

The Tourism Game.

A role playing exercise to explore the costs and benefits of the development of a tourist industry.

(This game was written by Stephen Fairbrass for NEAD's 'Just Business' project. The format is loosely based on NEAD's 'Debt Game'. The game may be copied for educational use free of charge. 'Just Business' would appreciate any evaluative feedback on the exercise, addressed to steve@nead.org.uk)

The Tourism Game is designed for use by groups of students from ages 14-19. It is principally intended for use by students of Business Studies, Economics and/or Geography, but it requires no specialist knowledge to play, and may also be utilised in other curriculum areas, to explore citizenship issues and decision making processes and to develop skills of discussion, critical thinking and persuasive argument.

The game is based in the hypothetical country of Latasica (derived from **Latin** America, **Asia** and **Africa**). It brings together a number of different issues connected with tourism.

The game requires approximately one hour playing and debrief time for the initial session (or slightly longer if the preliminary exercise is used). The game can stand alone, or be used as the basis for a variety of follow up work. The game requires a minimum of 12 players, plus a teacher/facilitator. It can be used with groups of up to fifty.

The game requires no specialist equipment other than the role cards contained within the pack. It is useful to have a board, or flipchart, and marker pens to record important points at the debrief stage.

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Preliminary Exercise (Optional).

The Tourism Game may be enhanced by encouraging participants to think 'locally' in the first instance. This preliminary exercise, which can take from 5-15 minutes, helps set the scene for the subsequent game.

1. Divide the group into two equal halves.
2. Ask members of half (a) to think of any ways they as individuals, their families, their friends, or their community generally benefits or may benefit from tourism in their own town/city/region. Ask one person in the group to 'scribe' this information for their group.
3. Ask members of half (b) to think of any ways they as individuals, their families, their friends or their community generally is disadvantaged or may be disadvantaged by tourism in their own town/city/region. Ask one person in the group to scribe this information for their group.
4. Bring the whole group back together. Ask each member of half (a) to give one 'benefit' of tourism in turn, write these on a board. Ask each member of half (b) to give one 'cost' of tourism in turn, write these on the board.
5. Orally summarise the information on the board, make the point that tourism has the potential to bring benefits to a community, but also has the potential to bring costs. The issue is whether the costs outweigh the benefits or vice versa. This provides the lead into the game, which is about the potential costs and benefits arising from a tourism development proposal in a 'third world' country.

NB. Benefits identified may include creation of local jobs, increased local incomes, improved infrastructure, development of local amenities, greater availability of goods and services etc. Costs may include pollution of various kinds (litter, noise e.g.), traffic congestion, overcrowding on public transport and other local amenities, increased prices in local shops, erosion of footpaths etc.

Instructions for playing the game.

1. Either read out, or distribute copies of, the background information sheet to participants. Deal with any questions arising. (3/4 minutes)
2. Divide class into individuals (if playing with the minimum 12) or groups for each role. Allocate a seating area for each group. Distribute role cards and give participants time to read through them. Again deal with any queries. (3/4 minutes)
3. Announce that there will be a Public Meeting in 20 minutes time, at which the issues will be discussed, and following which the Government will make an announcement about whether or not they will support the proposed tourism development. In the meantime participants should talk with other groups to find out what they think about the plans, try to form alliances, or persuade others to support them etc. (20 minutes)

During this period discussion can be stimulated by the facilitator circulating around the groups posing as a 'journalist', and asking what is going on in Latasica, what are the issues, how do people feel etc. The 'journalist' can also prompt different groups to talk to one another.

4. Call Public Meeting. Get Group to sit in a circle and invite Airtravel representatives to outline why they believe their proposals would be good for the country. Then invite representative(s) of each interest group in turn to put forward their views and state whether or not they support the proposals. Finally invite the Government to state whether or not they will allow the development to go ahead, and the reasons for their decision. (20 minutes)
5. Ask everybody to stand up and move to another seat, and to come out of role. Chair debrief discussion on what was learned from the exercise. Facilitators should use their own experience and judgment about how to encourage discussion of the issues at this stage. (12-14 minutes)

Background Information.

Latasica is a country in the southern hemisphere. It has a long warm summer and is blessed with wide, sandy palm fringed beaches leading down to a blue ocean. It also has extensive inland areas inhabited by exotic wildlife.

Latasica's present population is relatively small. There are two key areas of employment at present. The first is the fishing industry, located mainly around the coastal town of Ambria. This produces output mainly for the domestic market. There is also arable farming (based further inland) producing some crops for domestic consumption, but primarily concentrating on production of coffee for export. The coffee crop is at present Latasica's main source of earnings of foreign currency, but world prices have been falling for some years. Much of the inland area is populated by groups of self-sufficient nomadic herders, who wander large areas in search of grazing land for their animals.

At the present time Latasica has a small scale tourist industry, attracting a limited number of independent travellers from rich countries such as those in Europe, the United States and Japan.

Airtravel, a large European based holiday company is now proposing to develop and market Latasica as a high volume luxury tourist destination, for both beach and 'safari' holidays, with the aim of increasing by up to ten times the number of visitors to the country. Airtravel is currently in negotiations with the government of Latasica regarding the proposed development.

Airtravel is willing to finance the building of two large luxury hotels in the previously quiet beachside town of Ambria. Airtravel would market Ambria as a luxury beach resort, with a variety of watersports activities including sailing and windsurfing, waterski-ing and scuba diving.

Airtravel is also willing to finance a third hotel 'safari lodge' in an area of the country that it wants the government to designate as a game reserve. The rules of the reserve would encourage conservation of wild animals and forbid hunting. Human settlement, outside the safari lodge and

associated environs, would be banned. Tourists would make guided excursions to view and photograph wildlife.

However, Airtravel requires some support from the government of Latasica before they finally proceed with the project.

Airtavel are asking that the government spends money to build a new airport within an hours drive from Ambria and two hours from the game reserve, because research has shown that rich tourists are reluctant to undertake long road transfers. They also require the government to finance improvements in the infrastructure of roads, power and water supplies, and telecommunications.

Airtravel also require tax concessions on their investment, and a guarantee from the government that it will enact legislation designed to limit the power of trade unions and allow wage levels to be determined by market forces (i.e. no minimum wage).

The purpose of this exercise is to decide if the proposed developments should go ahead. You will take on the roles of various participants in the debate. Your job is to assess the costs and benefits of the development from the point of view of **your role** and decide whether you think the project should proceed. You should also discuss the development with other participants. You may wish to explain your point of view and try to convince others to support you. You should listen to other views and be prepared to negotiate a mutually satisfactory position.

The exercise will conclude with a public meeting at which all the affected parties will be able to express their opinions and the government will be invited to make a final decision on whether to approve the project.

The Government.

You are the government of Latasica. You have to decide whether to support the tourism development. You have to act in what you think are the best interests of your country and its people. You should consult with the people who live in your country and find out their opinions before you make your decision.

You should be aware of the following information. Your country is heavily in debt to Western governments and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who are insisting that you repay the loans. At present interest repayments each year take up about 40% of your national income. In order to meet your debt obligations it is essential that you earn foreign currency. The revenue you receive from coffee exports is insufficient for this end, and the debt is getting worse.

Tourism is at present the worlds third largest industry, and the most rapidly growing. The tourism development would bring in foreign visitors who would spend dollars, pounds, francs, deutschmarks and yen. However, some of this money would leave your country as profits to Airtravel, and to pay for imports of drinks, foodstuffs etc. that foreign tourists expect (eg Coca-Cola, Scotch Whisky). Capital equipment, fuel and other resources would also need to be imported You have to consider the likely net effect on your balance of payments position.

If you decide to approve the project you will have to spend large sums of money to build the airport, and the associated infrastructure of roads etc. You have limited funds available to you, particularly because the IMF, as a condition of their loan to you, have insisted on a 'structural adjustment programme' which involves cuts in government spending. However the IMF are very keen for you to encourage foreign investment, because they believe this will help your economy grow and you will then be able to afford to pay off your debts.

The infrastructure capital spending would create jobs in your economy, (jobs will of course also be created by the hotels) and may represent a profitable long term investment, with a positive multiplier effect. However you would have to cut current spending elsewhere, at least in the short run, perhaps on healthcare and education, in order to be able to afford it.

Airtravel PLC.

You are the Senior Management Team of Airtravel PLC, the world's third biggest tourism company. The global tourism industry is dominated by a few large firms. You are keen to maintain your company's position as one of the market leaders.

Recent years have seen a number of mergers and take-overs in the industry, as firms compete for market share. There is a rumour that the largest company in the industry is planning a bid to buy Airtravel. You are fearful for your future careers if Airtravel is taken over because take-overs usually mean 'rationalisation' at the top, and job losses amongst management. In order to survive as an independent operation it is essential that Airtravel should grow.

Profit margins on each individual holiday in the mass market sector are normally small. High turnover is necessary to earn good returns on investments. The last few summer seasons have seen 'price wars' between competitors, with weaker firms being taken over or simply going out of business. The survivors have been those companies that have been able to cross subsidise loss making parts of their business with revenues from the high margin luxury market.

The luxury market in recent years has seen a steady expansion of demand, and in particular there seems to be a trend amongst better off tourists towards more exotic destinations, outside Europe. This section of the market offers higher than average profit per holiday because demand is less price sensitive than for cheaper packages.

Latasica seems just the sort of destination that the discerning tourist would seek. It is 'unspoilt', there being no significant tourist industry at present. Furthermore none of your rivals seems yet to have recognised its potential.

Your task is to convince the government and people of Latasica that the development you propose is in all of your best interests. You may find some resistance from people who are nervous of change.

Ambrian Business Community

You are the local business community in the town of Ambria. You have to decide whether the proposed development is in the interests of your businesses, and your families, and then seek to influence the government to support your view. You might also wish to persuade other members of the population to support you.

You have worked hard to establish your business and have taken many risks. You have put in long hours. You are now making a good living compared to most Latasicans. You believe you deserve what you have earned. If others want to succeed all they have to do is work as hard as you. You believe the government has been too soft on people in the past, it should encourage them to get off their backsides and work.

More tourists coming to your country would give you the opportunity to sell more goods, and make larger profits. You will be able to sell goods and services directly to tourists, who will want souvenirs, local handicrafts, food and drink, etc. Tourists will be willing and able to pay higher prices than the local population, and you can make large profits from them. You will also be able to supply the hotels with goods and services. You will be able to expand your business and be able to hire more workers. The tourism development has the potential to make you and your country rich.

The hotels, and the airport, will also be seeking to hire workers, and may be willing to offer higher wages than you are currently paying your staff. This may persuade your staff to look for new jobs or you may have to pay more to keep them with you, this would increase your costs and eat into your profits. However, there are many unemployed people in your country, migrants from the rural areas arrive in town everyday looking for work, you would have no problem recruiting staff.

Your country is heavily in debt to western governments, and has many economic problems. The Government say the tourism development could solve your country's economic problems. By earning foreign currency from rich tourists the debts could be paid off. You are not sure if you trust the government, they have made promises of prosperity before, which have turned out to be false.

Perhaps you should talk to other Latasican people and try to find out what they think about these plans.

Coffee Farmers.

You currently make a living by farming coffee on hilly land that your family have rented for several generations. You sell all your coffee through a government run marketing scheme. It is a simple existence, times are sometimes hard, but you do make enough income to feed yourself and your family. Whilst you will never be rich, you do value your independence.

You have hopes for the future. You want your children to receive a good education and make a better life than you have had. You are concerned about older members of your family. You have elderly relatives whose health is deteriorating and who may need medicines and hospital care in years to come. In recent years there have been some cuts in Government spending on education and health care. This is due to the 'structural adjustment programmes' that the Government has been operating to try to get the country out of debt. You are having to pay for services that were once free, and prices seem to be rising. This trend concerns you, because there seems no prospect of any increase in the income you receive from selling coffee.

The government have let it be known that they are considering supporting tourism development in your country. They say there would be jobs created in constructing an airport, roads etc. In the longer term jobs would be available in the hotels etc. Maybe members of your family could find new jobs. However, in order to raise finance to build an airport for tourists the government say they would have to further cut spending on health and education.

There has already been some tourism in your country, and you are aware that tourists are willing to pay high prices for food, and for craft goods which they take home as souvenirs. This has meant that the better quality goods have gone to the tourists, and you have been forced by this competition to pay more for lower quality products. Tourists also tend to be noisy, disrespectful of local customs, and pollute the country with litter.

You must consider whether the tourism development is in your family's interests and decide whether to support it, or argue against it.

Ambrian Fishing Community

For many generations your families have fished the waters off the coast, and sold your catch in local markets. Small numbers of tourists have been visiting your country for some time now. When you catch the types of fish they know, they are prepared to pay high prices for them, and you can earn a good income. However you are concerned because you are having to travel further and further out to sea to locate these types of fish, it seems as if the numbers of fish are declining.

The government say that the proposed new tourism development would bring economic growth and help them out of the debt crisis that has so affected your country in recent years. They say it will make everybody better off, bringing new jobs and prosperity.

The new hotels will bring in many more tourists, but they will want the beaches to be clean, and want to sail and waterski etc. on the sea. You are concerned that divers may damage the coral reef, which could affect the fish population who feed there.

You have traditionally landed your catch on the beaches, and stretched out your nets there for drying. The government are now saying that if the tourist development goes ahead you will have to move your boats and nets elsewhere. Generally you are worried that tourists will have no respect for old traditional ways of life, everything will change. But perhaps things have to change if your country is to become better off.

There is potential for you to make a very good living in the short term, by selling fish to the rich tourists and to the hotels. They will pay much higher prices than local people. You might be able to earn enough in the short term to buy a bigger boat, or find a new way of life altogether.

You must decide if the proposed development is in your interests and try to persuade others to support you.

Arable Farmers.

You grow a variety of crops on rented land in the rural area that lies inland of the coastal town of Ambria. Some of the crops you use to feed yourself and your family, the remainder you take each week to the market in Ambria to sell for cash, which you use to buy fertilisers and other goods you require. (Fertilisers have been increasing in price in recent years, because the value of your currency has been falling.) Life is sometimes difficult, especially if you have a bad growing season, but you always seem to be able to make ends meet.

There is a rumour that the government wants to buy the land you farm in order to build an airport, and that the landowner is willing to sell, and that you will be evicted. You are very worried about what will then happen to you and your family.

The government say that the new tourist industry will create many jobs in the economy, but farming is the only occupation you know, and you feel that you are too old to change your life now. In any case, you value the independence you have in working for yourself and your family, you are not sure that you want to work for someone else who will order you around.

Even if you manage to remain in farming there could be problems for you. Tourists demand plentiful fresh water supplies, for showers, for swimming pools and regularly washed and changed sheets and towels. However at certain times of the year there are already water shortages in your country, and you fear there will not be enough water for your crops if the development goes ahead.

You should talk to other groups of people and find out what they think about the proposed development, perhaps they know more than you do about what will happen, or perhaps they will have ideas about what can be done.

Shanty town dwellers.

You live in the shanty town that lies to the west of Ambria, and you have no proper job. You came from the country looking for work, because since new technology came to the farms there was less for you to do, and no money. But there is no secure work in the town either for people like you. You struggle to find enough money to survive.

You do odd jobs. You may get a few days on a building site sometimes, or somebody might pay you to carry some bags. You have to be alert to every opportunity.

You're not sure about the new tourism plan the government has. On the one hand it will bring wealthy people into your country who will spend money. Perhaps there will be jobs building the hotels, and after perhaps other work serving the tourists. If there is no steady job maybe casual work, shining shoes, guiding, that kind of thing. However this work will only be seasonal, what will you do for the rest of the year? And more people may be attracted to move from the rural areas to Ambria from the countryside in search of work, which may mean more competition for jobs.

The tourists that already come here already cause problems. Because they want only the best fish, the fishermen no longer catch the fish that you can afford to eat. They would rather sell to the tourists at high prices. This means you have to pay more for your food, and often it is only the poor quality stuff that the tourists have not bought, maybe not so fresh either. And fruit and vegetables too, the tourists get all the best, and you go without, or pay high prices for rubbish.

Will things get better or worse with more tourists? You should discuss your hopes and fears with others, maybe you can work out a solution.

Nomadic Herders.

Since time began your people have lived on this land. Long before the people who grow crops, or who fish the sea arrived here your forebears wandered the plains. Yours is a simple life. You search for land for your animals to graze, and water for them to drink. You also take the food you need from the land. You hunt the wild boar, and you kill the puma if it threatens your herds. You also harvest fruits and other nutritious plants that grow wild. When water and grass become scarce you move on, maybe travelling hundreds of miles, to find fresh areas. Life has always been this way. The land you leave will recover, and in time you will return again.

Recently people calling themselves the government have begun to interfere with your way of life. They have said that you must not trespass on some lands because the elephants graze there, and the elephants are an 'endangered species'. But your people have lived in harmony with the elephants for many years, it is because so much of the land is now under cultivation that the elephants find it hard to find food. If the elephants stray near the plantations the farmers shoot at them with guns.

Now the Government is saying that they will make a big area of land 'reserved' for the wild animals, you will be forbidden to wander there. It is because the animals are becoming extinct they say, but again this is not your fault, it is because of the way that the land is used, by people with no sympathy for the ways of nature.

Who are this 'Government'? Who gave them the right to tell you what to do? You were here long before them and have no need for their rules and regulations.

For too long your peoples rights have been neglected. You need to campaign to protect your traditional way of life. You need to make it very clear to the government, and to the outsiders, how you feel.

Elderly people.

You are very concerned about the proposed tourism development. Already you have seen the ancient values, traditions and customs of your country being eroded, and you believe that the influence of foreign cultures is largely to blame. The voice of the older generation was always respected, but young people today seem no longer to value experience and the wisdom of years.

You are worried that young people will move away from home, and from traditional occupations, to take up jobs in the new industry. This will lead to the breakdown of the extended family network, and you are worried about who will then care for you in your old age. There are no old age pensions in your country. You need medicines, yet the government seems to be proposing to cut spending on health to finance building an airport.

Tourists are disrespectful. They flaunt dress codes, walking semi-naked on the beach and not covering their heads, arms and legs when entering temples. They ignore local customs of politeness. They want to see 'traditional' ceremonies, but fail to appreciate their true significance. Already you have been dismayed to see old religious rites being turned into neatly packaged spectacles for tourists. Sacred events that happened once a year are now being recreated almost every week to amuse the visitors.

The Government says that progress is essential, but you have seen stories about so called 'progress' in the rich countries, where families break down, there is crime and disorder. If this is 'progress' you want no part of it. You must try to persuade other people to see things from your point of view.

Young People.

You are excited by the proposed tourism development, because you can see the opportunity to get a more exciting job than your forebears, to earn more money and perhaps to be able to buy the kinds of clothes and luxury items that all the foreigners seem to have. You are excited by the chance to meet new people, and learn about their customs and beliefs.

Nothing ever seems to change around here, old people are so set in their ways, nobody in your family ever seems to listen to what you have to say. If you get a job in one of the new hotels maybe you will be trained by Airtravel, and maybe there are chances of promotion, and even of jobs with them in other countries.

Even if there is no work in the hotels, tourists have lots of money and will pay to be guided to where the best sights are to be seen, the quietest beaches and so on. You could make a living by walking along the beach and going up to tourists and offering to show them round.

You would have to leave school, but what use is school anyway, there are no jobs, or only picking coffee on the plantations and who needs school for that? You could earn more money in a day selling your services to tourists than in a week on the plantation.

You need to try to persuade others that the tourism development is the best thing that could possibly happen to your country.

Worldcare

(A northern based developmental and environmental organisation)

You are very concerned about the tourism development. You realise that the project does bring large potential benefits to Latasica, allowing the country to earn foreign currency to repay its debts, and also perhaps creating jobs and wealth for the population. You fear, however, that unless the project is carefully managed the costs could far exceed the benefits.

You believe that the government has not fully considered the environmental implications. You are aware of the depletion of fish stocks in the waters around Latasica, caused by overfishing, which large scale tourism will make worse. Northern tourists expect luxuries such as baths and showers and swimming pools, yet Latasica has a problem with fresh water supplies. In the short term this could pose problems for local farmers needing water for their crops, and for local people who may suffer shortages of clean water for bathing and drinking. In the longer term there might be problems of desertification and soil erosion if too much water is taken from the land. Tourists always pose problems of waste disposal, ie rubbish and sewage. There are also potential risks to the habitats of local wildlife, plants and trees.

You have witnessed similar tourist developments in other countries. You have seen young people neglect their education because it is possible to make quick money selling souvenirs to tourists on the beach, acting as guides, or even simply begging. You are also concerned about 'sex tourism', and the possible growth of child prostitution that has happened in other poor countries.

You are also aware that tourists tastes are fickle. Latasica may become next years fashionable destination, but if too many people visit it may become 'old hat', and people will move on to somewhere else. You are concerned that large scale tourism may not be sustainable in the long term.

Your task is to make the government and people of Latasica aware of these concerns.

Animaltrust

(A Northern based organisation devoted to the protection of endangered species.)

You have heard that the Latasican government are considering designating a large area of land as a game reserve. You are very excited by this prospect. You have been campaigning for many years to save Latasicas endangered populations of elephants, pumas and wild boar. The game reserve will guarantee their safety because nobody will be able to hunt them. Additionally, because the Government and Airtravel will want people to come to the reserve they may be willing to spend money supporting breeding programmes to increase wildlife numbers.

You are a little concerned about the building of the 'safari lodge'. The new roads and the building programme may disturb the animals natural habitats. You are also concerned about the guided tours to see the animals. These creatures are shy, and the presence of tourists may disturb them, but this may be a price worth paying to conserve these wonderful creatures.

You need to encourage the government to go ahead with the project, but you want certain safeguards built into the scheme to ensure that the animals' welfare always comes first.

Newsflashes.

The 'newsflashes' below may be used at any time by the facilitator to provoke more discussion. They can be selectively leaked to one or more groups, or revealed to everybody simultaneously as required. They are optional extras and need not be used if the facilitator is happy with the progress of the game.

Newsflash !

War has broken out in the middle-east. The worlds supplies of oil and petroleum are being seriously disrupted. This is causing prices of fuel to increase dramatically making travel more expensive. Additionally Western governments are advising their citizens that due to the present instability it is inadvisable to travel except to well established safe destinations.

Newsflash !

Due to continued good growing conditions worldwide it is anticipated that there will be global overproduction of coffee this year. This is expected to drive prices down by 50%. Coffee is Latasicas main export product at present, accounting for over 60% of its earnings of foreign exchange. This has severe consequences for Latasicas economy, including its ability to repay its debts.

Debrief.

These notes for debriefing the game are for general guidance. It is anticipated that an experienced teacher/facilitator will have their own ideas about how to follow up the game and integrate it into a general scheme of work.

1. Ask students to come out of role. Has anybody any questions, comments etc. about the game they would like to raise at this stage?
2. Ask for a show of hands, forgetting the role they played, how many students (a) think Latasica should go ahead with this development, (b) think Latasica should not go ahead with this development, (c) are unsure about whether Latasica should go ahead with the development.
3. Ask one or more of those 'in favour' to explain their reasons, similarly ask one or more of those 'against', and one or more of the 'undecided'. Use these responses to stimulate discussion/debate. If you have used the preliminary exercise it may be useful to refer back to it during this discussion.
4. Make the point that the potential costs and benefits accruing from tourism depend on the activities of tourists. 'Ethical' tourists seek to behave in such a way as to maximise the benefits while minimising the costs to their hosts and the environment. Ask the group to get into pairs and ask each pair to come up with one or more ways in which they could behave ethically in their own tourism. Ask each pair in turn to give an idea to the group, discuss these.

*Ideas might include buying 'local' rather than imported foods, drinks, souvenirs etc, thus maximising the amount of foreign exchange the visited country receives from tourism. Similarly use local transport, locally owned restaurants and shops. Protect the environment by not littering, not picking flowers or stealing rocks etc for souvenirs. Do not buy ivory, coral, fur or snakeskin products that contribute to the extinction of species. Respect local customs regarding clothing, standards of politeness, public displays of affection etc. **Make an effort to learn at least the basics of the local language** (if only 'hello', 'goodbye' 'excuse me' 'please', 'thank you' etc. This shows respect for your*

hosts and is much appreciated. It may even bring you benefits as the standard of service you receive may improve as a result!