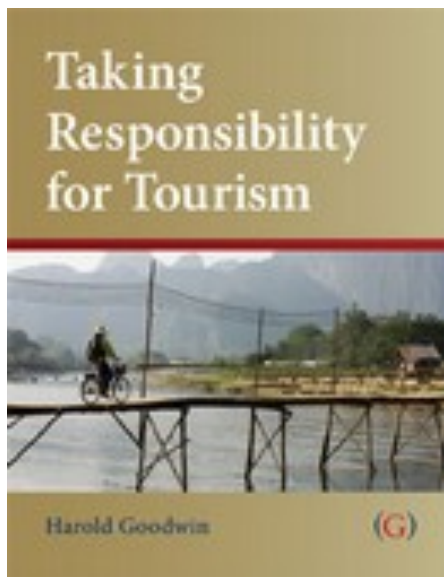


# **Responsible International Volunteering and Ethical Considerations ?**



**Dr Harold Goodwin  
Professor of Responsible  
Tourism**



[www.crtmmu.org](http://www.crtmmu.org)

# people & places

responsible volunteering



**non-exec Chair**



[www.crtmmu.org](http://www.crtmmu.org)



# A Political Scientist's Perspective

"Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."

Theses on Feuerbach 11 Marx, Brussels, 1845

Volunteering as part of tourism is a commercial activity whether run by large or small companies, NGOs or charities

It is not the only form of volunteering abroad.  
individuals, churches, youth groups....

# Responsibility

- Accountability – liability - obligation
- Social and political life – common good – role models?
- Limits to freedom – respecting the rights of others
- Held responsible for actions and consequences
- Agency => responsibility

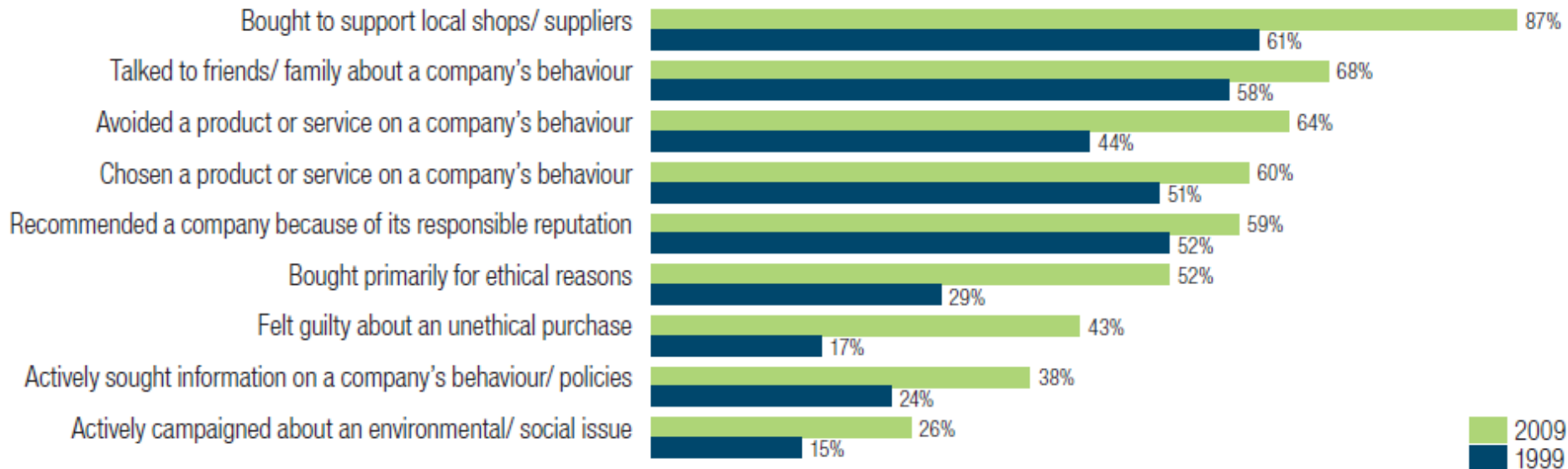
# What do we mean by responsibility?

1. Rights and responsibilities - respect
2. Latin *respondeo* to answer, reply, respond
3. Contemporary meanings
  - Legally responsible, accountable in law - causal link (blame or praise)
  - Moral obligation – stepping up to take responsibility, personal
  - Wanting to make a difference
  - Reputation risk – change of action

# Ten Years of Ethical Consumerism: 1999-2008

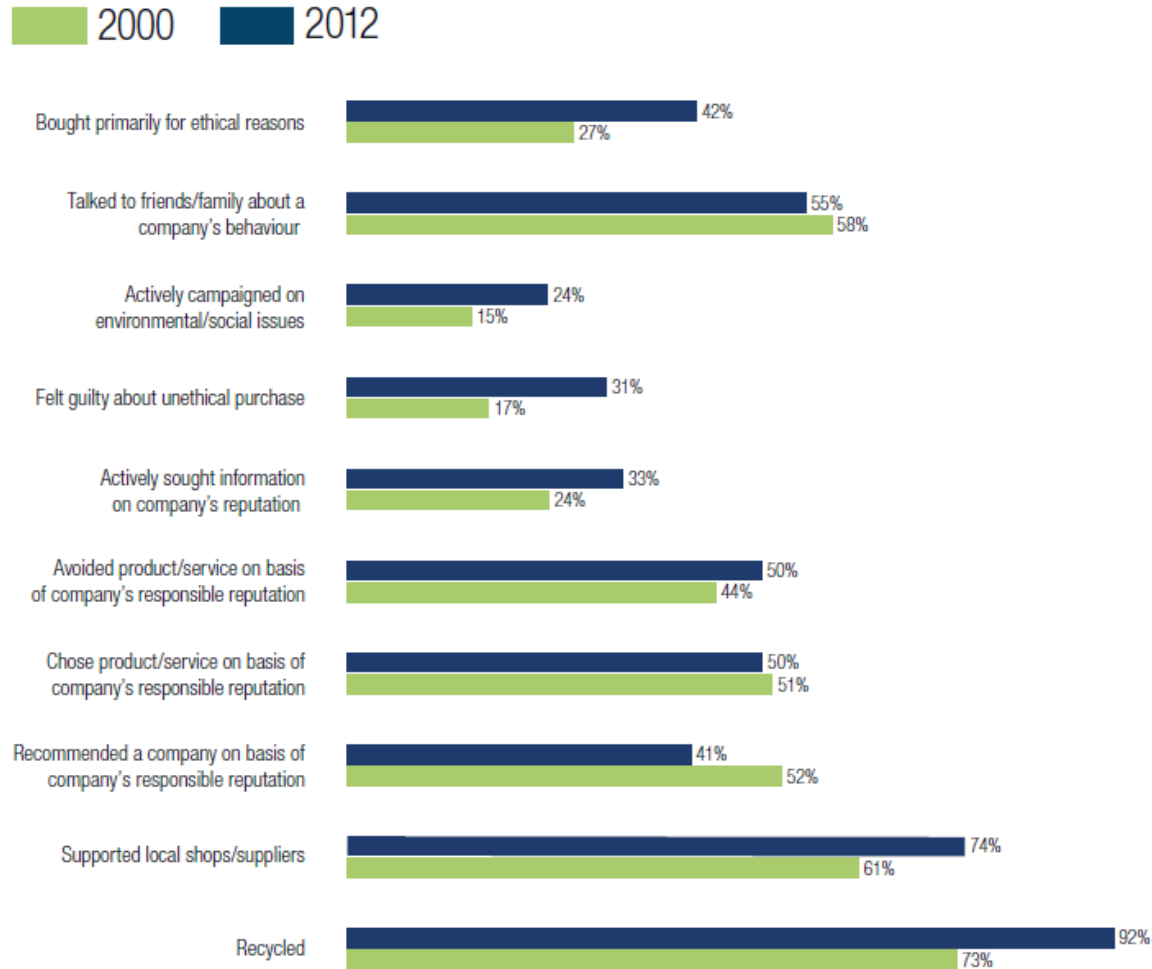
1. Exaggerated
2. Aspirational
3. Patchy

## % of people undertaking the following at least once during the year<sup>2</sup>



# Ethical Behaviours

% of people undertaking the following at least once during the year



[www.crtmmu.org](http://www.crtmmu.org)



# Ethical vs responsible

- 1995 Campaign for ethical tourism
  - too broad
  - inoperative
- Responsibility was preferred
  - It could be delineated
  - Could be empowering & held to account

- Davidson & Griffin
  - Social obstruction
  - Social obligation
  - Social response
  - Social contribution

Responsibility is free, you can take as much of it as you can handle.

Denis Wormwell CEO Sheairngs



# Why Responsible?

## **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.

## **Accountability**

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

# The alternative

- IrresponsibleTourism.info

- [www.facebook.com/groups/irresponsibletourism/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/irresponsibletourism/)

- Negative Volunteer Reviews

- [www.facebook.com/groups/454436357989887/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/454436357989887/)

- Off loading or outsourcing

- Denial

# What does the exercise of responsibility require?

- Knowledge and awareness of causal linkages
- Recognition of an obligation to act – awareness of making a difference?
- Willingness to take responsibility
- Conscience – ethical framework
- Is empathy enough? Add capacity?  
» Add courage?

# Responsibility

- Imputability – the integrity and independence of the individual – choice was made (omission or commission) - blame can be attached
- The consequences of our actions
- Accountability – held to account
- Liability – responsible for ..
- Moral decision making

# Jost Krippendorf

- “every individual tourist builds up or destroys human values while travelling.” “Orders and prohibitions will not do the job – because it is not a bad conscience that we need to make progress but positive experience, not the feeling of compulsion but that of responsibility.”

# Volunteering: “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”

- The origin of this often quoted maxim dates back at least to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), who is credited with “Hell is full of good intentions or desires.”
- Unintended consequences

# Aristotle: Phronesis

Politics &  
Nichomachean  
Ethics

Define desirable  
ends in particular  
circumstances & the  
means to achieve  
them

- *Phronesis* is the ability to determine ends and to act in particular contexts. This requires prudence and a degree of maturity

# Whose perspective?

## Core

- Volunteers and their funders
- Sending organisations – charities and businesses
- Project partners
- The local community

## Periphery

- Media and commentators in originating markets and destinations
- Academics
- Politicians and governments



# Motivation

- Organisers – to make money but also to do good in the world and to make change.
- Volunteers for altruistic reasons, to give back, to make a difference - and to build a CV
- Great deal of confusion – Just Giving

# Confusing ends and means

- It is not the concept of volunteering abroad that is the problem
- It is the form it takes
- So whose responsibility is that?

# The volunteer journey?

<b>Recruitment &amp; marketing</b>	<b>Trading Standards &amp; ABTA</b>	<b>Checking with returned volunteers</b>
<b>In country experience &amp; care</b>	<b>Trading Standards &amp; ABTA</b>	<b>Complaining and checking contract compliance</b>
<b>Development Impact</b>	<b>Check with returned volunteers False claims may be actionable</b>	<b>Reporting, social media and naming &amp; shaming</b>

**Caveat emptor**

# What is the problem?

## Double standards

- Volunteering abroad is attractive because it is abroad
- & because you get to be allowed to do things abroad you can't do at home
- If you can't do it at home, why is it OK to do it abroad?

## Issues, there are many

- Poor Quality experiences
- Employment
- Lion petting
- Child Protection & Orphanages
- Internalisation of the blame – misattribution of responsibility – Rachel

# Rachel

- “All through the training I’d had my doubts, but I’d told myself and told myself that once we got to the district, it’d be OK.”
- “... when we got there [we] still had no idea what we were doing – and we went for a walk around in the dark to see our new surroundings.”

# Your cub petting experience

- Thousands of people visit facilities where they interact with lion cubs. To pet, cuddle and have their photographs taken with a cute lion cub.
- Thousands of volunteers wish to work at wild life sanctuaries, particularly if they have lion cubs to take care of, to bottle feed, to hand raise.

Lion petting  
Walking with lions  
Exhibited for photo opps  
Canned hunting

# SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

Sexual exploitation  
is abuse and a crime.

If you think it is happening here talk to your  
supervisor or call Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

**WATCH FOR:**

A lot of male visitors to one room. A party room with lots of alcohol, drugs  
and alcohol. A lot of condom wrappers in the bin. Men paying with cash.



STOP THE TRAFFIK



COMBAT  
AGAINST TRAFFICKING



For children, Streetwise: 024 7652 0124/5 The Terrence Higgins Trust: 024 7622 9292

# CHILDREN ARE NOT TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

About

Think!

What you can do

Volunteering

ChildSafe

Documentaries & Research



Learn why visiting an orphanage is harmful...here





# Don't create orphans

Orphanage voluntourism incentivizes those involved in the burgeoning orphanage industry to bring children from villages to orphanages in the city and tourist areas.

In some cases it even encourages managers to deny the children proper care, because the worse conditions the children appear to be in, the more they will pull at the heart strings of volunteers, thus making it easier for the orphanages to solicit donations.

*Next Generation Nepal*

# Working with children

- Attachment/detachment
- Paedophilia
  
- Skills matter
- Ask whether you would be allowed to do it in your own country

# Don't displace local employment

- Teachers fired or laid off to create volunteering opportunities
- Volunteers digging holes and painting walls – which may be knocked down
- “Don't send us any more volunteers we have no more chickens”

# Employing the inexperienced

- “Despite a number of differences between my volunteering experience and that of many others, there is one overarching similarity: I, the volunteer, was the primary beneficiary of my volunteering. I had an incredible trip and gained a wealth of CV-enhancing experience. However, I coached football with only a basic basketball coaching qualification, and I taught with no formal teacher training.”

# Rachelrtw.

- It takes a rare kind of honesty to admit even to one's closest friends that you did not enjoy a trip intended to change your life. Rachel has had the guts to say it and to write about it on her blog
- *"We were in an area where nobody needed us, and where we could make little to no difference. We couldn't speak the language and had been told beforehand that it wasn't necessary, so we had next to no input. I felt useless. I was acutely aware that I was there for two reasons and two reasons only: to attract attention, because I am white, and to attract money, because I am white. It was made quite clear to us at the end of the programme that the money the UK government invested in the programme, in return for Nepal taking on UK workers, paid the wages of several of the Nepali staff. They didn't need me – they needed my government's money."*

# Gap-year holidays that reveal the madness of overseas aid

- "The day was spent swimming, sunbathing and eating... As the sun set over the sea, we headed back to San Salvador for a pizza," "On Tuesday, we went to work in a bakery, learning how to make Salvadorian treats and cakes Then it was back to "relaxing in our hammocks on our balcony, with 360-degree views of the cathedral, the mountains,
- Typical tales from young people on their gap year, perhaps. Apart from one thing: these youngsters are among 1,250 British kids enjoying their all-expenses-paid, three-to six-month journeys of self-discovery courtesy of the Department for International Development.

# Volunteers forgive too easily

- *"They run many, many programmes in many different countries and I have only heard good things about their other programmes. I also think they work for an excellent cause"*
- *This is about my experience and I don't wish to speak for other people."*
- *"The charity I went with are not part of some greedy, money-making scam, but rather a new government scheme in its early days."*
- *I don't feel like I have the right to name and shame an organisation that sent me to the other side of the world free-of-charge, and whose warnings about the lack of difference I would make I simply didn't heed."*

# Securing change

- Outbound Regulation – misselling & failure to deliver on what was sold: trading standards, trade associations, ASA
- NGOs and charities & consumer pressure, amplified by social media
- Host country regulation



# 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

# Social Media: Gossip

## Threat

- You cannot not be on social media
- Negative comment is multiplied by social media

## Opportunity

- Never been cheaper to maintain relationships – secure engagement
- Communication is cheaper
- Negative comment can be refuted
- Repeats
- Referrals

# Consumer or research questions?

- **Whose idea was the volunteer project and who runs it?**
- **How will my skills be used effectively?**
- **I'm only going to be there for a few weeks – how can my input be of any real use?**
- **Who decides what my role will be?**

- **Who knows about me before I arrive and what do they know?**
- **Where will I live?**
- **What kind of support is there for me?**
- **Will you advise me about local culture and how I should behave?**
- **Do you have a child protection policy in place for this project?**

# The “killer” consumer questions

- Will my normal travel insurance cover me for volunteer work abroad?
- How long before I know I'm accepted?
- When, how and where is my money spent?
- Can I talk to previous volunteers?
- Can I talk to local people before I travel?

**But they need to know what the answers should be and why**

# Two kinds of change

- The changes we make .....
  - Choice and imperative
- The changes we respond to:
  - Consumer demand
  - Changing markets & exchange rates
  - Regulatory frameworks
  - New technology & availability

# Further information

- [www.crtmmu.org](http://www.crtmmu.org)
- [www.haroldgoodwin.info](http://www.haroldgoodwin.info)
- [www.wtmresponsibletourism.com](http://www.wtmresponsibletourism.com)
- <http://blog.wtmresponsibletourism.com>
- [www.icrtourism.org/](http://www.icrtourism.org/)
- [www.responsibletourismpartnership.org](http://www.responsibletourismpartnership.org)
- [www.responsibletravel.com/awards/](http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/)
- [harold@haroldgoodwin.info](mailto:harold@haroldgoodwin.info)