). During the post conflict stage, tourism becomes a way to reinvigorate a nation’s economy (Anson, 1999) and to initiate low-level diplomacy in order for governments to begin rebuilding international ties (Butler and Mao, 1996; Yu and Chung, 2001). As a destination moves into full-fledged reconciliation as peace and stability is beginning to take root, tourism can provide a method to explore the healing process, rebuild societies and reconnect nations or cultures that were separated through conflict (Lennon and Foley, 2000; Stone, 2006; Strange and Kempa, 2003).

While commercial tourism activities can serve as a force to assist rebuilding efforts in post-conflict destinations, this paper contends that tourism can also strengthen positive peace in destinations unburdened by violent conflict. Fort and Schipani (2007) suggest that businesses can contribute to strengthening peaceful societies in four ways: fostering economic development; adopting principles of external evaluation (e.g., allowing transparency); nourishing a sense of community; and utilizing track-two, or
non-governmental, diplomacy. This paper intends to use and augment Fort and Schipani’s framework to identify and assess the ways and means by which the business of tourism contributes to sustainability and peace.

METHODOLOGY

A content analysis of award-winning commerce-based tourism practices was performed to identify and categorize the contributions made by commercial tourism activities to peaceful societies as outlined by Fort and Schipani (2007). Sproull (1995) contends the purpose of content analysis is to “make inferences about variables by systematically and objectively analyzing the content and/or process of communications” (pg. 246). Accordingly, this qualitative analysis of award-winning initiatives provides an inductive approach to observe how responsible tourism practices are associated with sustainable tourism principles and in which ways they might contribute to fostering peaceful societies.

Significant financial and non-financial benefits accrue to organizations receiving industry awards. These advantages can include publicity, competitive market advantage, opportunity to benchmark and share good practice, improved employee morale, and higher shareholder value for publicly traded companies (Balasubramanian, Mathur and Thakur, 2005; Bohoris, 1995; Ghobadian and Woo, 1994; Jenkins, 2006). While these benefits are moderated by award quality and level of consumer recognition (Dodds and Joppe, 2005), it is also suggested that awards can also serve as an incentive to spur innovation and encourage positive societal contributions.

Awards programs were screened based on several criteria including: inclusion of a variety of responsible tourism practices; a representation of international initiatives;
internet-accessible reporting of award-winning practices; and substantial focus on commercial tourism activities, which include corporate, government, or non-government organizational initiatives and partnerships. Awards programs that were solely marketing oriented (e.g., Travel Industry Association Odyssey Awards), not formally vetted (e.g., Business Enterprises for Sustainable Travel case studies), focused on one country or region (e.g., New Zealand Tourism Awards) or one type of tourism (e.g., Skal International Ecotourism Awards), or did not award commerce-based initiatives (e.g., IIPT Peace Awards) were not included for analysis.

Based on the criteria outlined above, four awards programs in the tourism industry were identified for inclusion in this study (see Table 1). The Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, originally established in 1989 by the Federation of Tour Operators and managed by the World Travel and Tourism Council since 2003, focus on four key categories: destination stewardship; conservation; community benefit; and global tourism business sustainable corporate practices. These awards are “aimed at recognizing best practice in sustainable tourism within the travel and tourism industry worldwide…highlighting the prime examples of best practice” 5. The Responsible Tourism Awards were established in 2004 by responsibletravel.com in partnership with Telegraph Travel, World Travel Market and Geographical Magazine. In 2007 and 2008, Virgin Holidays provided headline sponsorship. Tourists nominate and judges select individuals, companies and organizations in the travel industry which are “making a significant commitment to the culture and economies of local communities and are providing a positive contribution to biodiversity conservation” 6. Award winners are among thirteen categories including sectors (e.g., hotels, tour operators, cruise
companies), environments (e.g., marine, mountain), and practices (e.g., conservation of endangered species, poverty reduction). The Geotourism Challenge was established in 2008 and co-sponsored by National Geographic and Ashoka’s Changemakers. This award program’s philosophy is to “identify and showcase innovators in tourism development, management and marketing” 7. In 2008, 319 entries from 83 countries were received for this competition. While a panel of judges chose fifteen finalists, the three winners were selected by the public via online voting. Spawned from Conde Nast ecotourism awards program, the World Saver Awards were launched in 2007, recognizing travel and tourism company accomplishments in education, health, poverty relief, cultural and environmental preservation, and wildlife conservation 8. The World Saver Awards program has grown from 71 to 142 applicants between 2007 and 2008, with winners selected by a panel of judges representing academicians, corporate and association executives, and philanthropists.

Following procedures appropriate for content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980), two researchers independently categorized and coded winner and finalist practices into: representative sectors of the travel and tourism industry; world regions; contributions to peaceful societies as developed by Fort and Schipani (2007); and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)-approved System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED) sustainable tourism principles (CED 2008). The twelve principles were derived from the National Geographic Society’s Geotourism Principles and the UNWTO Aims for Sustainable Tourism, and consistent with key indicators from Innovation Norway and the Best Tourism Cities of China Program. Award practices representing a number of contributions and principles were coded in multiple categories.
Any discrepancies were discussed between the two researchers and differences in coding were resolved during this stage.

During the process of categorization, it was determined that significant award-winning environmental and conservation practices did not fit into the existing Fort and Schipani (2007) framework. To address this issue, a fifth contribution to peaceful societies named “enhancing environmental quality” was added. The protection and enhancement of our fragile ecological environment has emerged as a major concern of both business and governments in the forms of environmental certification programs (Font and Harris, 2004), CSR practices (Knox et al., 2005), and global legislation (e.g., United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Kyoto Protocol, Agenda 21).

Competition for scarce non-renewable resources such as fresh water and rich diverse eco-sensitive habitats may provoke violent conflict (Klare 2001), while collaboration on environmental conservation efforts can lead to cross-border cooperation, such as the establishment of peace parks (Hanks 2003). On a macro level, ecological interdependence suggests that human life is part of nature, so “peace with nature implies peace among people” (Brock 1991).

The twelve SMED principles were then organized into the five contributions to peaceful societies based upon conceptual fit (refer to Table 2). The resulting contributions-principles framework proved valuable in order to provide further conceptual clarity and structure, and served well to present exemplary practices identified in the selected award programs.
FINDINGS

Although the four awards programs analyzed are administered in the United States or Great Britain, the award-winning practices were found to be geographically diverse (Table 3). Over half of the 136 award recipients are based in Africa (30.1%) and the Americas (25.7%). East Asia/Pacific and Europe host 21.3% and 16.9% of the honorees, respectively, with only one award (0.7%) given to tourism practice in the Middle East. Global awards programs (5.1%) were not based in a specific destination and were generally corporate-wide practices for multinational companies (e.g., Marriott International, Lindblad Experiences). Nearly three-fourths of the tourism practices analyzed were represented by the lodging (50%) or tour operating (24.3%) sectors, while the attractions (6.6%), transport (5.9%), and restaurant (0.7%) sectors were much less visible in the cases reviewed (Table 4). All of the 136 award-winning practices analyzed were found to represent at least one, and often more than one, of the twelve sustainable tourism principles as related to the five contributions to peaceful societies (Table 2). The following subsections review each contribution to peace through a description of representative sustainable tourism principles, illuminated by several award-winning practices for each principle.

Enhancing Environmental Quality

Award-winning practices which enhanced environmental quality represented 95, or 69.8%, of the 136 awards analyzed. The three sustainable tourism principles closely related to enhancing environmental quality include biological diversity (42.6% of all practices examined), environmental purity and resource efficiency (32.4%), and physical
integrity of landscapes (14%).

The most common principle reflecting the environmental contribution to peace was *biological diversity*, which “supports the conservation of natural habitats, plants, and wildlife, and minimizes damage to them” (CED 2008). The Phinda Game Reserve in South Africa, operated by CC Africa, was reclaimed for wildlife after being degraded by poor land use. Over 46,000 acres and seven ecosystems were restored to their natural state. In addition, more than 2,000 animals were reintroduced to the reserve, including 15 endangered black rhinos, which have successfully adapted and reproduced. The Cristalino Jungle Lodge in Brazil’s Amazon Basin has saved over 25,000 acres of primary forest from logging activities. The Cristalino Foundation sponsors Flora Cristalino, a research project which has identified more than 700 species, including the discovery of three floral species. Blue Ventures launches scuba expeditions in Madagascar, allowing groups of paying volunteers to monitor marine environments and implement conservation strategies in fragile reef areas. These expeditions work with 25 villages in southwest Madagascar, and help protect over 800 square kilometers of coastal areas, including endangered habitats such as mangroves, coral reefs and sea grass beds.

The principle of *environmental purity and resource efficiency*, cited in nearly one-third of all practices reviewed, “minimizes pollution of air, water, and land (including noise and excessive lighting), generation of waste, and use of scarce and non-renewable resources” (CED 2008). Evason Phuket and Six Senses Spa, a 260-room luxury resort on Phuket Island in Thailand, developed an Eco Trail for guests, local school groups and community members to witness the environmental practices of the resort. The tour includes visits to the recycling corner, bio-diesel plant, composting area,
Approximately 700 guests and students have taken the Eco Trail, which has inspired the local community to consider separating island waste. Eurostar, the high-speed rail service connecting Great Britain with France and Belgium, has devised a ten-point Tread Lightly plan to focus on reducing the company’s environmental footprint. The company has become the world’s first rail service to go “carbon neutral,” with participation in certified carbon offsetting programs for any CO2 emissions the company cannot eliminate. Vail Resorts Management Company, which owns five ski resorts in Colorado, California and Nevada, offsets the entire corporation’s electricity usage by annually purchasing over 150,000 megawatt-hours of wind energy credits, making Vail Resorts the second largest U.S. corporation which entirely offsets energy usage in this manner. At Vail Mountain, the company’s largest resort, almost 70% of on-mountain waste is recycled, which equates to nearly one pound per guest.

The *physical integrity of landscapes* principle “maintains and enhances the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, so that the physical and visual integrity is not degraded” (CED 2008). At the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, the largest private game reserve in South Africa, the physical landscape had severely degraded during the last century due to livestock introduction. In the past decade, this 400-square mile conservation area has been restored to its initial state with removal of houses, fences, and dams. The Great Baikal Trail organization, created in 2002, was formed to protect the landscape and environment around Lake Baikal in Siberia from industrial development. In five years, over 2,000 volunteers have developed 540 kilometers of trails around Lake Baikal, allowing for ecotourism opportunities while conserving the
area’s environmental integrity. The Kenyan tour operator Gamewatchers Safaris
operates Porini Camps in the Maasai Mara ecosystem. The camps are small, housing
between 12 and 20 guests. They consist of small, comfortably furnished tents which can
be dismantled in hours, leaving minimal environmental impact. These upscale, intimate
safari experiences allow for safari walks instead of drives, and Gamewatchers
partnerships with nearby Maasai communities have allowed for recovery of the physical
landscape consisting of vegetation and grass cover due to reduced local inhabitant
dependency on livestock and hunting.

**Fostering Economic Development**

Award-winning tourism practices which foster economic development were
found to be the second most prominent contribution to peaceful societies, with 88, or
64.7%, of the 136 awards reviewed. Two sustainable tourism principles, employment
quality (44.1% of all practices examined) and economically viable tourism destinations
and enterprises (35.3%), enhance economic development. It should be noted that
employment quality was the most prevalent principle, reflected in nearly half of all
award-winning practices reviewed.

*Employment quality*, the most prevalent principle reviewed in this study,
“strengthens the quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism and related
businesses, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all
without discrimination by gender, race, disability, age, or in other ways”(CED 2008).
Marriott Corporation partners with the non-profit organization Youth Career Initiative to
offer a six-month hotel management and life skills program for underprivileged high-
school graduates in five countries, including Brazil and Thailand. Thus far, 150 students have graduated. The 18-room Yachana Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon is the for-profit arm of the Yachana Foundation. The Foundation established the Yachana Technical High School which awards diplomas in ecotourism and sustainable development to its 130 local students, 80% of whom are indigenous. The high school is incorporated into the Yachana Lodge, allowing students to assist in hotel and tour operations. Out of Nepal’s over 600 trekking agencies, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking is the only wholly woman-owned and operated agency. The company offers a one-month training program and five-month paid apprenticeship. Since the company commenced operations in 1994, more than 600 women have been trained and over 80 are currently employed as guides, where the average salary is $1,200 compared to the Nepalese average of $240.

The principle of *economically viable tourism destinations and enterprises*, reflected in over one-third of all practices reviewed, “ensures the competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, and maximizes tourism’s local contribution and visitor spending, so that destinations are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits over the long term” (CED 2008). In Gambia, the Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET) promotes and advocates small tourism businesses traditionally unrepresented in the mainstream tourism industry, such as taxi drivers, tour guides, craft vendors, small accommodations. Currently, 80 organizations are members of ASSET, which assists its members with customer service and product development training as well as grant development. Hotel Punta Islita in Costa Rica strengthens the local value chain by purchasing from 40 local small businesses, ranging from restaurants,
transportation companies, furniture shops, and fisherman. Over half of every dollar spent by visitors stays in the local communities, reducing economic leakage. Also, the hotel encourages guests to follow Costa Rica’s responsible tourism practices by purchasing goods and services from local providers. In 2006, Dominica-based Jungle Bay Resort and Spa launched the Southeast Entrepreneur Loan Fund (SELF), lending up to $12,000 to local entrepreneurs, including farmers and disadvantaged youth, to develop businesses supplying the resort with goods and services, such as seafood, produce, crafts production, and tour excursions. In addition, the resort’s restaurant uses 95% organic, locally-sourced ingredients.

**Nourishing a Sense of Community**

Award-winning tourism practices which nourish a sense of community represented 73, or 53.7%, of the 136 awards examined. Local quality of life and social prosperity (39.7% of practices examined) and local control and involvement (31.6%) are the two sustainable tourism principles contributing to nourishing a sense of community.

The third most prevalent SMED principle among the practices reviewed is *local quality of life and social prosperity*, which “maintains and strengthens the quality of life in local communities, including access to resources, amenities and social benefits for all, avoiding social degradation or exploitation in any form” (CED 2008). The Cambodia-based tour operator Journeys Within launched a non-profit organization, Journeys within our Community (JWOC) which enhances local quality of life through the construction of village water wells. Over 180 wells in the Siem Reap vicinity have been constructed, helping approximately 4,000 Cambodians avoid water-borne diseases. JWOC also
provides scholarships for local university students and runs a village microfinance fund. The Borana Lodge in Kenya operates mobile health clinics staffed with two nurses and one driver. The clinic visits 12 locations on a bi-monthly basis and treats medical issues, gives vaccinations, and hosts HIV-awareness programs. In the first 18 months of operation in 2005-2006, the clinic gave nearly 8,000 lectures on HIV-awareness. Borana also raises money for five local primary schools and sponsors 30 students on full scholarships. Conservation Corporation (CC) Africa is one of the largest lodging companies in southern Africa, owning and operating over 45 safari lodges and camps, including the 46,000-acre Phinda Private Reserve in South Africa. Through the Africa Foundation, CC Africa’s fundraising and development arm, contributions to the Phinda-area rural communities include 90 new or renovated classrooms, three libraries, 150,000 books, 19 pre-schools, computer training and conservation lessons for children, HIV-awareness programs and a 24 hour medical clinic.

*Local control and involvement*, found in nearly one-third of all practices examined, “engages and empowers local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders” (CED 2008). La Ruta Moskitia Ecotourism (LARUMO) Alliance, a collection of Honduran tourism enterprises, is fully owned by six local indigenous communities. Financial profits support 150 jobs and over 750 family members. The 30-room lodge of Posada Amazonas is owned by the community of Ese-Eja in the Peruvian Amazon. In exchange for allowing Rainforest Expeditions to co-manage the lodge, the community receives 60% of the profits, with training of community members to be employed at the facility. By 2016, complete lodge
management will be passed on to the community. More than 50 families are involved as lodge employees, suppliers or decision-makers on the Posada Amazonas Control Committee board. Campi Ya Kanzi is a luxury safari tented camp located between Amboseli and Tsavo National Parks in Kenya. In the mid-1990s, Italian Luca Belpietro made an agreement with the local Maasai residents that if they would designate 280,000 acres of their Kuku Group Ranch land as a nature reserve, he would finance the Campi ya Kanzi safari camp that the Maasai would build, own and operate for the benefit of the local community. A $70 per day guest fee at Campi ya Kanzi goes to the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust which helps fund local community projects and conservation initiatives.

**Utilizing Track-Two Diplomacy**

Award-winning practices utilizing track-two diplomacy accounted for 26, or 19.1%, of the 136 awards analyzed. Visitor fulfillment (36% of all practices examined), cultural richness (19.1%), and appropriate market positioning (5.9%) are three sustainable tourism principles most closely related to utilizing track-two, or citizen, diplomacy.

The principle of *visitor fulfillment* “provides a satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination, and encourage interactive interpretation by engaging both visitors and local communities in the learning process” (CED 2008). The Himalayan Homestays program in Ladakh, India was developed by the local communities as a way to promote economic development and preserve wildlife conservation. Over 100 households in 15 villages in the Ladakh region of India host
travelers which promote interactive cultural experiences for both the host and the guest. A local market survey revealed that 60 percent of visitors preferred homestays in the region rather than tented accommodation and guesthouses. Ol Malo Eco-Lodge is located on 3,000 acres in Northern Kenya in the midst of local Samburu communities. Ol Malo guests can visit local Samburu people in their nearby communities, but only by invitation from the Samburu and on a non-commercial basis. Guests are also educated to not infringe upon the culture and privacy of the local people. Dreamcatcher organizes authentic travel itineraries in South Africa including homestays and volunteer experiences. One unique experience Dreamcatcher offers is Cook-Up with Kamammas, in which travelers enjoy home-cooked meals prepared by Kamammas, who are South African community matriarchs. Kamammas share their culinary talents and culture with travelers, while visitors gain an insider view to South African life.

The principle of cultural richness “respects and enhances the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities and local destinations” (CED 2008). Intrepid Travel, a small group adventure tour operator based in Australia, offers authentic travel experiences for guests by utilizing local public transport as well as small-scale locally owned accommodation and restaurants during its tours. Many of the Intrepid guides are local, allowing for better guest understanding of local culture. Explicit responsible travel guidelines are shared with tour members on how to respect local rules, values and cultural differences. Crete’s Culinary Sanctuaries Eco-Agritourism Network organizes small group culinary seminars and tours operated by a local network of professional chefs, historians, farmers and mountaineers. These experiences celebrate Crete’s culinary history allowing tourism to help support local
Cultural preservation. The Network is also sharing its successes with colleagues in other countries. Bhutan has viewed tourism as a way to generate revenue and employment while strengthening its cultural and natural heritage. Strategies to preserve the cultural heritage include limiting the number of tourists allowed to visit the country, imposing a minimum daily spend of $200, and offering all-inclusive packages which must be booked through a Bhutanese-owned tour operator. Although Bhutan privatized tour operations in 1991, the government remains actively involved regulating the tourism industry to protect Bhutan’s cultural identity.

Appropriate market positioning “matches needs and interests of desired visitors with goals, products and services” (CED 2008). The Countrystyle Community Tourism Network (CCTN), founded by Diana McIntyre-Pike in Jamaica, involves 48 villages which offer community experience tours and village stays to visitors interested in authentic Jamaican culture. These experiences are offered to large resorts and tour operators to market them to their guests. The initiative was begun by McIntyre-Pike when she realized that visitors to Jamaica were unhappy with the lack of authentic cultural experiences while staying in all-inclusive resorts. Through the CCTN, independent and resort-based visitors are offered the opportunity to explore the local neighborhoods, meeting visitor needs for more authentic experiences. The Shigar Fort Palace, in the mountainous Baltistan province of Pakistan, has been restored as an exclusive heritage resort. Although located in a culturally conservative region, the Shigar Fort-Palace offers a relaxing getaway for educated Pakistani families, foreign diplomats and NGO workers. Focus on the aforementioned visitor segments has helped maintain sensitivity and respect towards local cultural norms, while contributing to area
economic development through job generation. Andaman Discoveries is a Thai-based non-profit grassroots tour operator offering travel itineraries in the twelve coastal communities along the Andaman coast. The tours offer craft workshops, volunteer opportunities, cultural experiences and nature-based tours. Andaman promotes its mission as “a leader in sustainable travel and development in Thailand, allows visitors and volunteers to directly support community education, village-led conservation, and cultural empowerment” and markets its travel experiences through the responsibletravel.com network and Conservation International Community-Based Tourism Program.

**Adopting Principles of External Evaluation**

Award-winning tourism practices which adopt principles of external evaluation represented 23, or 16.9%, of the 136 awards analyzed. The sustainable tourism principles focused on quality of governance (17.6% of practices examined) and evaluating outcomes (15.4%) are closely related to adopting principles of external evaluation, which help increase transparency and the rule of law while discouraging corruption.

The *quality of governance* principle involves “establishing sustainability policies, including planning, environmental protection, and management systems, supported by the necessary infrastructure appropriate to the character of the destination” (CED 2008). Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) developed a certification program to encourage responsible tourism practices by endorsing businesses that meet fair standards in areas including wages, working conditions, ethical practices, and environmental and
cultural actions. As of March 2008, 30 organizations ranging from community-based tourism enterprises to large hospitality companies have been certified. Gecko’s Adventures operates small group adventures for travelers aged 20 to 40. The company was recognized for its extensive responsible tourism policy which involves hiring local tour leaders at all times, using local suppliers, and following environmental and cultural guidelines of the destinations visited. In particular, Gecko’s is a founding member of the International Porter Protection Group, formed to set employment standards for porters and trek operators. Nkwichi Lodge opened in 2002 along the shores of Lake Niassa in Mozambique. Nkwichi helped establish the Umoji Association, which represents 20,000 area residents though elected representatives and local chiefs. The Umoji Association has helped six communities to secure land rights certificates from the government.

The evaluate outcomes principle aims to “measure results by quality of tourism impact, minimized harm (not only by mere headcount or gross revenue) in keeping with a community plan for responsible tourism” (CED 2008). The Gambia is Good program helps local farmers supply hotels with quality produce. This fair trade horticultural company works with 1,000 local growers, of which 90 percent are women. The impact of the company has been tracked, with 80% of hotels participating in the program, purchasing 20 tons of produce each month during the high season. In 2007, revenues of approximately $52,000 have been reallocated to these local producers rather than importers. Holland America has also measured outcomes in its efforts to reduce its dockside emissions of pollutants when its diesel engines are running. In 2007, the cruise line has reduced these emissions by 20 percent and increased recycling by 50 percent. Holland America’s environmental management system has been certified to ISO 14001.
standards, which involves setting targets and objectives. Biosphere Expeditions has offered wildlife conservation volunteer work experiences since 1999. After each project, a full expedition report is written and can be viewed online. The report includes the specific percentage of volunteer contributions spend in-country on the project, which helps ensure that the voluntourism initiatives foster local economic development.

DISCUSSION

This study of award programs has determined that commercial tourism practices can contribute to peaceful societies. Award-winning recipients have most frequently been honored for their practices related to environmental quality, economic development and nourishing community. The most prevalent sustainable tourism principles involve employment quality, biological diversity and local quality of life and social prosperity. Only secondary attention, however, has focused on citizen diplomacy and external evaluation efforts. This gap can be largely attributed to the pre-designated award categories (e.g., conservation, poverty reduction, community benefit), particularly evident in the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards and World Saver Awards. The results also reflect a traditional sustainable tourism focus on the ecological, economic, and sociocultural dimensions (Mowforth and Munt, 1998).

The predominance of environmental conservation and protection practices within the cases examined underscore the strategic importance of attractive natural environments for many hospitality and tourism operations. Initiatives contributing to environmental quality included implementation of environmental management systems and policies, institution of recycling programs, and the development of environmental
education programs for guests, residents, and staff. Given that travel is a major producer of greenhouse gases (Kelly, Haider and Williams, 2007), recent energy conservation efforts have targeted on reducing or eliminating carbon footprints through minimizing energy usage or contributing to third-party carbon offsetting programs. Many of the exemplary practices were found to contribute to enhancing environmental quality as a tool for economic development. For example, a number of wildlife activities (e.g., turtle watches in Sri Lanka, shark dives in Fiji, dolphin and whale watching tours in Philippines) were developed to generate employment through tourist visitation and spending while simultaneously protecting threatened species.

Economic development practices were found to be the second most prevalent contribution to sustaining peaceful societies. This is in congruence with the rationale that tourism, as a relatively low capital-intensive industry providing opportunities for an unskilled labor force, can provide a viable economic foundation for regions that are poor but are rich in biodiversity and cultural resources. Tourism development efforts began to focus on poverty alleviation at the turn of the 21st century, spurred by the UN Millennium Development Goals to erase extreme poverty by 2015 (Sahn and Steifel, 2003). The UNWTO created the sustainable tourism – eliminating poverty (ST-EP) initiative in 2002 (Croes and Vanegas, Sr., 2008), while a parallel pro-poor tourism approach developed among researchers and practitioners (Meyer, 2007). While local job creation was often cited among the practices reviewed, it appeared that the most promising initiatives focused on workforce development, allowing workers the opportunity to secure management and even ownership positions, rather than settle for entry-level opportunities with little upward career mobility. In addition, local business or
labor sourcing of significant elements of the visitor experience (e.g., lodging, transport, food, souvenirs) were considered major factors in reducing economic leakage.

The third most prevalent practices contributing to peaceful societies involved nourishing a sense of community. As commercial tourism activities operate within the confines of a community, success also involves enhancing the quality of life of the residents in a destination. Accordingly, many of the cases reviewed were found to be corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. It appeared that CSR efforts in developed nations tended to focus more on the environment while those in poorer regions concentrated on social programs often involving education and health. Many of the education initiatives involved local youth, either through environmental education, vocational training, or infrastructure development (e.g., schools, daycare centers). The most common funding mechanisms for CSR efforts to strengthen community fabric were direct corporate donations or contributions from non-profit foundations which the companies established. Employee contributions to social programs in their communities were also evident. In addition, travelers philanthropy (Honey, 2008) was evident, as guests were occasionally levied a mandatory daily fee to support community programming or more commonly asked to contribute to specific causes, often after visitation to a company-funded community project. Community-based tourism initiatives, which often involve local participation and ownership in tourism activities (Simpson, 2008), were often reported in the practices examined.

It is somewhat surprising that significantly less attention in the awards programs examined was given to track-two “people to people” efforts, often considered the nexus of peace through tourism (D’Amore 1988). Some of the practices contributing to citizen
diplomacy efforts incorporated high levels of guest-host interaction through initiatives such as homestays, voloutourism experiences, and educational seminars. Several track-two practices were facilitated by alternate means of travel such as bicycling, walking, and public transport rather than private motorcoach. Several practices also highlighted the efficacy of educating visitors on responsible interaction with local residents through written guidelines and codes of conduct. It is suggested that additional cultural training for both visitors and residents to facilitate positive guest-host interactions will become even more valuable as an increasing number of sophisticated travelers want and expect authentic experiences shared with members of the local communities visited.

The adoption of external evaluation practices was found to be the least represented contribution to peaceful societies in the awards programs reviewed. However, a number of initiatives identified in this research were found to increase transparency and accountability. These included environmental management systems (e.g., ISO 14001) and certification programs (e.g., Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa, Australia ECO Certification Program). Several practices were found to strengthen the rule of law—for example, African lodges helping local communities secure land rights and several tourism businesses supported local authorities by reporting illegal poaching and logging activities. Also, some companies institutionalized detailed environmental and CSR policies and codes of conduct while promoting these efforts via the internet, increasing corporate transparency and accountability.

From a sector perspective, most awards recipients represented the lodging and tour operator sectors of the tourism industry. Many industry segments were underrepresented, including restaurants, car rental agencies, travel agencies, attractions,
and transport (e.g., airlines and cruise lines) companies. Given that the tourism industry is often considered fragmented with poor working relationships between sectors (Jamal and Getz 1995), awards programs have the opportunity to play a significant bridging role by encouraging all sectors to share sustainable tourism practices and celebrate accomplishments.

Only 21, or 15.4%, of the 136 practices reviewed were located within countries with severe violent crises or wars in 2007. Most of these practices were in highly visited Kenya and India, generally far removed from violent regions of the countries. These findings may substantiate the argument that tourism does not tend to promote a peace defined as an absence of violence, due to the general lack of a viable tourism economy in high-conflict destinations. Nevertheless, awards programs should make an effort to recognize commerce based tourism initiatives in regions undergoing current or recent conflict in order to provide encouragement, recognition, and inspiration to those operating within such an uncooperative environment. For example, one organization reviewed in this study was Camps International, a not-for-profit voluntourism organization with extensive operations in Kenya. Camps International decided to maintain local staffing levels and expand project commitments in the face of recent post-election violence and vastly reduced international visitation. The International Institute of Peace through Tourism is in a prime position to recognize tourism business practices in high-conflict regions through its awards program related to a mission “dedicated to fostering and facilitating tourism initiatives which contribute to international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of environment, the preservation of heritage, and through these initiatives, helping to bring about a peaceful and sustainable
CONCLUSION

By conducting a content analysis of recent award-winning commerce based tourism practices, this study strengthened the conceptual link between sustainable tourism and peace by illuminating how responsible tourism can contribute to strengthening peaceful societies in destinations around the world. The results demonstrated that the award programs predominately focused on practices related to environmental enhancement, economic development, and community nourishment, with a relatively minor focus on promoting citizen diplomacy and transparency.

By utilizing sustainable tourism principles advocated by the WTO-sponsored Center of Destination Excellence (CED 2008), award-winning organizational practices were found to play a positive role in sustaining peace. These practices were organized and analyzed using a conceptual framework which incorporated twelve SMED principles related to five major business contributions which sustain peaceful societies.

It was determined that awards programs in tourism can serve a useful role in encouraging exemplary practices which promote peace through publicity and information sharing activities. Many award-winning practices were used by organizations to “brand” their websites. Unfortunately, the sharing of good practices and level of collaboration among award-winning organizations remains limited due to insufficient reporting and networking. However, the recently launched Geotourism Challenge provides a departure from the other awards programs with very detailed website reporting of winning practices as well as a hosted summit for awards recipients,
in which innovations and best practices could be discussed among attendees. It is suggested that other award programs consider full reporting of practices to allow improved opportunities for learning, sharing, collaboration and innovation for tourism industry practitioners.

Effective marketing of award programs to travel consumers could encourage candidates to apply for the awards and share proprietary information in the hopes of garnering positive publicity. In addition, consumer awareness of tourism practices contributing to peace would be further strengthened. While there is a growing demand for sustainable tourism experiences (Font and Harris 2004), it is questionable as to how effective sustainable tourism principles and practices are being promoted to travel consumers. Accordingly, it is recommended that a meta-database of awards programs showcasing good practices should be developed and categorized by the five major contributions to peace identified in this article. This database could be publicized through alliances with major online travel agencies and travel media outlets in order to reach potential consumers. In addition, future research should examine consumer perceptions (e.g., willingness to pay, positive intentions, influence on buyer decisions) for each of the five contributions towards peace, to help guide companies in evaluating the effectiveness of their sustainable tourism initiatives. Many CSR practices, for example, may be more readily adopted by businesses when proven relevant to stimulating consumer demand or positive public relations.

While this research specifically examined commerce based tourism practices from four selected awards programs, many other practices promoting peace can be identified from case studies, research papers, other awards programs, or via internet
searches. For example, an often cited case in the academic literature involves the Mount Gumgang resort area in North Korea, developed by the South Korean Hyundai Group, which has served as an economic development and citizen diplomacy tool to lessen tensions on the Korean Peninsula (Cho, 2007; Kim and Prideaux, 2003; Kim, Prideaux and Prideaux 2006). Genocide memorials and museums in Rwanda and Cambodia have attempted to contribute to reconciliation efforts while cross-border tourism initiatives can create an economic foundation for peace building (Greer, 2002; Timothy, 1997). Further examination of these practices could utilize and build upon the conceptual framework developed in this study and could help to widen the scope of contributions of commerce to sustaining and enhancing peace.

Limited empirical research has been published in the academic literature on the relationship of peace through tourism; more research on this important area is encouraged. While tourism data in high-conflict regions are difficult to procure, statistical relationships between tourism economic indicators (e.g., visitation, spending, hotel occupancy rates) and a conceptualization of peace would be valuable to measure, particularly longitudinal studies which capture the tourism role in the dynamics of the peace-conflict continuum.

Multi-sectoral collaboration between industry, governments, philanthropists, non-profit organizations, and other engaged stakeholders were commonplace in many of the practices reviewed. Further investigation of collaborative models should be examined in future work in order to highlight innovative and successful partnering or networking approaches.
Notes


5 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards <see http://www.tourismfortomorrow.com/The_Awards/, accessed 8/25/08>.


7 The Geotourism Challenge Awards <see (http://www.changemakers.net/competition/geotourism/mediacenter, accessed 10/12/08>.


References


Figure 1: International Tourism Arrivals: 1950-2020

Source: UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2008

Table 1: Awards Programs Analyzed in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards Program</th>
<th>Awards Program Sponsor</th>
<th>Years Reviewed</th>
<th>Total Awards</th>
<th>Commerce-Based Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Geotourism Challenge</td>
<td>Ashoka's Changemakers and National Geographic</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Tourism Awards</td>
<td>Virgin Holidays</td>
<td>2004-2008</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism for Tomorrow Awards</td>
<td>World Travel and Tourism Council</td>
<td>2005-2008</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Saver Awards</td>
<td>Conde Nast</td>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Peace through Tourism Contributions-Principles Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions to Sustaining Peaceful Societies (Adapted from Fort and Schipani 2007)</th>
<th>Guiding Sustainable Tourism Principles (CED 2008)</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>% of Total Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Environmental Quality (69.9% of practices)</td>
<td>Biological diversity</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental purity and resource efficiency</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical integrity of landscapes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Economic Development (64.7% of practices)</td>
<td>Employment quality</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economically viable tourism destinations and enterprises</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourishing a Sense of Community (45.2% of practices)</td>
<td>Local quality of life and social prosperity</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local control and involvement</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing Track-Two Diplomacy (10.5% of practices)</td>
<td>Visitor fulfillment</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural richness</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate market positioning</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopting Principles of External Evaluation (16.9% of practices)</td>
<td>Quality of governance</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate outcomes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Geographic Representation of Award-Winning Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Sector Representation of Award-Winning Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th># of Awards</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Operators</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destinations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>