Part 3

Innovative Tourism Planning
INNOVATION IN RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE RETENTION OF KEY MANAGEMENT AND STAFF IN A SEASONAL TRADING ENVIRONMENT.

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ABSTRACT

The cost of recruiting, training and developing both management and staff for the tourism industry has dramatically increased over the past number of years. Quality developments within the tourism sector have a particular need for interaction between visitors and staff, continuity in the interpretation of the product and customer care. All of these factors are greatly influenced, mostly negatively, by high turnover of staff, particularly key staff and management.

Seasonality has been a major factor in rural tourism development throughout most parts of Ireland for decades. It is widely recognised that retention of key staff and the planning of seasonal staff are vital for the developmental success.

Kylemore Abbey is the major tourist attraction in the west of Ireland. It has a local and international school for girls, a public garden and a variety of facilities for visitors. It is also the monastic home of Benedictine Nuns. The various tourism initiatives in Kylemore create an employment requirement of over 130 people during the tourist season, which extends from March to October each year.

The development of a food business where production is carried out throughout the 'off season' or closed months has gone some way to addressing staff retention problems. This case study explores the effect of these developments on retention and on the general stability of the key members of the work force. The approach is an innovative human resource management (HRM) solution to staff retention and rural development.

KEYWORDS

Human resource management (HRM), Staff retention, Seasonality, Rural tourism, Kylemore Abbey.
INTRODUCTION

Kylemore Abbey has been the Monastic home of the Irish Benedictine Nuns since 1920, where they settled following the bombing of their Abbey in Ypres, Flanders, during the First World War. The Order dates from the 6th Century and the Irish Foundation from 1665. In fact, the Nuns at Ypres were known as 'De Iersche Damen'. Kylemore Castle, which was to become the Nuns new Abbey, was originally built between 1866 and 1871, within an estate of some 11,000 acres, in celebration of the wedding of the owner Mr Mitchell Henry, a wealthy Manchester merchant, to Ms Margaret Vaughan from County Down. The castle is a building of national architectural importance and is very popular among visitors from all over the world. The estate has been designated as a National Heritage Area (NHA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Following the development of the Connemara National Park on land once owned by the Nuns, the estate has been reduced in size to about 1,000 acres. Although the retained lands are mostly mountainous, the Nuns have compensated for this lack of useful agricultural land by developing various other commercial facilities, in keeping with their mission. These include an international school, reflective walks, gardens, a neo-gothic Church, a gift-shop, restaurant, and interpretative centres at the reception point to the estate and in the Abbey.

Major restoration works have recently been completed in the Abbey and in the school. The Gothic Church has been restored and was officially opened to the public by President Robinson in 1995. Since 1999, the Abbey's Victorian walled garden has been restored and is now open to the public.

The Community in Kylemore currently employs 55 people in the non-tourist months and up to 125 people during the months of May to October, including 10 people in administration and management. These jobs are vital to the West of Ireland and have received employment support from Fas, the State training agency. Works undertaken on restoration and conservation projects have been assisted by training grants from the government, which also serve to improve the skill levels of local people. Interestingly, many of the Fas workers employed on the recent restoration of the gardens are direct descendants of the workers employed in the development of the original gardens in the 1860's.

Visitor Profile:

Travel and tourism is the world’s largest industry (10.7% of the global economy) and is also the world’s largest generator of jobs, employing 225 million people (19m in the EU) (ITIC, 1998). Undoubtedly, tourism is a growing international industry, which makes a significant contribution to employment. Ireland’s tourism growth has been extremely high with numbers of visitors reaching some 6.5 million in 2000. Annual visitor numbers has exceeded our resident population since 1995. This fact alone has
created many social side effects, from erosion of culture to pressure on the environment.

During the past decade visitors to Kylemore Abbey, Gardens and Estate have increased dramatically to just below 230,000 in 2000. Visitors are mainly independent travellers with a decreasing number of tour groups. This has put considerable stress on staff, facilities and capacity during the peak months of July and August.

![Graph: Kylemore Abbey Visitor Numbers]

The many distinctive characteristics of tourism, such as its seasonal nature, unsociable hours and poor career structures, have contributed to the dilemma of labour supply currently pervading the industry. Baum (1996) maintains that industry structuring and human resource provision as they currently exist in the tourism industry will give rise to general personnel and specific skill shortages in many European countries in the future.

According to CERT (1995) high levels of staff mobility within the various sectors of the industry, as well as a significant amount of staff movement out of tourism, hotel and catering altogether and into other industries characterise the tourism industry. While a certain level of mobility is desirable in the tourism industry (Bowey, 1976), there seems to be a problem attracting people to work in this industry and to remain in it (ITIC, 1998).

Mullins (1996) suggests a three-fold classification for the motivation to work: "economic rewards, intrinsic satisfaction derived from the nature of the work itself and social relationships". Maslow (1954) viewed satisfaction as the main motivational outcome of behaviour. As an extension, Herzberg (1968) motivation hygiene theory, states the "satisfiers" as being work itself, achievement, responsibility, recognition, advancement and growth.

In recognising the significance of these factors and being aware of their own situation whereby, managers, supervisors and other key staff had to be let-go at the end of a season, hopefully to be re-employed in the next year, if they were still available. The Nuns needed to develop a new policy to retain their key staff. They had tried retention policies such as winter retainers and guarantees of work in the following year. These had some success, but not to a major extent.
New management procedures had to be put in place to sustain business. Clearly these policies needed to be focused on the retention of their key staff and managers during the summer and off-season. A number of considerations were taken into account:

- The value in retaining key staff
- Recognising that local staff wish to work within their own community
- Developing meaningful work which has its own personal reward
- Providing strict cost benefit analysis to the venture
- Retaining Key staff: -
  - Clearly to retain trained staff who have the skills to meet the expectations of the business and of customers is valuable. The policy had to take into account, costs of training for the new job, in relation to the cost of the training for the original position, should the employee decide to quit. The cost of recruitment and training for visitor contact staff and management are high and have been estimated to be over £1,000 per skilled employee. Clearly it is worth trying to retain rather than retrain.
- Working within a community: -
  - Key staff were asked their preference in terms of working within the local community rather than travelling to a new location. Most were happy to maintain their employment even in a different environment, although some were happy to take time off, from three to four months.

Meaningful work
Capowski (March 1996) states that flexible work options improves retention, increases morale, enhances customer service and boosts productivity. Creating a flexible workplace entails a creative way of looking at how work gets done in an organisation. The idea, and one that the Nuns of Kylemore Abbey support, is for a flexible workplace that recognises business needs while at the same time meeting employee needs. It is however important to be satisfied that the work on offer is meaningful. To this end the development of a quality product has been important as it provides satisfaction for a job well done, while at the same time providing a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Cost benefit analysis
Worthwhile developments, even in a monastic setting, must have a commercial outcome. Although the enterprise may not be seen in the same light as in a strict business sense, the principle is the same. This commercial approach was established through cost / benefit guidelines set up to support development to a break-even or small profit level. This process established the enterprise as a real business and not as a camouflage activity.

Resulting from their deliberations the Nuns decided to expand their small preserve business and to increase manufacturing on-site during the off-season.

Positions needed to fill the production vacancies were offered, in the first instance, to the key employees that might have departed had they not had some employment. A number of the staff accepted the offer and were happy to take up full time employment.
The scheme outlined above has added to the retention prospects for those working in Kylemore and is perhaps a model for other developments in the seasonal tourism industry.

**Being Innovative**

It is fair to say that in problem solving some of the best solutions can be found through an innovative approach, often conceived by some lateral thinking. The Nuns of Kylemore Abbey have demonstrated this in one aspect of their business and with some success. However, becoming an innovator is not always easy, since it requires fundamental changes mainly in an organisation's structure and philosophy. As part of the process of change, the Nuns completed a detailed programme to establish their Mission from a hospitality and sustainability perspective.

**Sustainable Tourism**

At the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism meeting in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, on 27-28 April 1995, the delegates were mindful that tourism, as a world-wide phenomenon, touches the highest and deepest aspirations of all people and is also an important element of socio-economic and political development in many countries. They appealed to the international community and, in particular, urged governments, other public authorities, decision-makers and professionals in the field of tourism, public and private associations and institutions whose activities are related to tourism, and tourists themselves, to adopt the principles and objectives of their Declaration.

Articles 7 & 8 are particularly relevant to the approach taken by The Nuns of Kylemore Abbey in their innovative way of dealing with a human resource retention challenge.

Article 7. To participate in sustainable development, tourism must be based on the diversity of opportunities offered by the local economy. It should be fully integrated into and contribute positively to local economic development.

Article 8. All options for tourism development must serve to improve the quality of life of all people and must influence the socio-cultural enrichment of each destination.
References:


REVISITING THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PARADIGM (NEP): IS THE SCALE APPLICABLE IN A TOURISM CONTEXT?

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ABSTRACT
Ecotourism is a rapidly growing sector within the tourism industry. It is also recognised that wildlife watching tourism is an important (eco)tourism sector (Orams 1994). Over the last 20 years, tourism involving marine mammals boomed with an estimated total expenditure of $1,049 million in 1994 on whale watching tours alone (Hoyt 2000). Dolphin tours do not seem to be as apparent as whale watching tours, however, there are around thirty tour operators in New Zealand alone, who are involved with dolphin watching or swimming with dolphins as their main business. A variety of studies investigated the effects of these tours on the dolphins (for example, Constantine and Baker 1997; Constantine 1999; Orams 1995; Barr and Slooten 1999; Driscoll-Lind and Östman-Lind 1999). Although Amante-Helweg (1995) looked at the cultural perspectives of dolphins held by ecotourists participating in dolphin tours, there is, as it stands, still a lack of understanding by the tourists participating in those tours.

Western cultures share a long tradition of an anthropocentric worldview. Humans were viewed as superior and being 'above' nature. Part of this view was the abundance of natural resources and, thus, no real desire for managed or directed conservation during that era. As such, Dunlap (1980:6) suggests that "Homo Sapiens was seen, by virtue of possessing culture and technology, as able to adapt nature to human ends, rather than as having to adapt to the natural environment". These factors were manifested in a set of beliefs and values, called the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP). With a sudden awareness for environmental problems (Noe and Snow 1990), changes in those values and beliefs emerged and new ideas included the necessity of a "steady state economy", "limits to growth", or "balance of nature" (Dunlap and Van Liere 1978). This new worldview differed fundamentally from the view of the DSP and was termed New Environmental Paradigm (NEP). Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) designed a scale to measure the extent to which people would accept the ideas of the New Environmental Paradigm. After Dunlap and Van Liere's initial study, a number of researchers applied the NEP and tested it for reliability, validity and particularly for the dimensions of the scale. Only few researchers have applied the NEP in a tourism context.

The methodology used includes preliminary qualitative research and extensive quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire distributed to participants in swim-with-dolphins tours at three locations in New Zealand. Factor analysis and compared means were used to elicit environmental values and on-tour experiences of the tourists.
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The aim of this paper is to gain a better understanding of tourists on dolphin tours in terms of their environmental values and on-tour experiences. Some results of previous studies (Uysal, Jurowski et al. 1994; Ryan 1999) will be presented and compared with the recent study, with the goal of identifying the applicability of the NEP scale in a tourism context. The results suggest that there are no major differences between demographic groups regarding their environmental attitudes and their experience on the dolphin tour.

INTRODUCTION

Western cultures share a long tradition of an anthropocentric worldview. Humans were viewed as superior and being 'above' nature. Part of this view was the belief that there was an abundance of natural resources and that there was no need for conservation during that era. "Homo Sapiens was seen, by virtue of possessing culture and technology, as able to adapt nature to human ends, rather than as having to adapt to the natural environment" (Dunlap 1980:6). Social sciences saw humans as exempt from ecological constraints. These factors were manifested in a set of beliefs and values, called the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP).

This entails:
1. A belief in limitless resources, continuous progress, and the necessity of growth
2. Faith in the problem-solving abilities of science and technology

With an increasing awareness for environmental problems, due to environmental accidents, oil spills, mismanagement of toxic waste (Noe & Snow 1990), increasing use of nuclear energy, it was recognised that humans are not immune to ecological constraints. In fact, they are part of a finite global ecosystem and cannot live without the stability of the system (Dunlap 1980). It was argued that the problem of the increasing ecological crisis was the set of basic beliefs and values - the DSP (Swan 1971). Changes in those values and beliefs emerged and new ideas included the necessity of a "steady state economy", "limits to growth", or "balance of nature" (Dunlap & Van Liere 1978). This new worldview differed fundamentally from the view of the DSP and was termed New Environmental Paradigm (NEP). Researchers conducted studies on environmental attitudes and behaviour. Those studies were very specific about concerns regarding pollution, preservation, erosion etc. However, there was a lack of knowledge about people's more generic disposition (Albrecht, et al. 1982). Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) designed a scale to measure the extent to which people would accept the ideas of the New Environmental Paradigm.

After Dunlap and Van Liere's initial study, a number of researchers applied the NEP and tested it for reliability, validity and, particularly, for the dimensions of the scale. However, only limited research has applied the NEP scale in a tourism context. It appears that only very recently, has the NEP found its way into tourism research. Current studies apply the sale in research projects about ecotourism attractions
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(Higham and Carr), backpacker hostels (Russell), and visitor experiences of the environment and landscape (Carr). This paper briefly reviews some significant studies over the past twenty years and compares those with the recent study of the author. Finally, some results will be presented and compared with the goal to identify the applicability of the NEP scale in a tourism context.

The Studies
For this paper, the following studies have been reviewed and will be compared: Dunlap and Van Liere's original NEP scale (1978) using the 12 items as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The 12 items of Dunlap and Van Liere's (1978) NEP scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mankind was created to rule over the rest of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Plants and animals exist primarily to be used by humans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To maintain a healthy economy we will have to develop a &quot;steady-state&quot; economy where industrial growth is controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Humans must live in harmony with nature in order to survive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The earth is like a spaceship with only limited room and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Humans need not adapt to the natural environment because they can remake it to suit their needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>There are limits to growth beyond which our industrialised society cannot expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mankind is severely abusing the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dunlap and Van Liere used two separate samples, one General Public Sample (GPS) and another sample including members of environmental organisations (EOS). In 1982, Albrecht et al. applied the NEP during a study and tested reliability, validity and dimensionality of the NEP. They also used two different samples, one of farmers and one of urban residents, both in the State of Iowa. Geller and Lasley (1985) used the samples of Albrecht et al. (1982) and an additional study on farmers undertaken in Missouri. They were particularly interested in the question of dimensionality of the NEP. In 1990, Noe and Snow applied the NEP to studies at five national parks in the Southwest of the USA and looked at reliability and dimensionality of the scale. Uysal et al. (1994) appear to be the first researchers who applied the NEP in a tourism context. On the Caribbean island of St. John, they applied the NEP to two samples and tested the NEP for reliability and dimensionality. In 1997, Pelstring reviewed Dunlap and Van Liere's first study and investigated the question of validity. Ryan (1999)
conducted research on Australian tourists and their interest in wildlife based tourism attractions. Seven original NEP items were used among the 18 items of the applied scale.

Ryan applied cluster analysis to identify different types of tourists and their environmental values. Finally, the author conducted a study of participants in dolphin tours in New Zealand and compared his results with the previously mentioned studies.

Reliability

"Reliability refers to the extent to which a test or other measure performs consistently" (Kimble 1978: 186). In other words, a test or measure should produce the same results when undertaken repeatedly under exactly the same circumstances. The test used in these studies was Cronbach's coefficient alpha, which measures the internal consistency and reliability among a group of items combined to form a single scale (Litwin 1995).

Table 2: Comparison: Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunlap &amp; Van Liere (1978)</td>
<td>0.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albrecht et al (1982)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe and Snow (1990)</td>
<td>0.61-0.71*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uysal et al. (1994)</td>
<td>0.454; 0.699; 0.706**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lück (2000)</td>
<td>0.7756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cronbach's alpha was calculated for 3 park studies and each factor indicated here are the lowest and the highest alpha
** Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each factor

The coefficient can range from 0 (for a completely unreliable test with totally random scores) to 1 (for a completely reliable test) (Turner & Martin 1984). With one exception in the study of Uysal et al., all compared studies indicate reliability coefficient sufficiently large enough to justify the use of the NEP (although some being marginal), as shown in Table 2.

Validity

When measuring validity "we are essentially talking about construct validity - the approximate truth of the conclusion that our operationalisation accurately reflects the construct" (Pelstring 1997: 1-2). There are several ways to validate a measure. Dunlap and Van Liere attempted to validate their NEP scale by construct, predictive, and face validity. Construct validity means that the scale has to be developed on a theoretical basis and need to support those views by actual collected data (Pelstring 1997). It is referred to as the most difficult form of validity and often needs a longer period of time to be determined (Litwin 1995). Dunlap and Van Liere developed the NEP scale on a
theoretical basis and consulted environmental scientists and ecologists in order to chose the relevant items and find an appropriate wording (Dunlap & Van Liere 1978). They then applied the NEP scale in a survey of two different samples and were able to confirm that the NEP scale works in the way it was theoretically developed.

Predictive validity validates the relation between a theoretically predicted outcome and the actual outcome of a study applying the scale. Dunlap and Van Liere predicted that members of environmental organisations are more likely to endorse the New Environmental Paradigm than members of the general public. The results clearly show that this is the case. The overall mean of the EOS was 3.7, while the overall mean of the GPS was significantly lower at 3.0 (Albrecht, et al. 1982). The third form of validity applied by Dunlap and Van Liere is the face validity. This is the most subjective (and therefore weakest) method to measure validity. "A scale has 'face validity' if its constituent items logically reflect the attitudinal domain being measured" (Albrecht, et al. 1982:40). The developed 12 items constitute the paradigm and by consulting scientists and submitting the scale for review by experts in environmental issues, the two researchers were able to gain face validity (Pelstring 1997).

Albrecht et al. (1982) also tested the NEP for validity. They applied the tool of predictive validity and argued that previous studies had shown that farmers are generally less environmentally aware than the general public. The results of the study amongst farmers and urban residents in Iowa surprisingly showed that the environmental awareness and acceptance of the New Environmental Paradigm was very high in both samples. However, the anticipated difference was confirmed with an overall mean of 3.2 for the urban sample and 2.9 for the sample of farmers.

Pelstring approached the validity issue of the NEP in a theoretical way. She reviewed the types of validity and compared those theoretical definitions with the three types of validity used by Dunlap and Van Liere. She concludes that Dunlap and Van Liere succeeded in proving the NEP scale as a valid scale (Pelstring 1997).

On the grounds of the three studies mentioned above, it appears that the New Environmental Paradigm scale is a valid instrument.

**Dimensionality**

If a scale is to be established for general use, it must be consistent across various populations. Inconsistent scales with different factor structures across various populations are of limited use for generalisation (Geller & Lasley 1985). Therefore, it seems that dimensionality is the most important part of testing the NEP scale. All studies mentioned tested the NEP for dimensionality by using factor analysis.

Table 3. clearly shows that the outcome of these tests is diverse. Results of factor analyses varied from one to five factors.

Dunlap and van Liere applied factor analysis and found that all 12 items loaded sufficiently for one factor. The loadings ranged from 0.431 to 0.672 (0.526 average) for
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the GPS, while the loadings for the EOS ranged from 0.378 to 0.575 with an average of 0.466 (Dunlap & Van Liere 1978). Some loadings were rather low, but were still seen as sufficient to assign the items to one single factor. Therefore, Dunlap and Van Liere suggest that "it is appropriate to treat all 12 items as forming an internally consistent and uni-dimensional NEP scale" (Dunlap & Van Liere 1978:14).

### Table 3: Comparison: Dimensionality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Dimensionality (factors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunlap &amp; Van Liere (1978)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albrecht et al. (1982)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geller &amp; Lasley (1985)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe &amp; Snow (1990)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uysal et al. (1994)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lück (2000)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Albrecht et al. (1982) agreed with Dunlap and Van Liere in terms of reliability and validity, their findings regarding dimensionality were different. They also submitted the 12 items of the NEP scale to factor analysis. This time, three factors emerged for both the farmers and urban samples. These loadings were consistent and underlined the multi-dimensionality of the scale. Further analysis of the three factors revealed that each factor consisted of four items and could be classified as "balance of nature", "limits to growth", and "man over nature" (Albrecht, et al. 1982).

Geller and Lasley (1985) were particularly interested in the matter of dimensionality of the NEP scale. They adopted the data of Albrecht et al. (1982) and added a third sample. This third sample comprised farmers in Missouri. After applying factor analysis, Geller and Lasley's findings confirmed the results of Albrecht et al. In fact, Geller and Lasley found that a minimum number of four factors is needed for the farmer samples of Iowa and Missouri and five factors for the urban sample. Therefore, Geller and Lasley also cannot support the hypothesis of uni-dimensionality of Dunlap and Van Liere. However, they "cautiously accept the Albrecht et al. interpretation of three factors as being 'Balance of Nature', 'Limits to Growth', and 'Man over Nature'." (Geller & Lasley 1985:12). They suggest the use of a reduced nine-item, three-factor scale.

Noe and Snow (1990) used five samples of national park visitors and residents living in close proximity to national parks in the Southwest of the USA. Factor analysis of those samples showed similarities with Geller and Lasley's (1985) study. There were, however, some differences. Most striking was the finding that the pool of 12 items yielded only two significant factors (Noe & Snow 1990). Noe and Snow conclude that in confirming the multi-dimensionality of the NEP scale, however, they recommend the
continued use of all 12 items and not to expect a single dimensional scale. They argue that there is not sufficient evidence for abandoning three of the 12 items, as suggested by Geller and Lasley (Noe & Snow 1990).

Uysal et al. (1994) applied the nine-item NEP scale suggested by Geller and Lasley (1985). They used two samples of visitors to national parks on the small Caribbean Island of St John. Their study confirmed the three factors "Humans over Nature", "Balance of Nature", and "Limits to Growth" with significant loadings between 0.5179 and 0.8548 (Uysal, et al. 1994).

In a study of participants in swim-with-dolphins tours at three different locations in New Zealand (2 South Island, 1 North Island), the author also used the original 12 items of the NEP scale. Factor analysis applied to this New Zealand sample revealed two factors: One factor "Humans over Nature" with four items and one "general" factor comprising the remaining eight items of the scale. All items showed loadings between 0.495 and 0.831 and could be clearly assigned to either of the two factors. This result is similar to Noe and Snow's outcome of two factors and also confirms the multi-dimensionality of the NEP scale.

Results

Only two of the studies discussed in this paper presented the actual results of the surveys. Testing the scales for reliability, validity and dimensionality was prevalent. This is a clear indication of the importance of the suitability of the NEP scale as a valid measurement tool. Ryan (1999) also presented results; but he only used seven out of the original 12 items and applied a five-point Likert scale instead of the original four-point Likert scale. Therefore, results are not directly comparable. The available results of the studies are introduced in this section.

Table 4: Comparison: Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Mean Score*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunlap &amp; Van Liere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1978) GPS (Wash.)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1978) EOS (Wash.)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albrecht et al. (1982)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers (Iowa)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban (Iowa)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lück (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists (New Zealand)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Means were calculated by summing the average scores for each of the 12 items and dividing by 12. Possible range is from 1 to 4, with higher scores representing greater acceptance of the NEP.

Interpretation of these results is difficult and certainly bears the danger of error. One of the obvious reasons for that is the variety of samples. However, some trends might be elicited. If we disregard the EOS and the farmers samples due to their special members with biased opinions, it can be seen that there is a constant increasing acceptance of the New Environmental Paradigm. While the mean score in 1978 was 3.0, it increased to 3.2 in 1985 and up to 3.4 in the year 2000. In particular, the score of 3.4 has to be read carefully, because participants in dolphin tours might be closer to the EOS sample than to the general public - especially as the respondents were asked to fill in the
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questionnaire right after the thrilling experience of a dolphin tour. The first two studies were conducted in the United States, and the respondents of the New Zealand study were a mixture of a number of nationalities. Traditionally, German, Dutch and Scandinavian residents have higher environmental values and adopted pro-environmental behaviour, for example recycling, to their daily routines. Therefore, one could assume that they are more likely to approve of the NEP than other nationalities.

The NEP uses a four-point Likert scale, with four being the most positive value and one the most negative value. The results of all three studies are remarkable with all mean scores (one exception) being three or higher. This indicates that there is a high approval of the NEP and people's environmental awareness has increased over the last 20 years. Ryan (1999) used 18 items in order to identify environmental awareness. Cluster analysis was applied with the result of the identification of five different clusters of visitors to wildlife attractions in Australia: The "Après Moi", the "Optimists", the "Very Concerned", the "Less Pessimistic", and the "Nebulous". Ryan could not find a relationship between cluster members and the rates of visitation to wildlife attractions. However, he states that those who do visit wildlife attractions are mostly "sensitive to and appreciate messages relating to environmental issues" (Ryan 1999:8).

It would be interesting to see further research into the environmental behaviour of the respondents. It is argued that there is a considerable gap between environmental education and aspirations on one hand, and changes in behaviour on the other (Cameron, et al. 1998; Diekmann & Preisendörfer 1998). Hence, one may conclude that although the majority of the population is endorsing the NEP, their actions in reality might be far away from their good intentions.

The NEP has been widely tested, however, only to a small extent in a tourism context. For a study at swim-with-dolphins operations in New Zealand, in addition to the NEP scale, 11 relevant items of the Environmental Concern Scale (EC) (Weigel & Weigel 1978) and 15 items of the General Measure of Ecological Behaviour (GEB) (Kaiser 1998) were applied. While the NEP looks at general, global environmental issues, the EC addresses issues related to pollution and personal willingness to make sacrifices in order to protect nature. The GEB deals with actual behaviour of the respondents, from recycling to the use of public transport. The survey also included a variety of questions regarding the experience and satisfaction on the tours. It was attempted to achieve an overall score for the three environmental scales (termed "environmentalism") and relate it to the experience on the tours. It was anticipated that respondents who hold high environmental values would have a lower experience during the tours. This was explained with the assumption that more environmentally aware travellers would have second thoughts about such tours and were aware of the possible negative impacts the tours might have on the dolphins.

For the data management and analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows 10.0.5) was employed. SPSS is a comprehensive system for data analysis and presentation and is suitable for a wide range from simple descriptive statistics to complex statistical analyses (SPSS Corporation 1997). Factor analysis was
employed for the analysis of the subsets "Experience" and "Environmentalism". Factor analysis 'attempts to account for variation in a number of original variables using a smaller number of index variables or factors' (Manly 1994:12). This grouping of large amounts of variables into meaningful units can ease further data analysis and reporting and displaying results. For the subset "Experience" four factors explained only 54.42% of variance. When the subset "Environmentalism" was submitted to factor analysis, it was split up into sets on the NEP, the EC, and the GEB.

Two factors explained 43.56% of variance in the NEP set, three factors explained 52.36% of variance in the EC set, and 49.51% of variance were explained by four factors in the GEB set. Since the results of the factor analyses were very low (the highest percentage of variance explained was only 54.42% in the "Experience" set), it was decided to use factor analysis solely to identify items that did not fit into the data sets. Due to those problems, the subsets were submitted to factor analysis for each three, four, and five factors. In addition, the NEP set was tested for two factors, and the "Experience" set and the GEB set were tested for six factors. During this procedure, several items continually loaded over two or more factors and therefore did not fit into the set. Those items have been eliminated in order to gain sound subsets. The reduced sets were then tested for reliability. The test resulted in a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.7666 for the "Experience" subset, and 0.7935 for the "Environmentalism" subset. The two coefficients suggest that the results are reliable. Finally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in order to gain overall means for the subsets and relate them to demographic data of the respondents.

The results could not confirm that people with higher environmental values would have a lower on-tour experience. Figure 1 shows this relationship for nationality subgroups. Respondents of all origins do not only have similar environmental values (as previously discussed), but also have similar high experiences. When "environmentalism" and "experience" are compared with a variety of demographic data, such as age, gender, employment status, and education level, the picture is the same: There are no significant differences between certain demographic groups. When plotted in a similar way, all results appeared in the top right quarter of the matrix, which indicates high environmental values and a high on-tour experience.
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**Figure 1: Environmentalism and Experience of different nationalities**

*Note: The frequencies of the clusters "Africa and Middle East" and "Central & South America" (6 and 4, respectively) are not sufficient for reliable data*

![Diagram showing environmentalism and experience of different nationalities.]

**Conclusion**

With an increasing concern for the environment, the world has experienced a shift from the anthropocentric Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) to the ecocentric New Environmental Paradigm (NEP). Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) developed a 12-item scale to measure the extent to which respondents are endorsing this new worldview. They argued that their NEP scale is reliable, valid and uni-dimensional. Several studies over the last 20 years attempted to test this NEP scale and unisono agree to the following points:

1. The NEP scale is **reliable**
2. The NEP scale is **valid**
3. The NEP scale is **not** uni-dimensional.

However, almost all researchers suggest that there is not enough evidence for a definite number of dimensions and further research in that area is recommended.

Three studies applied the NEP in a tourism context. Uysal et al. (1994) tried to find a relationship between the environmental awareness and demographic data, as well as trip behaviour. They concluded "demographics seem to play a minor role in identifying..."
environmentally sensitive travellers. Of greater significance is trip behaviour" (Uysal et al. 1994:283). Ryan (1999) used the scale in order to confirm the hypothesis that wildlife attractions in Australia would appeal to specific market segments. However, he could not find a significant relationship between environmental awareness and attitudes towards wildlife attractions. Finally, the NEP scale was used in order to find a relationship between environmental awareness and the experience on swim-with-dolphins tours in New Zealand. Here, as in Uysal et al.'s (1994) study, demographics did not seem to have an influence on the environmental attitudes.

Both the scores for environmental values and for the on-tour experience were very high and there was no significant difference between any demographic subgroup. It seems as if tourists have higher environmental values than the general population and overall, they endorse the NEP to a large extent. This may have various reasons, for example, the actual experience just before filling in the survey (such as wildlife attractions in Australia or swimming with dolphins in New Zealand). There might also be a higher concern for the environment during holidays in general, because tourists are surrounded by beautiful scenery and wildlife, which raises appreciation and concern. All three studies have been conducted in relatively nature-based areas (national parks, wildlife attractions, and dolphin tours). It can be argued that visitors to those attractions might have a higher environmental awareness in the first place, and therefore endorse the NEP. It is therefore agreed with previous research, that the NEP has to be tested further at different sorts of tourism attractions. When applied at nature-based attractions, the scale seems to be of very limited use.

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COMMUNITY TOURISM GROUPS: DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Environmental policy in Ireland draws on the principles and priorities set out in the National Sustainable Development Strategy, which was endorsed by Government and published in 1997. It recognises that future development in tourism can be sustainable only if the natural assets upon which they depend are protected. Sustainable tourism aims to meet the needs and aspirations of the host area and its people, holiday makers and operators alike in a way which respects them all and those who will follow on.

There are many different government departments and national, regional and local agencies involved directly and indirectly in the promotion and delivery of tourism policies and objectives. There are many community groups and individuals committed to the social and environmental welfare of their localities and communities who are now involved in tourism development as a growing component of economic development.

This paper looks at the importance of local community groups who are involved in the development and protection of tourism through both an international and national case study of community based sustainable tourism development. The first case study examines the positive effects of community involvement in tourism planning and development in the Yulong Snow Mountain Region of China. The second case study examines the power behind pressure from local community groups involved in the protection and sustaining of their areas, through the examination of the '10-year saga' of sustainable rural tourism development in the Burren in North Clare.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been one of the most significant and consistent growth industries in the world. Among all the 'export industries' tourism represents 25% of the international trade services spending. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) estimates that tourism is now the worlds' largest industry, having overtaken both crude and petroleum and motor vehicles to become the number one export earner. Tourism is, therefore, seen as a major contributor to global economic development, creating employment and generating wealth on an international scale. (World Tourism Organisation, 1996)
Overseas tourist visits to Ireland grew by 7% in 1999 to 5.9 million, the eighth successive year of growth, generating £3 billion in total foreign exchange earnings. In the last decade, in fact, tourist visits have grown by 145% (Bord Failte, 2000). The present key priority for Irish tourism policy makers is to maintain existing growth levels for the period 2000-2006 (Quinn, 2000). The development potential of tourism in the new millennium, undoubtedly, offers significant opportunities for the Irish tourism industry.

Tourism growth predictions indicate that our visitor numbers will surpass 8 million per annum by the year 2006 (McDaid, 2000). This rapid growth of tourism in Ireland has brought an increased awareness of the dependence of tourism on the environment and of the importance of sustainable tourism. Signs of congestion in certain specific locations are becoming more evident, but so as. In order to preserve, however, the unique characteristics of Irish tourism, proper management of increasing numbers is necessary. (McDaid, 2000) If poorly planned, developed or managed, tourism can have a number of damaging impacts at local, national and international level.

Two examples of poorly planned developments that had a number of impacts at local and national level are the planned visitors centre in Luggala, County Wicklow, which An Bord Pleanala rejected permission for development, and the centre at Mullaghmore in County Clare. This example of Mullaghmore will be examined more closely later in the paper.

The influence of travel and tourism on a community is significant. Most obviously tourists bring revenue. However, how this revenue is attracted and the people who reap the benefits vary greatly. The way the money is spent and how it is reinvested also varies. Clearly the components of the tourist destination can be effective only if careful planning and management deliver a sustainable tourism product. (Cooper et al, 1993, 86) The environment has an intrinsic value, which outweighs its value as a tourism asset. Its enjoyment by future generations and its long-term survival must not be prejudiced by short-term considerations. In any location harmony must be sought between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community. In a dynamic world some change is inevitable and change can often be beneficial. Adaptation to change, however, should not be at the expense of any of these principles. (Cooper et al, 1993, 87)

This paper will outline the Irish government's view of sustainability and those parties involved in sustainable development. It will also examine the importance of local communities when planning and developing tourism projects for sustainability. The international example of the Yulong Snow Mountain Region in the People's Republic of China shows us the positive effects of tourism development for a region when all parties are involved from national through to local level and how the community themselves can benefit economically from such a venture.

Alternatively, the national example of the sustainable rural tourism development in the Burren in North Clare clearly shows what goes wrong when the proper planning procedures are not adhered to. In April 1991, the Irish government announced the
establishment of a National Park within the south-west region of the Burren and (without consultation) unveiled plans for an associated interpretative centre which it proposed to locate in the heart of this region, close to Mullaghmore Mountain. While the establishment of the park was generally welcomed, the site chosen by the Office of Public Works (OPW) for the centre gave rise to widespread protest, based primarily on concern for the delicate ecosystem of the area.

Sustainable Development
The Government strategy on sustainable development defines sustainable tourism as tourism which:
Provides a high-quality product based on, and in harmony with a high quality natural environment without adverse impacts on local communities, built heritage, landscapes, habitats or species;
Supports social and economic prosperity while protecting and enhancing the cultural and natural environments. (Department of the Environment, 1997)
Structures to improve the delivery of sustainable tourism should involve the cooperation between national, regional and local agencies and the participation of local communities.

National, Regional and Local Agencies

National
National groups generally fall under the auspices of the government umbrella network, some being involved in the planning and development of tourism projects. Bord Failte, An Bord Pleanala, Duchas, The Office of Public Works, An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland), the Heritage Council, LEADER, the Irish Wildlife Federation, Birdwatch Ireland, Friends of the Irish Environment, Irish Peatland Conservation Council etc, are only some of the national bodies involved in sustainable development. Most of these groups have sustainable tourism development and/or conservation of Irish heritage as a key stone to their mission statements.

County
There has been a development of county strategy groups under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) drawing members from the County Enterprise Boards, LEADER groups, County Tourism Committees and some volunteer groups.

County Development Board (CDB)
The new County Development Board (CDB) provide an opportunity for the integration of tourism and environment with other sectors. The CDB draws on the traditional Irish concept of 'meitheal' or working together. The CDB brings together the key players at local level, the public sector agencies, the social partners and most importantly, local communities and the voluntary sector to seek common cause in developing their cities and counties. (Dempsey, Department of the Environment and Local Government Publications, 2001)
County Tourism Committee (CTC)
County Tourism Committees were established in 1993 with the aim of planning, developing and promoting the county as a tourism destination. They are formally incorporated into the regional tourism authorities, although most have become somewhat inactive due to lack of funds and or personnel. An example of this can be seen through the Kildare Tourism Committee focusing on Leixlip. It aims are to promote Leixlip as a prime area to locate new industries and start-up businesses, and as an ideal tourist location and a special place to shop and conduct business.

Local
Policies and objectives cannot be drawn up without the direct involvement of local communities. Area community groups are in the process of being established as part of the County Development Board (CDB) process. These groups should be used to bring together community participants, Udaras na Gaeltachta, representatives of tourism groups and agencies working at local level, as well as representatives of other economic sectors including agriculture, fisheries, aqua-culture, energy, forestry, conservation and others. Such groups would support the work of the CDB working groups. An example of a local community group is the Burren Action Group (BAG).

Burren Action Group (BAG)
BAG evolved as a local response to oppose plans by the Irish National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop a large-scale interpretative centre at Mullaghmore in the Burren, Co. Clare, Ireland.
BAG has consistently argued that visitor facilities should be sited in villages - where there are already existing services and where economic benefits can accrue to the local populations - and not in the sensitive core area of the Burren National Park.

BAG is made up of environmentally conscious people who care for the Burren and have no vested interest. Those involved include local farmers, solicitors, nurses, craft-workers, musicians, teachers, biologists, ecologists, doctors, writers, artists, labourers, homemakers, people without jobs etc., the majority being natives of north Clare.

Importance of Local Community Groups: An International Example
This first case study examines the positive effects of community involvement in tourism planning and development in the Yulong Snow Mountain Region of China. ("Community Based Tourism in the Asia-Pacific" by Michael J. Hutton, 1999).

Yulong Snow Mountain Region

Location and Attraction
The Yulong Snow Mountain Area in Yunnan Province is located in the south central portion of the People’s Republic of China, immediately south of the Tibet Autonomous Region and Sichuan Province. The area is renowned for its breathtaking mountain scenery, some of the best examples of both North and South China architecture, the first bend in the great Yangzi River, one of the world’s deepest gorges, the Naxi culture, numerous Red Hat sect Buddhist monasteries and more. The area includes the historic town of Lijiang, set in a beautiful mountain valley at an altitude of 2,400
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metres. Designated as a “National Town of History and Culture”, Lijiang includes both
an old town and a new town. The former, known locally as Dayan, is of keen interest
to tourists for its narrow, cobbled, criss-crossing streets, gushing canals, well-preserved
architecture including classical wooden buildings, and market life. Situated at the foot
of Lion Hill, Lijiang reflects 700 years of human habitation.

The Development Process
The Yulong Snow Mountain Tourism Development Area was identified in 1993 as
having significant potential for tourism development. Since that time, the provincial
Administrative Committee responsible for the area researched and formulated an
integrated plan for developing the area. Most importantly, this plan respects and
conserves the physical and cultural environments. This committee, with strong city
representation, retains overall responsibility for the large-scale development and
administration of tourist infrastructure and services. In the earlier part of the 1990s, the
area was linked regionally and developed through a variety of infrastructure projects
that included the construction or improvement of roads, electrical capacity,
telecommunications, water supply and sewage disposal. More recently, the emphasis
has been on construction of tourist attractions and facilities within the area. Much of
this has been accomplished through joint ventures with a variety of companies. This
has attracted hundreds of millions of RMB Yuan in capital monies. In 1997, domestic
and foreign tourists to Yulong numbered more than 260,000. Currently, 60% of
regional tourism expenditures are spent in the Yulong Snow Mountain Tourist
Development Area with per capita consumption amounting to some 400 RMB Yuan. 1

Community
The development and construction associated with the Yulong Area has attracted large
capital expenditures and, to date, this has had an important effect on the local economy,
including increased employment and income. Before this development, agriculture and
animal husbandry were the main source of income for almost all residents. Now, with
the advent of tourism, many members of the local communities enjoy increased
personal incomes based either on work done directly for companies involved with
tourism development or, in other cases, as small business entrepreneurs offering
materials and services to these companies. As well, with the increasing number of
tourists, there are more and more opportunities to sell products or services directly to
visitors. Overall, the result has been increasing income and stronger encouragement for
greater community involvement in tourism-related activities. Further, community
involvement is strengthened through local representation on the Administrative
Committee, including appointment of the Steering Committee Director by the City
Government.

Sustainability
In order to continue the development of Yulong Area in an environmentally sound,
stable, and sustainable manner, the Steering Committee and local officials ensure all
construction respects the principle of balancing development with conservation and that

1 1 EUR = 7.55555 RMBY; 1 RMBY = 0.132353 EUR (http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi)
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It is environmentally appropriate and complies with sustainable principles. At the same time, it is critically important that the local communities understand and support the long-term value of sustainable principles.

Before this project, environmental protection was not a priority for many members of the local communities. Too often, forested areas were destroyed for land reclamation, ecologically sensitive sandy areas were indiscriminately misused, and the removal of stones from key tracts created a patchwork effect. All this imposed serious threats to the forests, water and other land resources. Now, with the benefits from tourism apparent, the local communities are obviously, and increasingly, supportive of sustainable development and environmental protection. This outcome has only been made possible by involving the community in the development of tourism and tourism infrastructure, and ensuring they benefit directly.

The Future
Future development must continue to build on the principles of sustainability and community development. So far, the influx of tourists has not had a deleterious effect on the overall natural environment, and there is room for continued growth providing this occurs in a planned and judicious manner. It is critical for future success that the number of tourists does not exceed the carrying capacity of the environment. Similarly, ensuring the local community is directly involved with and benefiting from the tourism activity is fundamental to its purpose.

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Importance of Local Community Groups: A National Example
The second case study examines the power behind pressure from local community groups involved in the protection and sustainability of the Burren in North Clare.

'10-year saga' of Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in the Burren in North Clare

Location
The Burren in Co. Clare is one hundred square miles of unparalleled beauty. This limestone landscape is acknowledged as an area of international importance for its flora, fauna and turlough/water ecology. The district around Mullaghmore represents a unique association of limestone pavement and turloughs, which supports a diversity of rare habitats and flora. In 1988, in recognition of its importance, the state Wildlife
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Service recommended the designation of the area as a Nature Reserve. In April 1991, the Irish government announced the establishment of a National Park within the southwest region of the Burren and (without consultation) unveiled plans for an interpretative centre, which it proposed to locate in the heart of this region, close to Mullaghmore Mountain. While the National Park was generally welcomed, the site chosen by the Office of Public Works (OPW) for the centre gave rise to widespread protest. Objection was primarily based on concern for the delicate ecosystem of the area.

**Development and the Community**

Consequently, early in 1991, the Burren Action Group (BAG) was formed to campaign for the relocation of the centre to a suitable site in or near a village on the periphery of the Burren. From such a site, the impact of visitor numbers could be spread over the whole Burren on a year-round basis, to the advantage of visitors, local people and the environment alike.

Support for this viewpoint has been expressed by every environmental organisation in Ireland, including An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland), the Heritage Council, the Irish Wildlife Federation, Birdwatch Ireland, Friends of the Irish Environment, Irish Peatland Conservation Council, the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, the Irish Federation of Adventure Sports, and Bord Failte. Other concerned individuals included the naturalist and filmmaker, Eamon de Buitlear, the Nobel Prize winning poet, Seamus Heaney, and members of the rock band U2. Internationally, concern has been expressed by the Worldide Fund for Nature (WWFN), Plantlife and, most importantly, by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) who sets standards for the operation of National Parks worldwide.

Subsequently, construction of the interpretative centre was halted by successful court actions initiated by BAG. In the process, the group won valuable changes to Irish planning legislation, bringing the OPW under the same planning application system, as that required of every private citizen. In the spring of 1995, a new Government announced that the planning application for the Centre would be withdrawn and that the partially completed development on site would be dismantled.

**Sustainability**

Work has recently been completed (June 2001) on demolition of the centre and car park at Mullaghmore. One decade after the Mullaghmore controversy first erupted, players from opposing sides met on the site of the ill-fated Mullaghmore interpretative centre to perform the final act in the drama.
Since last February, Government contractors have been busy removing the last remnants of the conflict, demolishing (at a cost of £800,000\(^2\)) the partially completed interpretative centre, car park and sewage treatment works in the shadow of Mullaghmore Mountain. Where the car park and centre once stood, there are now brown fields with grass starting to grow again. Members of the BAG met with representatives of the OPW to ensure the work was being done to their satisfaction. These men, P.J. Curtis and James Howard, were among those protestors who, in 1992, objected to the commencement of the visitors centre on this same site when the first sod was turned by Minister Brendan Daly. Ten years later after a long and hard battle, they witnessed the turning of the 'final sod' and the closing of the final chapter in their successful fight. They say they were "motivated by an almost innocent love of a mountain" in one of the most sensitive areas of the Burren. They fought for the generations to follow to be able to appreciate the area as much as they do. (Deegan, The Irish Times, 9/6/2001)

BAG supports the recommendations outlined in the Draft Burren National Park Study, Draft Strategic Plan for Tourism in the Burren Area and the Heritage Council's policy statement on Management of the Burren National Park. All of these recommendations highlight the need to locate visitor and interpretative facilities, away from the fragile core area of the National Park, in or near gateway villages. In accordance with best national and international planning practice; this would allow for concomitant private development (restaurants, craft centres, etc.), while minimising environmental damage, maximising job creation and the socio-economic benefit to the region (http://www.iol.ie/~burrenag/).

The Future
At the time, back in November 1992, Government agencies didn't need planning permission for their development, and it seemed inevitable that their plans would surge ahead when in December work commenced on the site. In a bid to prevent it being completed, the action group took to the courts, which resulted in the most fundamental change in Irish planning legislation in 30 years.

One of the members of the Burren Action Group, Leilia Doolan, said, "It is a difficult thing taking on the authority of the state and to stand up and say 'this isn't right, you can do it another way'. Changing the law, bringing the State authorities into line with the rest of the citizens so they would now also have to apply for planning permission was a very important and good thing. One of the other satisfying things is that an awful lot of people are a lot more aware of the countryside through this issue." (Deegan, The Irish Times, 9/6/2001)

There already exists an interpretative centre in the village of Kilfenora called the Burren Centre where visitors can explore the geology and geography of the areas, including the rich diversity of Burren flora and fauna and the history of man in his landscape (http://www.Shannonireland.travel.ie/clare/attractio ns.asp). This centre is undergoing refurbishment at the moment.

\(^2\) 1 EUR = 0.787564 IEP; 1 IEP = 1.26974 EUR (http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi)
Conclusion
At both national and international level there is a need for a coherent policy for sustainable tourism in rural areas, which recognises distinct culture and community structures. It is not realistic to assume that these areas can take the overflow from more congested traditional tourism resorts. Instead tourism should be integrated into the local economy and evolve slowly so that the character and identity of the locality is retained.

Tourism as a rapidly expanding economic sector, has potential to bring significant benefits to rural areas, which was evident from the international case study of the Yulong Snow Mountain Area in the People's Republic of China, but it can also bring damaging impacts, such as those in the Burren. Through an integrated strategy for rural development, involving participation by local communities and the co-ordination of policies by the different economic sectors, those impacts can be minimised and the potential of sustainable tourism can be realised.

More importantly, at a national level the Planning and Development Act 2000 will have major implications. An Bord Pleanála now has responsibility for assessing the numerous major infrastructure projects which are due to be carried out under the National Development Plan. There will also be an onus on the Board to ensure that these procedures are carried out with the greatest speed possible while ensuring that the principles of sustainable development are upheld. Apart from the significant range of new functions, the Act will bring important changes in the operation of the existing planning system including the systematic application of the principles of sustainable development.

Appendix 1:
The Battle of Mullaghmore
April 1991 - Government plans unveiled for an interpretative centre at Mullaghmore in the Burren National Park;
December 1992 - Planning permission not needed by the Office of Public Works (OPW) and construction work commences on the project;
February 1993 - Work stops after Burren Action Group secures a High Court injunction. The high Court rules it was unconstitutional for the OPW to be exempt from the Planning Acts. Works rendered illegal;
May 1993 - Supreme Court upholds High Court ruling;
January 1994 - Planning application lodged for centre with a 12.5% reduction in size;
February 1995 - Culture Minister Michael D. Higgins withdraws planning application after fall of Fianna Fail - Labour Government;
October 1996 - Revised plan lodged by Higgins for visitor facilities at Mullaghmore;
September 1998 - Clare Co. Council refuses planning permission after a council vote;
October 1998 - Minister Sile De Valera appeals the decision to An Bord Pleanala;
March 2000 - An Bord Pleanala refuses planning permission on a number of grounds;
July 2000 - Burren Action Group secures High Court order to have the Mullaghmore site restored to its original condition;
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February 2001 - Machinery prevented from gaining access to site by visitor centre supporters. Blockade lifted after intervention of the Taoiseach Bertie Ahearn. DeValera reveals that exploratory talks have opened with Clare Co. Council to identify alternative site for access to the Burren National Park.

May 2001 - Work is completed on demolition of the centre and car park at Mullaghmore.

A more detailed history of this 'Mullaghmore saga' can be obtained from the following web-site: http://www.iol.ie/~burrenag/hist72000.html

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