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Crisis, chaos and change: Caribbean Development Challenges in the 21st Century

Title: Pro-Poor Tourism: A Vehicle for Development in Trinidad & Tobago

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ABSTRACT

For Trinidad and Tobago, 2020 has been highlighted as the year by which the nation will achieve developed nation status. At the core of achieving this status is the overall vision of creating successful national development that would result in a high quality of life for all citizens. A key component of this national development agenda is poverty elimination. To date, the energy sector has assumed the dominant role of income earner and has been the engine of growth and development in the economy. Within recent times, tourism has been officially identified as one of five sectors that should be developed to contribute to the country's development agenda.

In pursuing the development of tourism, the government has adopted the conventional focus of promoting tourism to maximize foreign exchange receipts and they have not capitalized on the potential to enhance net benefits and opportunities for the poor. A different approach to tourism development is proposed, that of "pro-poor tourism", which focuses on unlocking opportunities for specific groups within the society. It is with this in mind that this paper aims to examine pro-poor tourism as a vehicle for development under the tourism thrust in Trinidad and Tobago.

Keywords: *Pro-Poor, Tourism, Development, Poverty.*

Introduction

Economically, the realities of insularity and scale in the Caribbean islands, along with a broadly shared heritage of colonial status, have helped to foster a small island syndrome of underdevelopment which includes several characteristics (Weaver, 1995). The majority of these islands rely upon a very limited range of economic activities, and concomitant vulnerability to fluctuations in these sectors. Caribbean islands also suffer from restricted natural resource endowments, with few exceptions, notably Jamaica with bauxite and Trinidad with oil and gas. As a result, these Small Island States (SIS) are continuously struggling to identify activities which will contribute to the goals of long-term economic development (Freitag, 1994).

For the islands of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), the energy sector has assumed the dominant role of income earner and has been the engine of growth and development over the last four decades. Even in the face of a recent oil boom, the country faces serious social challenges. According to Henry *et al* (2006:65) “measured poverty is high, and pockets of acute poverty and indigence persist in certain eastern, far south, and southwestern regions. Over the last two decades, the number of displaced persons, unemployed youth and street children has increased”. Also, there has been an increase in crime and violence along with use of illicit drugs and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The government of T&T has declared that it intends for the twin island Republic to have achieved developed nation status by the year 2020. For this vision to be achieved the economy must not be based entirely on the oil and natural gas sectors but on human capital since the energy sector is subject to longer-term volatility and offer fewer jobs (Henry *et al*, 2006). According to some “at the same time, social protection structures must be put in place to protect the most vulnerable citizens against the risks of economic and social change” (Henry *et al*, 2006:65).

In its aim for developed nation status by 2020, the government does recognize that the energy sector is unable to fully sustain the economy in order to achieve this goal. Therefore, tourism has rapidly moved into the mainstream of economic development

tools that the government is using to reduce the country's reliance on the energy sector. According to the Vision 2020 Tourism Strategic Development Plan (GOTT, 2004:v),

“By the year 2020, the Trinidad and Tobago tourism product will be a significant economic sector contributing significantly to the nation's GDP, through job creation and increased revenues, driven by a uniquely differentiated, internationally competitive product, complemented by comprehensive, fully functional physical infrastructure, modern, competitive institutional framework and supported by the people of Trinidad and Tobago”

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report on tourism in Trinidad has indicated that the baseline forecasts for the country's travel and tourism are generally very positive over the next ten years with growth set at 5.2% per annum until 2015 (WTTC, 2005).

To date, like many other governments in developing countries around the world, the T&T government has primarily viewed tourism as solely an engine for economic growth. This paper proposes that tourism, more specifically, pro-poor tourism can also be used as a mechanism for delivering on poverty reduction thereby further contributing to the country's quest for developed nation status by 2020. Against this background, this paper firstly seeks to critically examine the link between pro-poor tourism, poverty reduction and development. Secondly, through the use of various case studies, a number of pro-poor tourism strategies would be proposed that can contribute to the further development of T&T.

Trinidad & Tobago Context

Trinidad and Tobago boasts of a politically stable economy and is regarded as one of the more developed territories in the Caribbean region with an average GDP of 12.6% and an unemployment rate of 7% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007). Notwithstanding this, the Social Sector Investment Programme Report for 2007 states “the most recent poverty statistics puts the level of poverty at 24% with approximately 8.3% of the population being indigent or suffering from hunger” (Ministry of Social Development, 2006:24-25). Within this oil rich territory the major pockets of poverty have emerged and are sustained

in areas such as Nariva/Mayaro with an indigent population of 24%, St. Patrick 13%, St. Andrew/St. David 14%, and Victoria 15% (Henry *et al*, 2006). The basic cause of this level of poverty is attributed to the lack of a firm policy agenda and operative institutional framework for poverty reduction (Ministry of Social Development, 2006). However, part of the vision for national development is “an integrated and inclusive society, free of poverty, with mechanisms to prevent and treat expeditiously with vulnerabilities of any type, and providing the wherewithal for all of its citizens to self actualize” (Ministry of Social Development, 2006:95).

Recently, the government entered into an agreement with the European Union (EU) in 2001 to fund a Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP). At the heart of the PRP are three components: improvement of the delivery of poverty reduction services; strengthening of the institutional framework for poverty reduction; and strengthening of the information system on poverty and poverty reduction programmes (Ministry of Social Development, 2006:25). The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to the reduction of poverty in the country using a decentralized approach via the fourteen (14) municipal regions in T&T House of Assembly. Two noteworthy successes from this initiative are the provision of pipe borne water for residents of Caratal Village in the Sangre Grande region and the provision of school buses, telephone booths for residents of Gasparillo Village in Santa Cruz (Trinidad Guardian, 2007:28-29).

Part of the PRP is also to develop sustainable communities. According to the Ministry of Social Development (2006:40), “a sustainable community is one in which residents are empowered to meet their needs for housing, social facilities, physical infrastructure, recreation and employment opportunities either within or in close proximity to the community without compromising the ability to future generations to meet their needs.” In order to achieve this the Ministry holds strong to the belief that: citizens must be empowered to take responsibility for their communities; every citizen must have fair access to resources and facilities in their communities that are necessary for living a satisfying life; sustainable economies and business enterprises must be encouraged; and information sharing and knowledge development must be fostered within communities (Ministry of Social Development 2006: 40). This agreement with the EU is a timely

initiative given the government's development agenda. To further augment the efforts by the Ministry of Social Development, this paper proposes pro poor tourism strategies to reduce the levels of poverty in T&T.

Tourism- A Developmental Platform

Over the last three decades, tourism has emerged as a major force in the global economy, with most countries, whether developed or developing, having increasing opportunities to participate, as both host and guest, in this socio-economic phenomenon. Governments in SIS in particular are recognizing tourism as an export industry that generates foreign exchange, creates jobs and encourages economic diversification (Freitag, 1994; Hall and Page, 1996). In recent years, the government of T&T has recognized that continuous dependence on non-renewable resources like petroleum can only lead to an uncertain future. Hence, the new strategy by the government focuses more on renewable sources such as manufacturing and high potential areas such as tourism.

Trinidad and Tobago's tourism industry is currently in its growth stage, contributing approximately 3-4% to the country's GDP. According to the Draft 2020 Strategic Tourism Development Plan, by the year 2020, "tourism will be a significant economic sector contributing approximately 90,000 indirect and direct jobs to the economy." International arrivals to Trinidad & Tobago have shown consistent growth by over 40% since the mid-1990s, equaling or exceeding the growth recorded by other Caribbean islands over a ten-year period. Over the last two years the country has seen steady growth with 442,555 recorded for 2004 and statistics up to July 2005 already show that arrivals stand at 235,000. The outlook for the current period as well as the medium term remains positive (WTTC, 2005).

Until the 1990s tourism development has focused primarily on generating macroeconomic growth and private sector profit. Tourism development has been premised on the 'trickle-down' development concept which assumes that the benefits of general economic growth will permeate to all sectors of society. The issue of poverty

alleviation has been largely absent from the tourism development agenda (Ashley *et al*, 2000). Furthermore, tourism has not been a priority item among the poverty reduction strategies of international development agencies. This can be attributed to the fact that traditional mass tourism development is often associated with high levels of leakage, foreign dominance of the industry and expatriate domination of management at high levels (Weaver, 1995; Hall and Page, 1996).

However, the reality is tourism already touches the lives of the many of the poor in developing countries. The challenges, according to Roe and Khanya (2001:2) are to “enhance the many positive impacts it can have and reduce the costs it can place on the poor.” Fundamentally, the new pro-poor tourism development strategies explicitly seek to maximize tourism benefits to the poor while simultaneously reducing their negative impacts.

Pro-Poor Tourism

At the outset, it is important to define poverty. It is defined as “a multidimensional phenomenon that consists of a ‘lack’ of certain things upon which human health, well-being, and autonomous social functioning depend, including the ability to meet ‘basic needs’ (i.e. food, shelter, clothing etc.). This lack may consist of insufficient income, consumption or assets, entitlements, rights, or security” (Cattarinich, 2001:1). The Ministry of Social Development (2006:95) penned it this way, “poverty is much more than difficulty in satisfying one’s basic needs or financial constraints. It includes vulnerability to poor health and education, deprivation in knowledge and communication, inability to exercise human and political rights and the absence of dignity, confidence and self respect.”

By definition, pro-poor tourism (PPT) is “tourism that generates net benefits for the poor” (Ashley *et al*, 2001:2). Benefits in this context are not only economic but also socio-cultural and environmental. The core aim of PPT strategies is to “unlock opportunities for the poor, rather than to expand the overall size of the sector” (Ashley *et al*, 2001:2). It must be stated that PPT is not a specific product, sector of tourism or an alternative form

of tourism, but an approach to the industry that involves a range of stakeholders operating at the micro and macro levels. It consists of a set of principles and the initiatives represent practical steps that can transform strategies and principles into concrete action (Cattarinich, 2001).

Several alternative forms of tourism have emerged notably 'sustainable tourism' and 'eco-tourism' that emphasize environmental conservation and 'community-based' tourism that aims to increase local people's involvement in tourism. While a pro-poor approach can involve these forms of tourism, PPT seeks to be much broader in scope and not limited to alternative or niche tourism (Torres and Momsen, 2004:297). It extends beyond 'community tourism' by striving to "unlock opportunities for the poor at all levels and scales of operation" (Ashley *et al*, 2001: 3).

Proponents of PPT argue that tourism possesses certain characteristics that make it potentially more conducive to poverty elimination than other economic sectors (Ashley *et al*, 2000; Roe and Khanya, 2001). Tourism delivers consumers to the product. This opens up opportunities for the poor for local access to markets for other goods and services. Given the diverse nature of the industry, tourism provides a wide scope for economic diversification, as well as increased opportunity for participation by the poor who often operate informally. Tourism is also highly dependent on natural capital e.g. wildlife, culture. According to Torres and Momsen (2004:297), "this may potentially provide local people with an opportunity to leverage their assets to obtain equity in joint venture partnerships, as well as to extract value and decision-making power through their ownership of unique tourism resources." Tourism provides relatively labour intensive opportunities. It also appears to offer more job and income earning opportunities to women than do other sectors (Roe *et al*, 2004).

Although the potential positive impacts of tourism are numerous, there are serious challenges to overcome. Several PPT case studies reveal that the distance between the poor and the tourism products is a significant issue. In St. Lucia, for example, cruise ship tourists have limited time to visit (and spend money in) inland communities (Cattarinich, 2001). The control of the tourism industry by multinational corporations, outsiders and

local elites limits access to tourism markets by the poor (Ashley *et al*, 2001). According to Cattarinich (2001:11), “the structure of the industry and the international political economy minimize the potential economic benefits that most developing countries and the poor can obtain from tourism.” Furthermore, participation by the poor in the industry is hindered by inadequate education and training; high tourism industry quality requirements; and a lack of economic and social capital (Torres and Momsen, 2004). Other critics have stated that the industry with its many beneficial impacts have also encouraged negative consequences even to the extent of promoting maldevelopment in many of these developing countries (Cattarinich, 2001). Despite the various challenges facing PPT, empirical evidence suggests that adoption of explicit, pro-poor approaches can ‘tilt’ tourism, at the margin, to channel industry benefits to the poor (Roe and Khanya, 2001).

The literature on PPT prescribes a wide variety of strategies requiring implementation through a mix of stakeholder input. These strategies are divided into those that generate three different types of local benefits including economic benefits, non-financial livelihood benefits and enhanced participation and involvement. Table 1 further elaborates on the PPT strategies.

Increase economic benefits	Enhance non-financial livelihood impacts	Enhance participation & partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand local employment, wages: - commitments to local jobs, training of local people. • Expand local enterprise opportunities – including those that provide services to tourism operations (food suppliers) & those that sell to tourists (craft producers, handicrafts, guides etc.) • Develop collective income sources – fees, revenue shares, equity dividends, donations etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building, training • Mitigate environmental impacts. • Address competing use of natural resources. • Improve social and cultural impacts. • Increase local access to infrastructure & services provided for tourists – roads, communications, healthcare, transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a more supportive policy/planning framework that enables participation by the poor. • Increase participation of the poor in decision-making by government & the private sector. • Build pro-poor partnerships with the private sector. • Increase flow of information & communication between stakeholders to lay the foundation for future dialogue.

Source: Ashley et al, 2004

Several case studies on PPT strategies have been commissioned jointly by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and other stakeholders with a view to representing the range of actors involved in PPT, different types and levels of practical PPT interventions and different locations and tourism products. For the purposes of this paper, two (2) case studies were selected for examination with a view to extracting successful strategies or approaches to PPT development for implementation in T&T.

Pro-Poor Tourism – The Case of St. Lucia

St. Lucia's economy was once dominated by the export of crops, namely bananas, sugar cane and coffee. With the introduction of global trade liberalization policies the island had to compete against larger nations particularly in regards to the export of bananas to the United Kingdom. As a result, there was a decline in the export of crops and a subsequent decline in revenue. The economy and by extension, the population's livelihood was dependent on the export of these crops and thus the reduction in revenue from this area caused serious problems. According to Renard (2001:2), "the economic and social consequences of these changes in the agricultural sector are responsible for a substantial increase in poverty, which was estimated at 24% in 1995."

Today, the tourism sector is currently the main source of foreign exchange, and the main contributor to the nation's GDP (Renard, 2001). In 2005 the sector contributed 13.6 % towards real GDP and real growth expanded by 6.3 (Government of St. Lucia, 2005). From all appearances the tourism industry seems to be the key sector that will promote economic growth and development for the island and one of the key objectives of the Government of St. Lucia (GOSL) is "to establish tourism as a strategic economic development priority" (Caribbean Development Bank, 2005:105). Like most Caribbean islands, the GOSL had failed to capitalize on the growing tourism sector in addressing poverty issues on the island. However, in 1998 the GOSL initiated the St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme (SLHTP). The programme is described as "a community based initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, GOSL, funded by the EU, and aimed at making St.

Lucia the most diversified and sustainable tourism destination in the Caribbean” (SEDU, 2007). Though the programme’s sole focus is not to reduce poverty, it does seek to “ensure that the benefits derived from tourism are distributed more evenly throughout the island and especially to rural communities” (SEDU, 2007). It is an attempt to shift an entire sector, as quickly and as effectively as can be reasonably expected, so that it becomes more sustainable, more equitable, and more focused on the needs of the poor people (Renard, 2001:5). The GOSL chose heritage tourism as the type of tourism to be developed in the different communities since local residents and their resources are the center of attention. Put another way, heritage tourism focuses on “the sustainable use of natural and cultural sites, attractions and activities in host communities” (SEDU, 2007).

In order to change the existing tourism sector so that it focuses more on the needs of poor people, the Programme employs a two-pronged strategy:

- Facilitating a broader and improved distribution of the benefits of the existing tourism sector (cruise ship passengers and stay-over visitors); and
- Creating a new complementary sub sector, qualified as Heritage Tourism, aimed at a new clientele (Renard, 2001:3).

The two-pronged strategy is supported through a number of approaches. The following are some of the approaches that are pro poor related:

Increase economic benefits

- Using, developing and transferring skills - through training the programme develops skills for tour guides and craft producers so that employment opportunities are increased.
- Developing new activities and products - the programme provides financing and technical assistance for product development within the poor areas. Credit is also extended to small entrepreneurs for small business development.

Enhance non-financial livelihood impacts

- Creating awareness and fostering pride – the Programme is geared towards encouraging local involvement by demonstrating the benefits that could be generated and by illustrating the roles that local residents can play (Renard, 2001).
- Encouraging and supporting environmental management - The Programme is fully aware that the quality and sustainability of the product depend on effective environmental management (Renard, 2001:10). It therefore encourages residents to engage in proper conservation and resource management in all their practices.

Enhance participation & partnership

- Encouraging local people to be both producers and consumers of a new product -the Programme seeks to develop a sense of ownership so that residents are in no way alienated or marginalized.
- Building organizational capacity - The Programme encourages partnerships between various agencies i.e. public sector and civil society organizations. It is therefore working with a wide range of partners, including national natural resource management agencies (forestry, wildlife and fisheries administrations); the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourist Board and the private sector organizations involved in tourism; as well as local organizations (Renard, 2001:10).
- Transforming the policy process and content- in order to change the balance of power and encourage participation by the poor, the programme promotes a range of local level participatory planning initiatives. To make this realistic, a range of policies aimed at removing entry barriers are to be introduced.

The SLHTP was introduced into a number of poverty stricken areas on the island. One such area is Anse La Raye. Anse La Raye is a small fishing village located on the west coast of St. Lucia. Fishing had been the main livelihood for the residents in this village from the early part of the 20th century (Pantin et al, 2005). The village is said to be one of the poorest villages in St. Lucia and it lacks employment opportunities (Renard, 2001). The tourism sector was in minimal operation before the introduction of the SLHTP, but since its opening, a number of sites and activities has been developed: two waterfalls, a museum and sugar mill, two viewing sites at both entrances of the village and a weekly

seafood night (Renard, 2001:12). The weekly seafood night has become a very popular event not only for villagers but also for persons in the wider island. According to Renard (2001:13), “participation in this activity has enabled the community to use of its most abundant resources, the sea, to create a revenue generating activity while maintaining a cultural flavour.”

The PPT strategies implemented in the area had a positive impact on the village of Anse La Raye both economically and socio-culturally. The seafood activity has created a much needed alternative economic opportunity for many villagers. Although there are a few privately run sites, the experience in Anse La Raye involved participatory planning at both community and governmental level. It has developed a greater sense of pride and ownership among community members and has generally allowed for an increase in social services for villagers. The feeling of desolation and neglect is gradually being replaced by one of hope and enthusiasm (Renard, 2001).

Pro-Poor Tourism – The Case of Humla District, West Nepal

Humla, located in the North West corner of Nepal bordering Tibet is a very remote area. This district suffers from a lack of infrastructure such as roads and communication and experiences severe cold weather. There is little or no cash economy in Humla, and people live largely by subsistence farming in extraordinarily difficult terrain. As a result, life for the people is extremely challenging and they often have to content with food shortages and occasional disease epidemics (Saville, 2001). Development in this area is difficult for the Nepalese Government because of the terrain and weather and also, many government workers are unwilling to work in the area because of its inaccessibility. According to Saville (2001:1), “in a composite index of development, Humla district ranked 4th from worst off.”

Tourism development is minimal in Humla, with activity centered on the main town of Simikot. From the period 1996-2000 the flow of tourists has been low, with an average of 626 per year over the four years (Saville, 2001). The area is accessible only by foot trails that lead to the beautiful Himalayan peaks and so trekking tourism has evolved. The

Hilsa trail is said to be the main trail that leads through Simikot and it is patronized by outside trekking agencies. This has caused the benefits of tourism to be centered on the well off rather than the poor (Saville, 2001). According to Saville (2001:1), “if tourism revenue could be captured within Humla, instead of with outside trekking agencies, the potential benefits to Humla people is great, especially in view of the lack of alternative to improve people’s livelihoods in the region.”

The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) has been operating in Nepal since the 1980’s and has partnered with the Government of Nepal in their quest to reduce the poverty level. The organization has introduced a sustainable tourism development programme that seeks to “generate optimal additional income and jobs emphasizing target groups in the different programme areas of SNV Nepal, with minimum negative impacts on cultural and national environments” (Saville, 2001:9). According to Saville (2001:10), “the objectives of the SNV sustainable tourism development programme are explicitly pro poor since they focus on the economic and social empowerment of the people in Humla.”

The pro poor strategies involved are:

- Expansion of business opportunities- the trekking companies using the Simikot-Hilsa trail would normally bring all the food that they need for their journey. An Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) and Business Planning Programme were introduced to residents along the trail to encourage the development of tourism products. On completion of the courses, residents produced six business plans which included vegetable farming, apricot wine making, poultry farming, apple production, pea and potato production, hotel and teashop management and livestock and cultural shows (Saville, 2001). In order to develop these business plans micro credit was offered to members of credit and saving groups formed under the social mobilization programme (Saville, 2001:13).
- Expansion of employment opportunities – employment is generated in the area with the introduction of tourism projects that includes the building of toilets, campsites and other necessities. However, permanent employment exists for residents in the

trekking business, once training is provided. At the time of this study, already some girls in Humla were employed as 'kitchen boys' for trekking groups (Saville, 2001).

- Addressing the environmental impacts of tourism- villagers are empowered to deal with the issue of maintenance of their trails and have formed themselves into groups such as the Village Development Committee (VDC) and Community Forestry User Groups. They are empowered to introduce taxes on trekking companies. Already, a youth club has initiated this tax and has gained revenue.
- Enhancing the social and cultural impacts of tourism- according to Saville (2001:14), "improvement in sanitation as a result of the programme is the most positive social impact affecting all communities along the trail." He went on further to state that, "this should result in a decrease in disease from diarrhoea and worms for all communities" (Saville 2001:14).
- Building a supportive policy and planning framework- SNV is focused on building more supportive policies on pro-poor tourism (Saville, 2001). In order to accomplish this for the area of Humla, they have loaned two of their tourism experts to the National Tourism Board who can help to influence policy and planning on the national level and cause it to be more pro poor focused.
- Developing pro poor processes and institutions- local pro poor institutions such as Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and the Multiple Use Centre was introduced in Humla as part of the PPT thrust. The Centre acts as nodal point where the poor stakeholders would meet with tour operators. According to Saville (2001:16), "the Multiple Use Centre will try to connect poor stakeholders with tour operators, trekking companies and tourists themselves. By setting fixed prices for certain commodities and services the Centre will aim to break down exploitative labour relationships."

Much improvement in the lives of the people of Humla has been made since the start of the programme. The following are some of the changes:

Progress up to January 2001

The main progress of SNV sustainable tourism programme since October 1999 may be summarized as follows:

- 410 toilets built along the trail
- CBOs mobilized in all the communities along the trail
- 6 APPA business plans prepared by CBOs
- 32 Community Support Funds approved for the development of micro-enterprise by stakeholders along the trail and in Simikot
- 6 Venture Capital Fund loans approved for micro-enterprise development throughout Humla
- 4 district level and 2 Village District Committee Level Infrastructure development Funds approved for improved water supplies, electricity, irrigation throughout Humla
- Tax of US\$2 per tourist for trail maintenance now being levied by the District Development Committee
- 1 Community campsite already started by Kermi Youth Club
- Tax on grazing of community pasture by trekking pack animals started in one community
- Community enterprise options studied and plans for implementation underway (hot springs, community campsites, village tours)
- Multiple Use Visitor Centre to act as a nodal point for tourism actors studied and planned
- 1 orientation field trip for CBO and NGO members to view village tourism in another district

Source: Saville, 2001

Implications for Trinidad & Tobago

The government of T&T has been criticized for not having a clear and coherent policy agenda and operative institutional framework for poverty reduction in this middle-income country. The EU sponsored Poverty Reduction Programme is significant as it is instrumental in correcting the critical issue of poverty in the country. As discussed in the literature review and the case studies, PPT has tremendous potential in further contributing to the government's goal of poverty reduction by the year 2020. Several macro and micro level actions or strategies can be elicited from the case studies in order to inform the development of PPT in T&T.

At the macro level, there are strategic actions that can be taken that seek to contribute to creating an enabling environment in which poverty reduction can take place. It is clear at the outset that poverty must be included on the nation's tourism agenda as an industry-wide objective (Goodwin, 2000; Ashley *et al*, 2000). One observation from the both cases is the fact that without policy level changes practical PPT action in the destination will have limited impact (Saville, 2001:44). Moreover, while work in the field of PPT can be

carried out by smaller entities such as community organizations and the private sector, in order for communities to fully benefit from these initiatives the government must formulate policies and establish institutional structures which allow a pro-poor agenda to be integrated into the vision and work of all relevant organizations (Renard, 2001).

The Draft National Tourism Policy of T&T stresses community participation as one of its policy objectives where the emphasis is on empowering local communities in planning and decision making for the development and management of tourism products. This objective only addresses community participation on one level and does not explicitly address the alleviation of poverty in the different communities. A pro poor approach advocates poverty reduction as an objective rather than an exclusive focus on specialty niche markets such as community tourism or ecotourism.

Further to this, the development of partnerships and joint ventures between local governments, tourism investors, NGOs and donors are noted as being critical to the success of any pro-poor initiative (Goodwin, 2000; Ashley *et al*, 2000). In both St. Lucia and Nepal partnerships were formed between government agencies and funding agencies. For St. Lucia the EU, local government and the Ministry of Tourism joined forces to develop the SLHTP. In Nepal, it was the SNV that assisted the government in implementing pro poor initiatives in Humla. According to Saville (2001:19) “this process will require continued support for training, strategic planning, organizational development and fundraising.” Renard (2001:42) penned it this way, “links with and strengthened capacities of local government should allow shifts in development practice to reach every level, affecting systems that will remain after SNV withdraws from the district.”

Already there exists a partnership between the Government of T&T and the EU with the poverty reduction programme. However, with PPT there needs to be greater private sector involvement in pro-poor initiatives. While incentives for international development agencies, national governments and local communities to promote PPT are evident it is less clear why the private sector and more specifically, community-based businesses will be motivated to adopt a pro-poor approach. Ashley *et al*, (2005:3) noted that by adopting

a pro-poor approach private sector organizations will not only contribute to national goals, it will also help to enhance their own security and operating environment, and realize opportunities to upgrade the product and enhance the tourist experience.

This is apparent in both cases with the emergence of the CBOs and NGOs. According to Saville (2001:42), “social mobilization with communities through CBOs is an excellent (perhaps essential) entry point to prepare community level stakeholders for development of tourism.” For St. Lucia, Renard (2001:19) highlighted the fact that “...the Programme needs to continue and intensify its efforts at capacity building, especially those targeted at local organizations and community groups. To date, one of the main obstacles to successful programme implementation has been the weakness of local and community based organizations.” Practically, tourism companies can link with the local people by recruiting and training un-skilled staff and hotels can enter into neighbourhood partnerships to make the neighbourhood a better place to live, work and visit.

Central to the adoption of a pro-poor approach is the initiating of tourism activities by external actors. According to Renard (2001:20), “the success of national level initiatives depends, to a large extent, on the leadership provided by the national government.” As discussed earlier, the poor is hindered by inadequate training and education and a lack of social and economic capital. In the case of Nepal the SNV provided training for residents along the Simikot-Hilsa trail which resulted in the production of six business plans. In 1998, it was the government of St. Lucia that established the SLHTP. Therefore, the onus is on the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with other ministries and other stakeholders, to develop and promote PPT activities among those in need.

The aforementioned macro level actions require corresponding direct micro-level action in order to translate into effective poverty alleviation efforts. Pro poor tourism initiatives must focus on the poor themselves and should seek to encourage autonomy. Action must be taken to enhance participation by the poor in tourism enterprises. Approaches suggested include “addressing issues of credit, organization, land tenure, market access, bureaucracy, training and capacity building” (Torres and Momsen, 2004:298). In both

case studies, training and funding were provided to equip the poor in the community to manage their own resources.

In T&T, funding can be obtained from the Micro-Enterprise Loan (MEL) Facility. This Facility provides borrowers with community- based business loans; business training for all interested persons; after loan services and business support (Ministry of Social Development, 2006:110). In addition, the government also offers the Micro Enterprise Training and Development Grant (MEG) which provides assistance to needy clients who are capable and willing to undertake a small business venture or engage in skills training. These programmes already provide a good starting point for the development of tourism products by the poor in the differing communities.

Conclusion

Tourism has been regarded as an economic panacea for many developing countries. For T&T, tourism is now recognized as an industry that can contribute to the sustainable development of the islands. In the government's bid for developed nation status by the year 2020, poverty reduction is a priority on its agenda, as poverty remains a critical concern to the people of T&T. In addition to the sterling efforts by the Ministry of Social Development to address this concern, this paper proposed the adoption of PPT as a strategy to contribute to further poverty reduction. While tourism in itself is insufficient as a poverty reduction strategy, it could be a significant component of a broader pro-poor economic growth strategy.

At the core of PPT is putting the livelihoods of the poor as the central focus. A combination of macro and micro level strategies are necessary to transform principles into action. At the macro level, the establishment of partnerships between the local government and other stakeholders is the key driver of PPT initiatives. At the micro level, the success of PPT initiatives is dependent on the empowering of the poor to exercise control over and to manage their resources. It is argued by some that PPT initiatives do not reach the poorest segments of societies. Nevertheless, even marginal gains in income

can be very significant for the poorest households. Given the current initiatives with the Ministry of Social Development and the status of tourism development in T&T, the country is well positioned to take full advantage of PPT as a strategy to contribute to further poverty reduction.

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