

T o u r i s m S c a n

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Community starts Indigenous tourism plan www.abc.net.au/news/stories

The Aboriginal community of Barcaldine has completed the first stage of a plan to create an **Indigenous centre for tourists and school children**. Here, the combination of indigenous culture and education calls the attention. For the initiative, 8 people have renovated two cottages on Drysdale farm outside Barcaldine and landscaped the 28 acres around the two buildings. Mount Isa Skills Association is coordinating the adult education project and hopes that with more funding the farm will be converted into a tourist enterprise by the local Aboriginal Corporation which already producing arts and crafts etc is aiming to attract tourists and have them participate in different activities.

The famous Aborigine 'story telling', re-discovered by Bruce Chatwin in his "Dream Lines", will be part of the program. In Australia, indigenous peoples today are still often suffering from discrimination, also with regards to economic development, education, and job opportunities. This CBT initiative (community based tourism) might well prove tourism as a positive driver for 'peace building' and 'mutual understanding' - just as ECOT is promoting it for already a quarter of a century ...

Tourism Boom Threatens Antarctica www.newsweek.com

Antarctica's environment is seriously threatened by the increasing cruise ship tourism, claim critics, and passengers are put at risk by dangerous navigation habits in the world's southernmost continent. As there exists almost no regulation of that lucrative industry, growing numbers of the giant cruise ships arrive. Some experts fear catastrophic accidents and irreparable environmental damage. According to The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, the whole of Antarctica is supposed to be a reserve under the environmental protocol of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat solely dedicated to science and to protect the wilderness and the environment. But the Antarctic tourism industry has been left largely self-regulated and numbers of tourists increased from about 6,700 in 1992/3 season to some 29,500 in last year. Despite some companies are promoting "safe and environmentally responsible" travel, their impact and outreach is rather small as other businesses are scheduling even more cruises in the future. The danger of sailing in winter times is often not acknowledged nor is the serious environmental impact.

The different ways of tourism affecting peoples lives in the polar regions are outlined in the UNEP paper "Tourism in the Polar Region. A Sustainability Challenge".

Download at: www.unep.fr/pc or www.ecotourism.org

Andaman Island: tourism yes or no?

"The light of Andamans" (thelightofandamans.com, Nov- issue) recently welcomed the governor's declaration of an area close to the Jarawa Reserve in South Andaman as a buffer zone, specifically because of the 'order' that "any person other than a member of an aboriginal tribe is prohibited from entering the Buffer Zone for any commercial and/or tourism activity". Before and after the Tsunami, the Andaman islanders have

experienced a tough time as commercial tourism activities and residencies for foreigners have mushroomed over the islands threatening the cultural identity. The governmental order now “leaves no ambiguity or loopholes in the law that miscreants can take advantage of” – that for sure!

But if the ‘need for isolating this innocent tribe (Editor: people living within the newly declared buffer zone) from malignant influences’ does exist as such, is a different question. Though it might well be true that “tourism has grown like a malignant tumor” in Jarawa and has led to marginalization of Andaman citizens, isolation by law will not bring positive effects as it seldom helps to empower indigenous communities to self-manage their future sustainably...

A strong movement against tourism has arisen recently: local residents and tour operators of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands increasingly advocate against further tourism (see www.ips.com/ Inter Press Service and IFEJ-International Federation of Environmental Journalists - Pankaj Sekhsaria) as awareness of the need to protect forests has increased and agricultural returns are dwindling despite of a continuing population growth. After the Tsunami, the government strongly promoted tourism, and its ‘Vitamin Sea’ plan indeed succeeded to revive the local economy. But as visitor numbers quadrupled in short time with more and more government-employees from the continent popping into the islands as low-budget tourists, businesses men and women are not happy with that kind of tourism. On World Tourism Day, they expressed their concern: "Tourism, instead of bringing a boon to the islands, has actually brought a curse on the islanders...The only contribution (of LTC tourists) to the islands is bringing scarcity of water, inter-island boat tickets, island-mainland ship tickets and even air-tickets for the localities. What makes it worse and intolerable is that it is totally state-funded."

Due to the lack of a sustainable post-Tsunami rehabilitation plan, local people increasingly suffer from water supply shortages and problems with respect to carrying capacity, infrastructure, waste management, impact on sensitive ecosystems like coral reefs, while tourism companies seem to have unlimited access to all natural resources. Looking just 500 km to the East at the Thai resort island Phuket, there is an urgent need to immediately start managing in a participatory and sustainable way the future of Andaman tourism.

Accessible Tourism gains attention in Europe and Asia

On November 27th, EU member states were called to make a united effort to support Accessible Tourism "towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism". Based on a report on the challenges faced by the European Tourism sector, a set of twenty-two concrete proposals for renewed action was given from a Italian Member of Parliament. There are 6 specific paragraphs outlined aiming to coordinate on an EU level that information on accessible tourism is available for tourists with reduced mobility and their families. It was found that greater efforts have to be made to improve access for disabled people at European cultural heritage sites. ECOT welcomes this initiative and is looking forward to help ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism, based in Greece) to promote accessible tourism. ENAT Coordinator Ivor Ambrose stated: " All parties must work together across national and regional borders to make accessible tourism a reality, both for European consumers and international visitors". More Information: www.accessibletourism.org; Email: enat@accessibletourism.org

The International Conference on Accessible Tourism 2007 was held in Bangkok with a presentation of Scott Rains, renowned Contours writer (www.rollinggrains.com), on ‘universal access’. Aiming to achieve the goal of creating an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for all, the conference delegates agreed on a list of recommendations to different public and private stakeholders. For details, check: http://www.dpiap.org/resources/reports/2007/icat_07/bkk_recommendations.html

Human Rights violations for tourism development in Latin America continue: cases in Honduras and Chile

Chile: The Mapuche stand up for their rights

Honduras: Garifuna fisher people vs tourism company:

In Chile, more than 200 hundred people gathered to protest against the pending displacement of members of the Mapuche

After a long time of struggle, in a meeting in the municipality of Roatan, the main island of the Bay Islands/Honduras, a solution for the ongoing conflict

community of Paichil Antriau / Belvedere to free space for several tourism projects; even worse. Already, one family had been threatened to sell the land they own for more than 30 years. Protesters also claimed to free Juan Copa, a man arrested because he denied selling his land and relocating. The Mapuche are requesting a round table to solve the land conflict which is going on since 4 years. The grey eminence behind the tourism investment push is supposedly a North-American oil-entrepreneur.



between fishers of the Garífuna community of Punta Gorda with staff of the tourism company ‘Blue Ocean Reef’, was found. Conflict parties and high profile government representatives signed an agreement which had been called in by the Garífuna organizations OPROMEP, ODECO and others. Their objective to get back the earlier confiscated fisher boats and equipment from the local police was reached. Furthermore, acknowledging the American Convention on Human Rights, the company is now obliged to better respect the local fishers. In addition, further education possibilities and training will be offered to the Garífunas, as agreed in this extra juridical and voluntary document.

Insight Chiang Mai - Citylife Magazine, Vol. 16, No. 12, 2007

Today, let’s look a bit outside of town, to the village Pai some 3 hours north from Chiang Mai town which is in danger of losing its charm: A professor at Chiang Mai University recently revealed that many Pai villagers, having seen that tourism can pay quite well, are no longer interested in framing their land but think about a career change what makes them sell arable lands to business people for new resorts and guesthouses what supposedly will generate more income than agriculture. “Farmers do not believe in their own capacities. They buy fruits and vegetables from Chiang Mai although they can grow it themselves”, according to the research. The encroachment of tourism in Pai attracts more and more foreigners; thus, local culture is vanishing little by little while crime rates and prostitution in the district grow. Though nature was once the reason most people visited the area with its splendid views, landscapes and lush panoramas, Pai is now becoming another hot spot for big – tourism – business. Today’s Pai supposedly is no longer the peaceful village of yesteryear but losing its charm by tourism ‘development’...

Announcements

CBT SPRING Partnerships Project: The “Springboard Project for Responsible International, National and Ground Partnerships” kicked off with the goal to “develop greater understanding and proactive support for Thai Community-based Tourism among actors in the Thai-UK rural ‘responsible’ tourism supply chain.” The CBT SPRING Partnerships project is linking selected Thai CBT projects with Responsible Tour operators in the UK and in Thailand. Project partners are working to develop win-win partnerships which will give UK tourists a chance to enjoy quality, rural travel experiences, while helping Thai CBT projects to attract manageable numbers of ‘responsible tourists.’

The project has won the support of 9 pioneering UK RT Operators who will consider the new community based tours for inclusion in their tour programs. After the launch meeting in the UK, a meeting in Thailand is planned for March 2008. More information: cbt-i@communitytourism.net

Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Management (DPPM)

After launching the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Management (DPPM) Program in November 2006, the work has been carried out well throughout 2007. ECOT worked with partners and established new partnerships with individuals and organizations involved in the tourism and natural disaster prevention and preparedness. Workshops in Sri Lanka and Thailand on tourism impacts, child protection, ecology and coastal protection, human rights intervention and disaster preparedness and prevention management have been implemented for grassroots leaders of those coastal communities where tourism is developed and which are vulnerable to natural disasters. In partnership with the DhyanaPurna Tourism School in Indonesia, the drafting of a DPPM-related curriculum for tourism education and training has been started.

Through DPPM, ECOT's partners have been able to help local leaders to develop plans of action responding to their communities' situation. In 2008, DPPM will mainly focus on community-based tourism initiatives, tourism monitoring and human rights intervention through legal aid and training, as well as continuation of the drafting of the curriculum.

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ECOT 25th Anniversary Publication

As announced in the last edition of Contours Magazine, Contours No 4/2007 and No 1/2008 will be replaced by ECOT's commemorative book **"Transforming Tourism – Re-forming Tourism"**.

Please pay your Contours Subscription Fee (US\$ 35) for 2008 to cover postage and printing costs. Thank you very much (see subscription form in Contours No 3/2007, now also online!).

Subscribers will receive the book for free. Contributions to support ECOT's work are most welcome.

For further orders, questions or comments, contact Julia at contours@ecotonline.org.

This is the last Tourism Scan in 2007. We published 11 issues and started a Spanish version of TourismScan in March 2007. All TourismScan issues are available from www.ecotonline.org/publications/TourismScan.

In 2008, TourismScan will become an occasional newsletter and we encourage readers and all those interested in our advocacy work for human rights in tourism to get in touch and use this global communication tool to express their concerns, hopes and aspirations for "another tourism". Thanks to all of you who supported us in 2007!

Julia Schönhärl

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!