

Gambian Tourism Experience

Local Economic Development and Livelihood Initiatives

Adama Bah, Gambia Travel Foundation Programme Manager

CONTEXT



Context

Facts

- Population: 1.6 million
- Poverty: 168 /182 countries ranked on the UND Human Development Index (2009)
- 70% of women are engaged in low productivity rural subsistence agriculture
- 76.4% of households employed in the agricultural sector are considered poor
- Over 30% of total export earnings comes from tourism
- And 20% of all private sector formal jobs
- Agriculture and Tourism are two of the main economic activities in The Gambia

Advantages of Tourism in Delivering Pro-Poor Growth

- It is generally labour-intensive – although less than agriculture – and therefore can impact on a large number of lives through the labour market;
- Tourism has considerable potential linkage, especially with agriculture and fisheries, which can minimize the leakage effect. Due to the high income elasticity of demand for international tourism, it can offer a relatively rapidly growing market;
- Tourism provides opportunities for off-farm diversification, particularly in areas that do not attract other types of development options;
- Tourism can provide poor countries with a significant export opportunities where few other options are viable;
- It may create initial demand for a good or service that can itself develop into a growth sector;
- Tourism products can generate demand for assets such as, natural resources and culture, to which the poor often have access;
- Tourism delivers consumers to the product rather than the other way around; and
- Infrastructure associated with tourism development can provide essential services for local communities.

Tourism: Is it developmentally benign?

Whether the benefits of tourism actually remain in poor countries, or reach poor people within them, is hotly disputed.

Our findings in the Gambia through research (Bah & Goodwin,2003 and Faal & Mitchell,2007) and put into practice by NGOs like The Travel Foundation

supports the argument:

- **That all forms of tourism, if practiced responsibly can bring about real positive difference in the livelihoods of the poor;**
- **That all stakeholder have a role to play to make this a reality.**

RT Implementation Strategies

- 2000-2003 Dfid funded pro-poor tourism project linking the informal sector to main stream tourism industry in the Gambia.

<http://icrtwestafrica.org/ResearchandDevelopment.aspx>

- 2000 Birth of ASSET www.asset-gambia.com
- 2003 Birth of RTP
- 2004 Responsible Tourism Policy of the Gambia
- 2005 ICRT-Gambia/ West Africa
- 2005- now: The Travel Foundation funded projects on GiG, informal sector training and “Roots” excursion. www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk



Introduction to “Gambia is Good” (GiG),
a Social Enterprise



Background

2004 *Gambia is Good* starts business as MARKETING Company

Conditions before GiG:






1. Farmers unable to earn decent livings
2. A thriving tourism industry depending almost exclusively on imported produce

After feasibility studies were carried out by Concern Universal in The Gambia, CU joined forces with the UK's leading organic fruit producer, Haygrove, in 2004, to start the *Gambia is Good* (GiG) pro-poor fresh produce marketing company designed to link local farmers with the tourism market.



Supply Side Barrier

2005 The Travel Foundation joined GiG to establish the Gambia is Good Farmyard

-  Maintain market by plugging gaps in local supply
-  Pilot production of new items and varieties
-  Facilitate gradual replacement of imports
-  Demonstrate sustainable practices
-  Strengthen links with tourist industry and generate additional revenue through tourist visits to sustain farm and training cost.



Key Issues



Social enterprise issues









Is GIG a business or development project?



CONTEXT

MAJOR CHALLENGES FARMERS FACE:



-  Limited access to seeds and inputs
-  A long rainy season & tropical climate
-  Little access to training and information
-  Maximum drudgery in water management
-  Low yields, poor quality, & wastage
-  Difficulty in accessing markets



Horticulture Production

GROWERS FOR GAMBIA IS GOOD

Structure and organisation of vegetable gardens

-  North Bank Region: individual gardens (mostly male growers) with ½ to 1 ha in average
-  Western Region: community womens' gardens, 50 to >300 members in each garden



GiG's IMPACT

Improved lives for Farmers

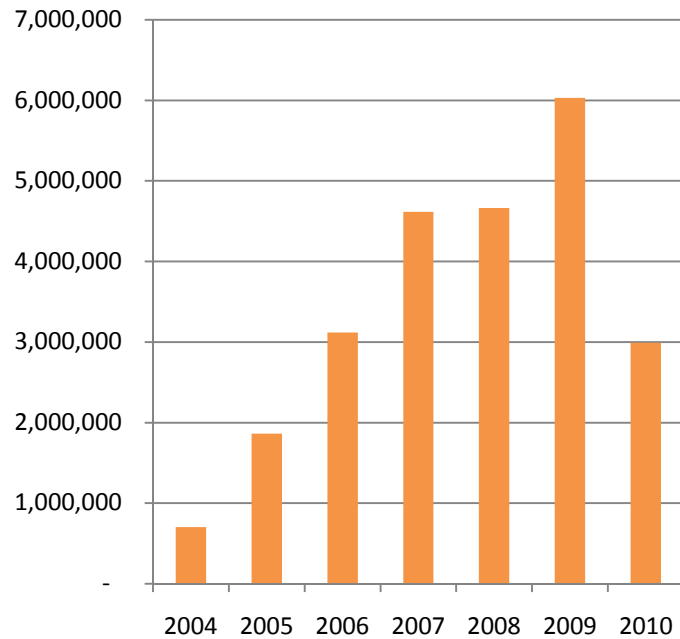
- 🍅 GiG has worked with over 1000 Gambian producers (indirectly benefiting 5000 people), 90% of whom are women
- 🍅 GiG is enabling farmers to move from subsistence to commercial farming.
- 🍅 **7 million dalasi** (approx. **175,000** GBP) directly into the hands of poor Gambian farmers for purchase of over **500 tonnes** of produce
- 🍅 Won 4 international awards including RT award at WTM in London and “To do” at ITB in Berlin

Reduced Imports: GiG has reduced imports and increased consumption of locally grown produce, with benefits to local farmers and the environment



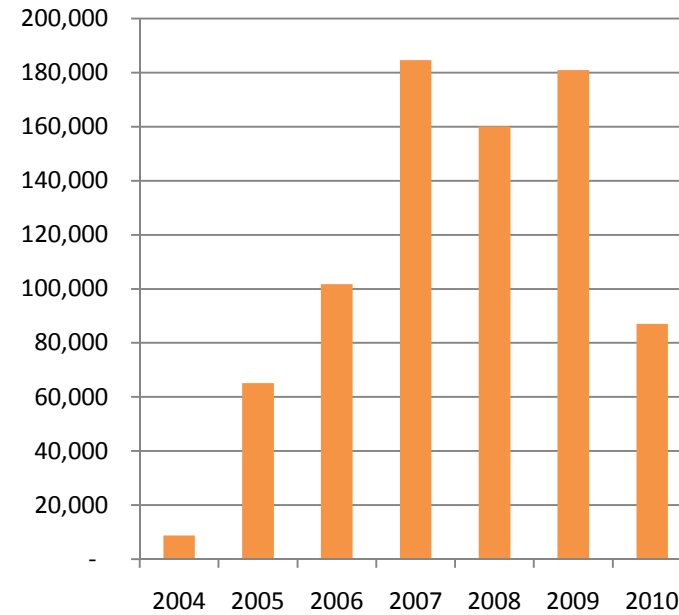
GiG's Impact

Sales Amount (Dalasi)



* 2010: Jan – April

Sales Amount (Kg)



Purchase Breakdown

- Total 2009 GiG purchase breakdown:
 - Import= 44%
 - Locally Produced: 56%
- *As GiG has progressed, only items unable to be grown or seasonally unavailable in Gambia are imported



Other TTF Interventions

“Roots” Project Nov.2008-

Now:

- Jufureh/ Albreda Community of 2000
- 16 local guides trained and paid monthly salary from gate fees of 1.25 GBP/ tourist
- Guides licensed by tourism authority
- 3 additional people on payroll for coordination of project
- So far collected around 20.000 GBP
- Community project to be decided
- Children centre is operating
- Runner up in TIES innovation award
- Craft Vendors trained on new products

OTG Training

70 official Tourist Guides trained

