

global Eye

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**Development Awareness
in Action:**

On the Line 17-19

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War on landmines continues

In March 1999, the Ottawa Convention on the banning of landmines passed into international law. (See 'World News' Global Eye issue 5, Spring 1998).

Speaking on the day the law came into effect, International Development Secretary Clare Short said, "Since Britain signed the Ottawa Convention just over a year ago, we have been working with the international community to help rid the world of the scourge of landmines. Mines are a hindrance to development, and a lethal threat to civilians. They affect nearly 100 countries, including many of the poorest in the world."

The British Government has pledged to double expenditure on humanitarian mine action, including the development of new technology to make mine clearance safer and more effective. Despite the efforts put in by many governments, action against mines has been very slow in some countries, particularly those which are still affected by conflict. Clare Short said that the international community has to improve the way it works together, to target resources more effectively and bring about real benefits for many people.

Assistance increasing

Figures released in June show that the UK is fulfilling its pledge to increase its assistance to the developing world. The report shows that Britain's official development assistance to the developing world rose by 8% in 1998, to £2.3 billion. The UK is now the world's fifth largest aid donor, with only Japan, the United States, France and Germany contributing more.

A Global Embrace

On 2nd October 1999 the World Health Organisation is holding a Global Embrace, to mark the launch of the International Year of Older Persons. A series of walks and events will be being held all across the world to celebrate. The first events will be held in the countries of the Pacific, where the international date line marks the start of a new day. After this events in time zone after time zone will get underway, forming a ring around the world. The last events of the day will again be held in the Pacific, to show that the embrace has come full circle...

School linking

The British Government is supporting plans to give every school in the UK the chance to become involved in a linking programme with schools in the developing world. It is believed that as well as being popular with pupils, school links provide a useful way to exchange ideas and views about the world. For further information visit the "windows on the World" website (www.wotw.org.uk) or contact the British Council on tel: 0171 389 4383.

Once known as Upper Volta, **Burkina Faso** “the homeland of the people” or “country of the incorruptibles” gained its **independence** from **France** in **1960** before changing its name in 1984. A landlocked country, it lies south of the **Sahara Desert**, half way between the equator and Tropic of Cancer and shares its borders with **Mali**, the **Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin** and **Niger**. At 274.000 km² it is slightly larger than the UK.

The **north** of the country forms part of the **Sahel** region of Africa, a semi-arid area of thorn bushes and grasses. This gives way to savanna in the central plateau area and then damper, more humid conditions of **savanna** and forest to the south, as you move nearer to the equator. The **three** main tributaries of the **River Volta** – the **Black, Red** and **White** – flow through the country, joining in the south at **Lake Volta** in Ghana.

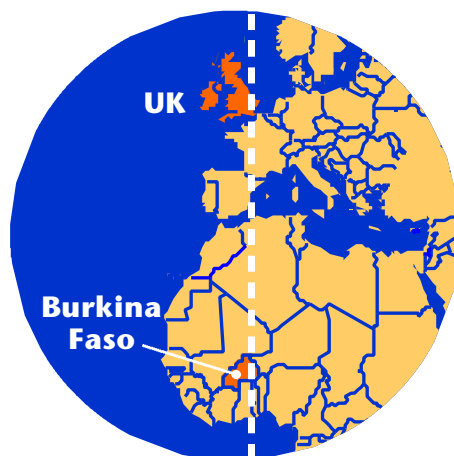
There are over **60** different **ethnic** groups in Burkina Faso, most with their own language. **French** is the official common language, used mainly in urban areas. With few natural resources the majority of the people rely on **agriculture**.

People	Burkina Faso	UK
Human Development Index (HDI)	171st (of 174)	10th
Population (million)	11.0	58.5
Population Density (per km ²)	36.0	244.0
Urban Population (%)	16.9	89.3
Life Expectancy (years)	44.4	77.2
Infant Mortality (per 1,000)	110.0	6.0
Education		
Adult Literacy (%)	20.7	99.0
In Primary Education (%)	32.3	99.9
Economic, Health and Social		
GNP (US \$ per capita)	250	20,870
TVs (per 1000 people)	6	612
Radios (per 1000 people)	28	1,433
Daily Calorie Intake	2,137	3,237

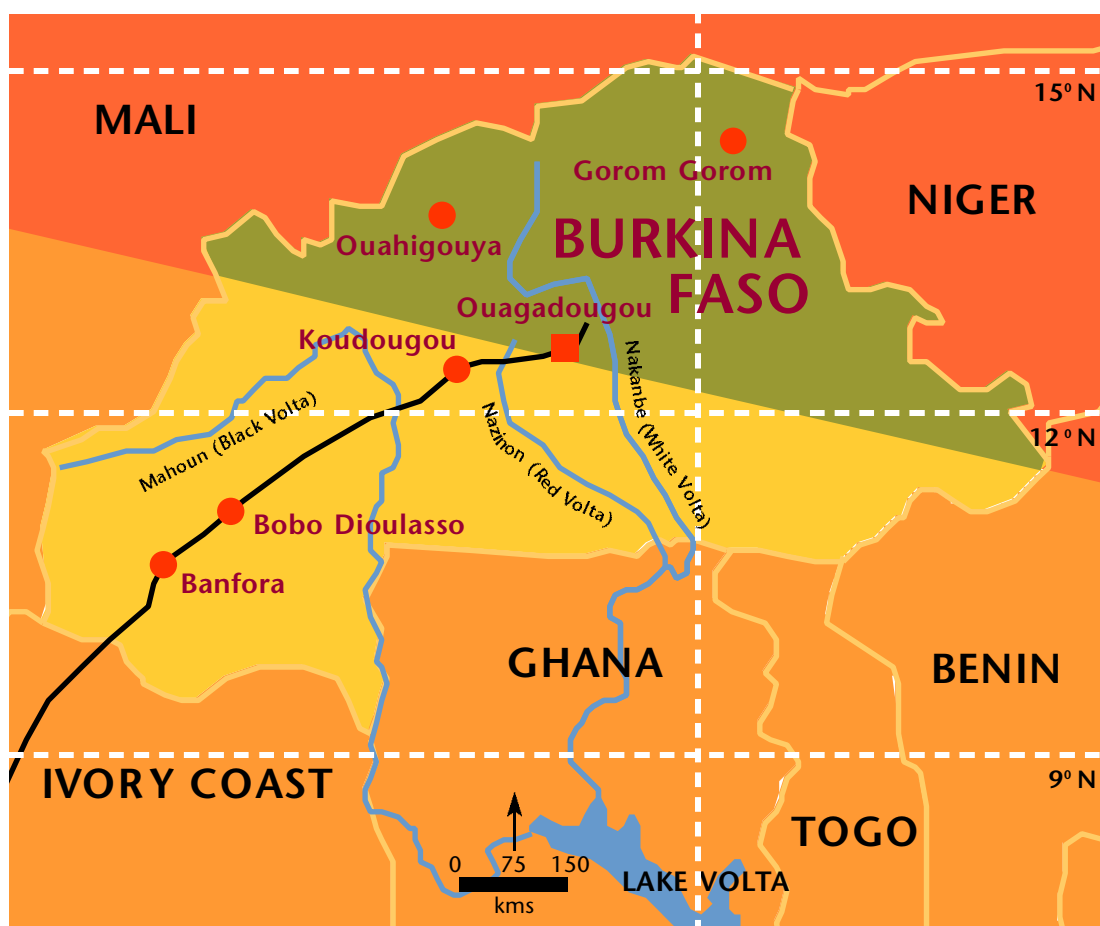
Source: UN Human Development Report, 1998.

Burkina Faso:

- like the UK, is located on the Prime Meridian (0 degrees longitude)
- is one of the world's poorest and least developed countries
- hosts FESPACO, the Pan-African Film Festival, and SIAO (International Craft Show) in alternate years.



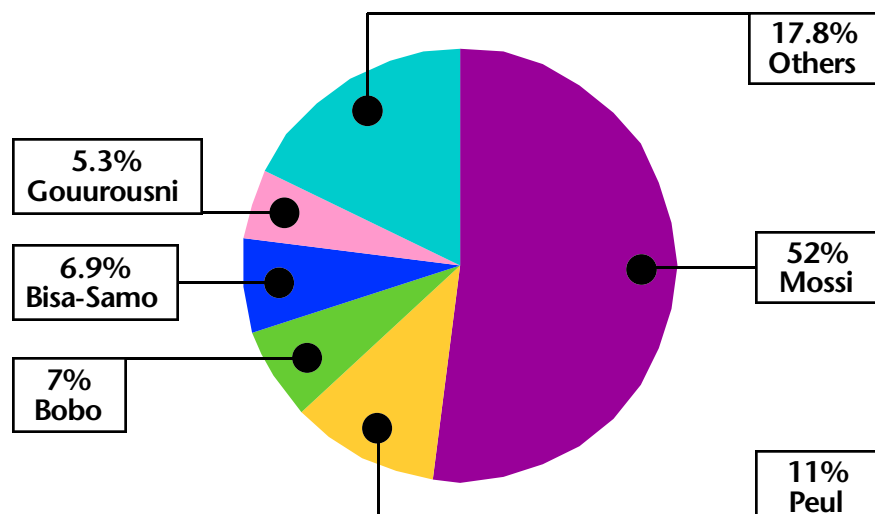
BURKINA FASO



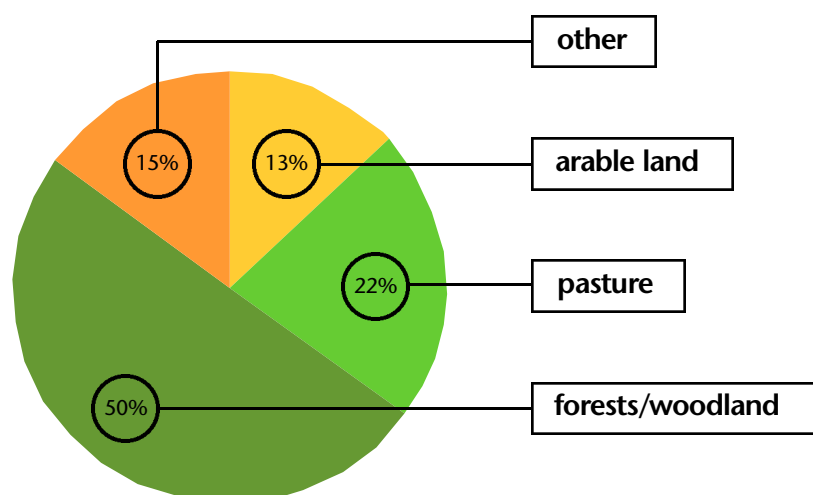
- KEY:**
- Capital City
 - Town
 - Sahel region
 - Railway

BURKINA FASO

Largest Ethnic Groups



Land Use %



Employment %

Burkina Faso



UK



■ Agriculture
 ■ Industry
 ■ Services

People

Burkina Faso is one of the smallest yet most densely populated countries of West Africa. Most people live in the central area around Ouagadougou, with the drought-prone Sahel region to the north gradually becoming empty and deserted.

The people of Burkina Faso are called the Burkinabe, and are made up of over 60 different ethnic groups. Of these, the largest group are the Mossi, comprising 52% of the population, centred on the capital city and surrounding region. The Peul and Tuareg live to the north, the Gouurounsi and Lobo to the south and the Bobo concentrated to the south west.

As the population increases it puts even greater pressure on the land and its limited resources. Work other than in farming is hard to find and up to 20% of the population, usually males, migrate to adjoining countries e.g. the Ivory Coast and Ghana, in search of work. Much of this is seasonal migration, but a significant proportion do not return.

International Events

Every second year since 1969, Ouagadougou (the capital city) has hosted FESPACO, Africa's major film and television festival. The most recent festival was held in February and March 1999. Thousands of visitors, journalists, film producers and TV programme makers from 85 countries took part. Over 400 films from more than 50 countries were shown and prizes awarded by international juries.

Alternating with FESPACO (in even-numbered years) is both a National Culture Week and SIAO, the largest arts and crafts festival held in Africa. Over 100,000 people from across the world visit the festival to see the great range of African arts and crafts on view. This includes pottery, weaving, leather crafts and silver goods. All three events produce a carnival atmosphere with music, dancing and entertainment in the streets – bringing money to local people and traders.

In 1998 the finals the African Nations Cup were held in Burkina Faso, attracting national football teams and visitors from 16 African countries. Despite its low HDI ranking, Burkina Faso has become the host nation for a wide range of cultural, entertainment and sporting events for the African continent.

Health

Health is a major issue and major problem. Poverty is the main factor contributing to poor health, with an estimated 55% living below the poverty threshold. Malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and measles and limited access to doctors and medical services are the principle causes of the very high mortality rate (110). Almost 50% of children are malnourished; the average distance to a clinic is 30 kms and the ratio of doctors to people is 1:35,000.

Meningitis and AIDS epidemics have been responsible for many deaths, but insects are the prime carriers of many of the other diseases affecting large numbers of the population. The damper and more humid south provides ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes (malaria), blackfly (river blindness) and tsetse flies (sleeping sickness). Not only do these cause death or illness, they make large areas of urgently needed productive, fertile, farmland unusable.

Whilst malaria and sleeping sickness look set to remain long term problems, the World Health Organisation (WHO) programme to wipe out onchocerciasis (river blindness) has proved to be very successful. In 1974 a campaign was launched to try to wipe out the blackfly responsible for onchocerciasis, affecting more than 20 million people at that time including almost 10% of the population of Burkina Faso. In February this year the WHO held a week of celebrations to publicise the almost complete eradication on the disease in West Africa.

Although there are still small areas of infestation, the WHO are optimistic that the disease has now been controlled by spraying blackfly breeding sites and by the use of a new drug (ivermectin). It should also allow people to farm on these important areas of land.

Education

Levels of school enrolment and literacy are very low. Only 32% of children go to primary school. There is also a great gender imbalance – of those in school, two thirds are boys and just one third girls with an even higher differential in rural areas. Class sizes are frequently 60 or more, with very few resources or facilities. Less than 10% of children attend secondary school. Not surprisingly, the overall literacy rate of 20% is very poor and is much lower for women than men.

The government has set itself targets to improve these figures. By 2005 it aims to have 60% of children attending primary school and a literacy figure of 50%. Since 1993 a scholarship programme has been running to try to encourage more girls into education. In addition, satellite community schools have been set up in more remote rural areas to teach basic reading, writing and numeracy. 60% of schools now offer one meal a day to pupils.

40% of primary school teachers are not trained or qualified. Numbers are especially high in rural areas where recruitment is even more difficult. The aim is to have at least one trained teacher in each school, but finding sufficient funding for this and to improve the education system is a major problem.

Case study 1

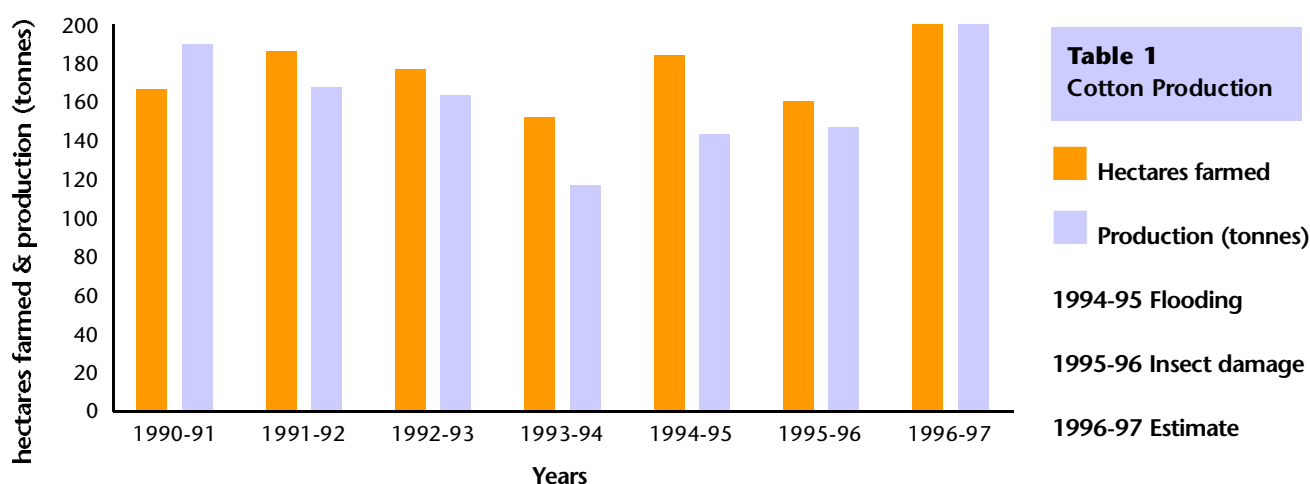
Agriculture in Burkina Faso

90% of all jobs and 50% of total export income in Burkina Faso comes from agriculture. The majority of people are subsistence farmers; people farming to feed themselves. The main crops are millet, maize, sorghum and rice plus vegetables and fruits. Goats, cattle and sheep are the main livestock. Cash crops are also grown e.g. shea nuts (karite nuts) to produce vegetable oil; groundnuts; cashews and sesame seeds. Much of the country's shea nut crop is bought by Mars, a major TNC (Transnational Company), for use in making chocolate.

In recent years other cash crops like cotton and sugar cane have become important. Cotton accounts for half of Burkina Faso's exports (by value) and over a third of its GNP. The main cotton producing area is between Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulassa. There have been great efforts to increase production in the past 10 years but, despite increasing the amount of land being planted, this has not been very successful (see Table 1). Flooding, a drop in world prices and insect damage have all contributed to this. However, the aim is to try to double production by the next millennium by better management, higher prices and more efficient pest control.

Conditions for farming are difficult with a long dry season and a short rainy season (mid-May to mid-September). In recent years rainfall has been very unreliable. Unusually heavy rainfall led to flooding in 1994, seriously disrupting the cotton crop. In 1996 and 1997 widespread drought meant that 67,000 tonnes of emergency food aid had to be brought in to deal with subsequent food shortages. Large areas in the south are infested by blackfly which cause river blindness, so much fertile land has not been able to be cultivated.

Whilst unreliable rainfall and poor soils make farming very difficult, it is the problems brought by rapid population growth which are causing most concern. Land and resources are coming under intense pressure as the population grows.



Case study 2

Pressures on the Land

Map 1 shows the Sahel, a semi-arid region on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert stretching across Africa. In the past it has been possible to farm the land, despite its poor soils and lack of water. However, from 1960 to 1980, a period of below average rainfall occurred (during 1983-84 almost no rain fell). This created drought conditions across the region, causing an estimated 100,000 deaths and leading to widespread migration.



map 1 The Sahel region

Many people worried that this process of “desertification” would continue to spread, leaving former marginal farmland unusable. Links to possible global warming created fears that with higher temperatures rainfall totals would remain permanently low. In fact, rainfall in this region is notoriously unreliable and the drought years had followed a 15 year period of higher rainfall when farming was quite good.

Almost half of Burkina Faso (the north) falls within the Sahel region. A number of climatic and human factors have led to land degradation in the last 25 years including:

- **rapid population growth – total almost doubled since 1975**
- **increasing number of goats, sheep and cattle leading to overgrazing**
- **more intensive use of (often poor) land for crops, leading to overcultivation, soil exhaustion and infertility**
- **deforestation – 60% trees lost since 1980 (many of them cut down for fuel)**
- **soil erosion as removal of trees and vegetation expose it to the winds (an average of 15 tonnes of soil lost per hectare per year)**
- **unreliable rainfall causing a drop of 20 metres in the water table**
- **when rain does fall it is very heavy, difficult to capture and store and can cause further soil erosion via surface run off**

20 years ago a cheap, simple but effective method to reduce soil erosion was introduced to Burkina Faso. The scheme was set up by OXFAM, encouraging farmers to build a series of small stone walls called diguettes in their fields. The walls acted like small dams, preventing surface run off and allowing rain to sink into the soil. A transparent piece of plastic tubing containing water and fixed to two uprights helped work out the slope of the land and walls were then built along the natural contours. In places this has increased yields by up to 50%.

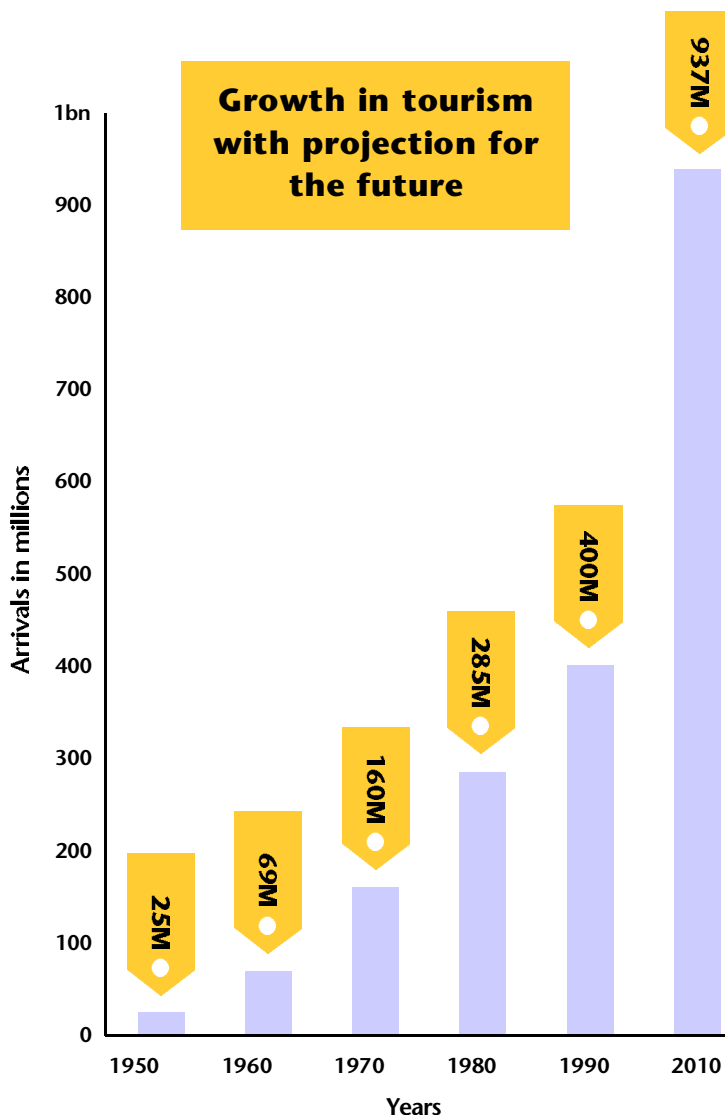
Soil and water conservation, alternative fuel supplies, higher yielding, more drought-resistant crops, precise targeting of overseas aid plus use of the FEWS (Famine Early Warning System) to predict food shortages are all factors which may help keep marginal farmland productive or help Burkina Faso respond quickly in years when rainfall is low.

Domestic tourism

going on holiday within your own country

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) 10% of the world's workforce is employed in the tourist industry. Tourism is proving increasingly popular throughout the world and numbers of both domestic and international travellers are growing rapidly. The WTO estimates that international tourism alone will increase by a minimum of 4% each year well into the 21st century. With such demands the tourist industry is being forced to expand, providing economic opportunities for many people, but also dangers for the natural environment.

Most countries have a tourist industry, and for many, especially those in less economically developed areas, tourism is an increasingly important economic activity. In 1996, for example, trips by international tourists to developing countries made up almost 30% of the global total. In many less economically developed countries (LEDs) domestic tourism is also expanding rapidly.



International tourism

going on holiday outside your own country

Why do people go on holiday?

A good holiday means different things to different people. For many, the ingredients of a good holiday can be found in developing countries with:

- **plenty of sunshine**
- **beautiful scenery**
- **wonderful beaches**
- **a different culture to explore**
- **low prices for accommodation, food, goods and services.**

Given all these factors, it is not surprising that in spite of often costly air fares, more and more people are travelling on long-haul holidays to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

To cut costs and make organising a holiday easy, people often book package tours. Like any industrial process, package holiday firms keep costs down by buying in bulk and bargaining for 'good deals' for their customers. A package holiday will include travel, accommodation, eating and entertainment arrangements so that customers do not have to worry about anything themselves. Many people feel safer travelling to foreign countries if they go as part of a package.

Case study 1

Package holidays in The Gambia

Package holiday companies from many European countries bring clients to The Gambia, in West Africa. On its northern beaches there are around 20 resort hotels. Most of The Gambia's holiday visitors come between November and April, when it is winter in Europe, and they generally stay in the coastal resort area. Here, facilities they would find at home, such as running water, electricity and telecommunications, are available. Elsewhere in The Gambia, people have far less access to such facilities. Poverty is widespread, with people struggling to meet basic needs of food, drink and shelter.

Package tourists are often very shocked when they are faced with the difference between their own standard of living and that of the locals they meet. Gambians themselves are well aware of this difference and they see tourism as a way of improving the national economy and raising their own standards of living.

Some Gambians find ways of making money by approaching tourists personally, for example the 'bomsas', boys who befriend tourists and offer their services as informal guides, and the hawkers who sell crafts outside the hotels. Others, who have the necessary money start larger businesses, such as hotels, restaurants and craft shops. Foreign tour firms then use these businesses as part of their package holidays. The hotels are guaranteed a certain number of guests each season, but in return the hotel is committed to providing a level of service which its foreign visitors will accept, from the cleanliness of the rooms, to the taste of the food in the restaurants. The tour firm also decides when holidaymakers will visit. In the case of The Gambia this means that there are very few tours in the 'wet' season between May and October, when most hotels stand empty or are closed.

Some tourists pay their package firm to go on excursions to other parts of The Gambia, but tourists on a package have little chance to explore for themselves. What they see and do has been chosen for them, and this often includes which shops they go to and what they are offered to buy as souvenirs.

For local people, package tourism means that a large number of visitors from abroad come on a regular basis, bringing in money and boosting government taxes. Tourists visiting places such as the national nature reserve in The Gambia help to pay for conservation projects, protecting the country's wildlife. But package firms can push prices down in their bid to get the best deals, so that hotels make very little profit. The Gambia competes with many other 'winter sun' destinations offering the same kind of holiday, so hotel owners feel unable to demand the payments they need from the package firms, in case the companies decide to take their clients elsewhere.

Since package tourists require special facilities, available only on the coast, the percentage of people in The Gambia employed in tourism is very low. Most employment is only for part of the year because package firms will not bring tourists in the 'wet' season.

If a country can provide most of the things needed by the package tour industry, this form of tourism brings many benefits. But if, like The Gambia, only a small region of the country can provide the goods and services required, package tourism does not bring improvement to the lives of most people.

Case study 1

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is defined in many different ways. If you look in travel brochures, you will find it used to describe holidays taking people to unspoiled places, with the aim of seeing wildlife or special landscapes – in other words, it is often used as just a new name for holidays in rural, often exotic, settings.

But ecotourism is more than this. It is about a special kind of tourism that can help rural communities improve their lives while conserving the natural resources they depend on.

The word 'ecotourism' was first invented to describe tourism projects in Central America. Tourists wanted to see the plants and wildlife of the rainforest, so they paid people in remote villages to stay in locally-built accommodation. Conservation and development groups realised that this was a good way of protecting precious environments while bringing much needed money into poor communities. Now all over the world people are using this model to make a living from tourism.

When ecotourism is used for community development, it is

- **Small-scale**
- **Controlled by local people**
- **Directly benefiting local people and wildlife**
- **Using local resources sustainably – without straining or polluting the environment**
- **Educating as well as entertaining tourists and visitors.**

Ecotourism depends on getting the balance between what tourists and local people expect from each other just right, whilst also finding a successful way of attracting the right number of tourists for the size of the enterprise. Ecotourism like this is a partnership between the people who live in a special area, the tour operators who bring tourists to them, and the tourists themselves. Everyone benefits from the partnership, and so too does the natural environment.

Case study 2

Ecotourism in Namibia

Tourism in Namibia is currently the country's third largest industry, after mining and agriculture. In 1997 more than 500,000 tourists visited Namibia, an 18% increase on the year before. By 2002, it is estimated that 770,000 tourists will be arriving in Namibia every year. Such huge increases offer many benefits to the people of Namibia, but also potential problems.

The Government of Namibia see community-based tourism and ecotourism as the best way to cope with the growing number of visitors. However, to be successful they must

- **Conserve the country's wildlife and natural environments**
- **Ensure careful land-use and planning, especially in wilderness areas**
- **Support efforts of people in rural communities to develop tourism in their local areas**
- **Educate tourists to respect Namibia's people and fragile environment**

A good example of community-based tourism is the project at Purros in Kunene, Northern Namibia. In the 1970s poachers killed all of the elephants near this small desert community. Then, in 1986 the first elephant for ten years was seen. In order to re-establish elephants in the area the cooperation of the local people was vital.

A two day meeting was held, at which it was agreed that tourists would be allowed to visit the area, only if they travelled with one specific safari company and each paid a levy to the community. The local head men would then distribute the money equally. The scheme proved to be very successful, and in 1989 a second, much larger tour company also agreed to pay a levy to bring visitors to the area.

By 1994, earnings from such levies and sales of local craft items reached N\$70,000 (£15,000). There are now ten elephants living in the area.

Even those local people who used to be against the return of the elephants and other wildlife, can see that they are a valuable source of income. One head man said, "We live well with the elephants. They are like our cattle because they bring us money from the tourists who come to see them".



On the Line is an **international millennium project** set up by Oxfam, Channel 4 and the WWF (World Wildlife Fund for Nature). The original idea came from Channel 4's **Jon Snow** who wanted to link **people, places** and **wildlife** in the **eight countries**, two polar regions and oceans along the prime meridian. The eight countries are the UK, France, Spain, Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo and Ghana.

DFID has allocated major funding to the On the Line schools programme, aiming to raise support and awareness for international development targets, notably halving world poverty by 2015.

There are opportunities for schools and the wider community to join in a great range of activities, events and links; use and interact with the On the Line web site and receive a regular newsletter and other information. Over 5,000 schools have registered so far. The main organisations involved have worked together to bring you the programme outlined below:

- WWF have produced a range of teaching and learning materials for pupils in primary and secondary school under the title Swallows On the Line. These include a photopack, books, and data on a CD Rom. There will also be an Internet race and debate in the year 2000.
- The Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges (part of the British Council) is helping the On the Line by arranging links or partnerships between UK schools and schools in other On the Line countries.
- Oxfam have produced "Put Yourself On the Line", a free guide for teachers aimed at taking pupils beyond a concern about global issues to taking an active part and becoming active Global Citizens
- Grants have been given to almost 30 local millennium projects, each involving up to 100 schools. For example, schools in Kings Lynn will be working with True's Yard Fishing Museum exploring sustainable fishing On the line from the Wash to Ghana's Gold coast.
- VSO are organising 11 artists residences with artists from countries on the line with clusters of UK schools
- Christian Aid are linking communities On the Line. Some allotment holders in Glasgow have already linked with market gardeners in Mali.
- Newcastle based Folkworks are running a programme linking musicians in Shetland, Newcastle, France, Spain and Burkina Faso
- A free guide for Youth Workers, "Youth On the Line", is being produced by ActionAid and could be useful for sixth form work.
- Channel 4 is broadcasting a range of TV programmes throughout the Autumn Term, including First Edition presented by Jon Snow .

<http://www.ontheline.org.uk>

ON
THE
LINE

Much of the work of On the Line can be found on their web site. The site is divided into 5 main sections:

- **action**
- **exploration**
- **schools**
- **entertainment**
- **on the line explained**

On **July 15th** On the Line held an **online** chat day with **Jon Snow**. A Ghanaian school was amongst the many schools who took part – here are some of the questions ... and replies:

Duncan:

In your job you must meet many politicians and world leaders – do you feel you can use this privileged status to change things for the better ?

Viv:

Jon – you sound incredibly enthusiastic and inspired – how so ?

Maame Boakyewaa Ofori-Awuah:

Since you came up with this idea, will you visit all the countries on the line ?

Jon Snow:

I do. And partly trying to get On the Line going I have been using and abusing my access to people like Clare Short, Robin Cook and Kofi Annan to get things moving. So far it's going pretty well. And yes, I do think that any of us can change the world for the better, especially if we plug into On the line !

Jon Snow:

Because I was lucky enough at the age of 18 to be sent to Uganda on VSO and as a sheltered, under-aware, globally-challenged lad, this experience completely changed my life ! I only became a journalist to try to get sent to Africa again (successfully). I think On the Line can enable people online to have some of the experiences I had. But that sounds very personal; there's lots more besides that!

Jon Snow:

Yes I hope to go to the African end of on the line in September to make a film and I've already been to France and Spain. So by the end of the Autumn I should have been all the way along the line.

On the Line... at the **Global Cafe**

One organisation actively involved in promoting the '**On the Line**' project is the **Global Cafe**, part of the **Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)**. They are organising a range of activities from October, **focusing on Ghana**. Some of the planned events include:

- work based around the Oxfam 'Give it up for Ghana' campaign. The theme for this campaign is fair trade and will focus on cacao farmers in Ghana. This is particularly aimed at secondary schools, looking at how cacao is grown, produced and traded between Ghana and the UK. There will be a display in the Global Cafe of work produced.
- an exhibition of crafts, textiles and artefacts, plus a video to show the rich diversity of Ghanaian culture will also be displayed in the Global Cafe.
- a workshop and tournament for the traditional African game 'Oware', a game also used to help teach basic numeracy to children in Ghana.
- a feast with traditional Ghanaian storytelling and food.

As food is part of everyone's everyday life a cafe is a good way to highlight the environmental and development issues which surround food across the world. The Global Cafe aims to teach people about the issues facing developing countries and the effect that individuals can have on them. It sells food made from fairly traded, locally produced and organic ingredients. Public workshops and activities are also held and there are regular exhibitions of art from different countries and cultures.

RISC (a development education centre) also have a large shop specialising in fairly traded and environmentally friendly products, a book shop, resources centre and workshop / meeting areas.