



THE 85th TAOYAKA PROGRAM SEMINAR



Speaker:

Dr. Joseph M. Cheer

Lecturer, Graduate Tourism Program

Director, Australia & International Tourism Research Unit (AITRU)

National Centre for Australian Studies, Faculty of Arts, Monash University

モナシュ大学 人文科学部 講師

オーストラリア国際観光研究ユニット 取締役

“Cruise Tourism in a Remote Small Island – High Yield and Low Impact?”

Abstract: For the peoples of remote islands in the Vanuatu archipelago, cruise tourism promises opportunities for economic diversification, development and linkage to the mainstream economy. Yet despite several decades of cruise ship visits, the development of long-term legacies and evidence of advances in living standards remains unconvincing. The rhetoric from policy makers and the tourism sector promotes the notion that cruise tourism is generally ‘high yield and low impact’ at ports-of-call in Pacific island countries. However, this contradicts the experience of unconvincing development outcomes from cruise tourism. In-depth, ethnographic fieldwork from 2010 to 2014 at a number of ports-of-call in Vanuatu was conducted. This paper raises questions concerning what the proceeds of cruise tourism have been dedicated toward and exactly who the primary beneficiaries have been. The question of corporate social responsibility of cruise tourism operators echoes. The cruise industry has made recent overtures to promote its commitment to sustainable cruise tourism development demonstrating a renewed focus to ensuring more meaningful community participation. In theory, this bodes well for islanders in remote locations. However, providing answers as to how cruise revenues are deployed for optimum community benefit remains elusive given the lack of transparency, enduring governance deficits, and the failure to link cruise tourism to beneficial long-term community legacies. Quasi attempts by the cruise sector and development aid donors to enact corporate social responsibility initiatives hold little credibility and is more or less an attempt at quelling community concerns in the short term, and retaining privileged access to ports-of-call in the medium to long term.

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Room 204, K Building, Faculty of Integrated Arts and Sciences, Hiroshima University

広島大学総合科学部K棟204 〒739-8521 広島県東広島市鏡山1-7-1

Contact :

Taoyaka Program Office, Hiroshima University

E-mail: taoyaka-program@office.hiroshima-u.ac.jp

Website: <http://taoyaka.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/english/>