



# **ATLAS Annual Conference 2023**

**Quality of Life: Health, Tourism and Climate**

**Bad Gleichenberg, Austria**

**October 10-13, 2023**

**ABSTRACT BOOK**

**FH | JOANNEUM**  
University of Applied Sciences

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## Organizers

The ATLAS Annual Conference 2023 is organised by ATLAS and FH Joanneum, University of Applied Science, Austria



## Supported by



# Introduction

Bad Gleichenberg is located in the southeast of Styria, nestled in rolling hills, surrounded by vineyards, and surrounded by seven thermal spas. Located in the destination “Thermal and Volcanic Land ([www.thermen-vulkanland.at/en](http://www.thermen-vulkanland.at/en)), the campus of FH JOANNEUM Bad Gleichenberg is the ideal place to study topics of health, well-being, sports, and tourism. Around 360 students appreciate the family atmosphere, the high quality of life and study, and the region's culinary offerings. Like the bachelor's and master's degree programs on offer, the conference theme also fits in perfectly with the gentle hilly landscape and mild climate.

## Quality of Life: Health, Tourism, and Climate

The ATLAS Conference 2023 is intended to provide a multi-perspective view of tourism and its relation to a wide range of burning contemporary issues. It means to address such questions as:

- How does tourism impact the quality of life of those who work within the industry and the people in the communities in it?
- How are health and tourism-related—not just in the context of health and medical tourism, but also in connection with ways in which tourism may be health-promoting (or not)?
- How can the economic health of communities, particularly demographically and infrastructurally disadvantaged ones, for example, in rural areas, be enhanced by tourism?
- How will climate change impact the health of the tourism industry?
- What is necessary for “healthy” tourism development?

The Bad Gleichenberg campus has state-of-the-art technology to guarantee a smooth conference process. The large Audimax can accommodate 220 people. In addition, two lecture halls, seven seminar rooms, and two IT rooms offer enough space for workshops during the conference.

## Our motto: we practice what we preach (and teach)

### Sustainable oriented conference

One of the ways we hope to practice what we preach is to organize the conference as a “sustainable oriented event”. We will do as much as we can to avoid producing waste, whether it be in a digital-only version of the book of abstracts and the conference schedule (in the form of an app), digital signage, or sourcing all beverages locally in returnable bottles. Catering will be done by local firms using regional, organic ingredients, also because doing so can significantly reduce waste. We will also encourage conference participants to travel to the event in as sustainable a way as possible by explaining public transportation options and encouraging transport pooling. We will also provide those traveling by air with information about how to buy CO2 compensation. Keynote speakers who would normally need to travel from overseas to attend will be given the option of sharing their keynotes via video stream. In keeping with the principle of doing good and talking about it, during the conference itself, we will make specific reference to how the conference has been organized to encourage others to follow our example.

## Keynote Speakers



*Susanne Becken*

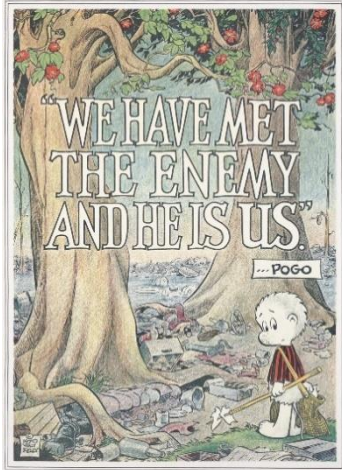
Susanne Becken is a Professor of Sustainable Tourism at Griffith University in Australia and a Principal Science Investment Advisor in the Department of Conservation, New Zealand, where she works at the science-policy interface. Her research focuses on the tourism-environment nexus with particular focus on tourism resource use, climate change, regeneration and resilience, and tourism

policy. Susanne is a member of the Air New Zealand Sustainability Advisory Panel, the Travalyt International Advisory Group, and the New Zealand Tourism Data Leadership Group. She is an elected Fellow of the International Academy of the Study of Tourism and a UNWTO Ulysses Award recipient.

### **Confronting Climate Breakdown and Human Stupidity**

July 2023 was the hottest month on record; about 1.5°C warmer than the pre-industrial average for 1850-1900. Climate experts are now referring to a climate breakdown, Hothouse Earth and the era of 'climate boiling'. Yet, very little progress is being made in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to the level that would minimise the risks of 'dangerous climate change'. Moreover, the contribution to the calamity of planetary crisis shows profound inequalities, both historically in terms of cumulative emissions and presently due to skewed distribution of wealth and behaviours of excess. Climate (in)justice is nowhere more apparent than in the case of global air travel; an activity that contributes about 3% of global emissions but is only enjoyed by 11 percent of global population (4% of people fly internationally). A focus on aviation as a significant contributor to global climate change reveals an unfettered growth agenda, put forward by industry and governments alike, that lacks adequate and genuine efforts to curb emissions compatible with a low carbon future. Resistance to change, pluralistic ignorance and wishful thinking amongst all stakeholder groups combine fuel a persistent push back against interventions that might constrain the aviation systems' trajectory of growth; ironically often justified through aviation's purported contribution to sustainable development. The idea of 'compensating' aviation emissions through carbon offsets, the institutionalised notion of 'carbon neutral growth' and the unrealistic expectations of 'sustainable aviation fuels' are all forms of green gaslighting orchestrated by key aviation actors. Whether greed, complacency or convenience, false 'solutions' to climate change abound; not only in aviation. As these solutions defer real action, whilst consuming valuable resources in the meantime, they contradict the precautionary principle and undermine global progress on a just transition to net zero emissions by 2050. Improved flows of accurate information are essential in addressing such collective stupidity, but they will not be enough to turn around humanity's propensity to self-destruct. Instead, a profound recalibration of human's relationship with nature – of which

humans are part of (!) – along rapid decoupling of wellbeing from materialism where ‘less is more’ – may be more promising. Staring the beast in the eye, speaking truth to power, accepting climate grief, and opening up to the possibility of spiritual regeneration, all provide personal anchor points in an otherwise paralysing dread. Giving up is not an option.





*Harald A. Friedl*

Dr. Harald A. Friedl is Assoc. Professor for Ethics and Sustainability in Tourism at FH JOANNEUM - University of Applied Sciences, Institute for Health and Tourism Management in Bad Gleichenberg, Austria, where he coordinates the Master program "Sustainable Tourism and Management". He holds a doctorate in philosophy with a focus on the ethics of ethno-tourism using the example of the Tuareg nomads in the Central Sahara. His applied approach to tourism has been influenced by his twenty years of working as an adventure tour guide alongside his research and teaching. His current research

focuses on the ethical problems of flights in times of global warming and on ways to influence (political) systems for defossilisation. He is co-founder of the international think tank "Action for Climate in Tourism Network" (ACTnetwork) together with Susanne Becken (Griffith Institute, Univ. Brisbane, AUS), Daniel Scott (University of Waterloo, CAN) and Paul Peeters (University of Wageningen). He is also a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Tourism Panel on Climate Warming (TPCC - <https://tpcc.info/foreword/>).

### **After the Gig just more of the same? The quest for Ethical Consequences of Tourism Research in Times of Multiple Crises**

*This keynote addresses the complex interplay of tourism, sustainability, artificial intelligence and ethics. Based on the results of the ATLAS Annual Conference 2023, the question is how tourism can improve the quality of life in times of global warming. This raises the need to collect and process Big Data to address the complex issues in the interplay between sustainable tourism, climate neutrality and quality of life. Big Data and artificial intelligence can be powerful and efficient tools in this regard to support the development of effective policies that accelerate society's transition to greater sustainability. Unfortunately, this raises fundamental ethical dilemmas regarding the use of AI, with questions about collective surveillance and control, coercion and threats to human dignity. The contrast between Western values and China's surveillance system highlights this ethical dilemma. The critical examination of the role of AI in tourism research therefore seems essential for every tourism researcher, at the latest since the publication of ChatGPT.*

At the end of a conference, I am always moved by three intense, opposing feelings: on the one hand, relief that everything went well and that I was able to enjoy all the good food; on the other hand, great joy over the many exciting presentations with their inspiring insights as well as the moving encounters and conversations; and finally, the feeling of a great crushing lesson in the face of the question:

What follows from this now? What do I, what do you all do with these insights? File it away in folders, note attendance at the conference on your CV, leave and carry on as before, carry on researching as before? This would mean that research, and especially the exchange of research results, would have no factual relevance other than to generate symbolic capital, some nice experiences and some more or less significant emissions from travelling...

At the center of all the contributions was the multi-faceted question of how tourism could contribute to the quality of life of all people involved in times of global warming.

To summarize even more briefly: How can tourism become more sustainable for all involved?

What for me can be derived as an essential insight from the many different contributions is ultimately the confirmation of what every prudent researcher is becoming increasingly aware of through their practice: research problems are becoming increasingly complex, and with them possible solutions. The time of simple solutions á la "one fits all" are long gone. Instead, promoting a transition of regional as well as global tourism towards more sustainability and climate neutrality requires an unimaginable amount of data. To be able to intervene in systems in a targeted manner, the structure and dynamics of these systems must be sufficiently understood. This applies first to systems as complex as the climate in its many-layered manifestations and, in a next step, to the interaction of humans with the climate and the resulting climate warming. Understanding the effects of human actions on our habitats and thus on our future living and development conditions are indispensable prerequisites for simple but momentous questions such as:

To what extent do we have to adapt our current living, consumption and tourism practices to be able to live as well as possible in the long term and continue to "do tourism well"?

And which instruments are suitable for this, but also ethically justifiable, so as not to cause rebound effects again, i.e. undesirable consequences as a result of new technological "solutions"?

In other words, as researchers we must ask ourselves which research topics and methods make sense or are even justifiable today in view of these challenging issues? To what extent can or may we still afford to waste research resources on topics that could counteract efforts to achieve a necessary transition?

But who should be able to answer this highly complex ethical question satisfactorily? For first of all, an ethically reflected decision presupposes one thing: a sufficiently large degree of freedom of choice with regard to the question of how scarce research resources should be used. In practice, we know that such decisions are rarely "free"...

Essentially, this problem is reflected in Immanuel Kant's four basic questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What should I do?
3. What can I hope for?
4. What is the human being? (2021)

Transferred to the relationship between sustainable tourism development and the climate crisis on the one hand and the question of ethical consequences for researchers on the other, I would like to illustrate the complexity and contradictory nature of the question of "proper research" on the example of Artificial Intelligence:

We assume that modern research methods such as the use of big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning can be helpful in better understanding the systems to be changed to better control them. We hope that new findings will help us to better understand the connections and feedback processes between tourism development and the environment.

But what are the normative implications of these insights? Does artificial intelligence already provide us with insights into how we should use these insights "in the best possible way"?

I would like to illustrate the problem behind those questions with the following questions:

1. What obligations can be derived, for example, from the mounting evidence that the systematic burning of fossil fuels is the cause of global warming?
2. What should this mean for our everyday economic and cultural, but above all for our political actions?

To be able to answer those two ethical questions, we first need a much better knowledge of the areas in question. In fact, our knowledge about our daily, economic and cultural, but especially our political actions is extremely rudimentary. The current research initiative of the international "Tourism Panel on Climate Change" to clarify the impact of global tourism on global warming reveals increasingly relevant gaps in our understanding of e.g. customer behaviour, especially behavioural patterns under polycritical conditions (rising inflation, migration pressure, global warming, increasing weather extremes, climate change, skills shortages...) (TPCC, 2022). Solid answers to such questions are, however, indispensable in order to be able to develop meaningful, i.e. effective, intervention instruments.

At this point it is appropriate to take up Kant's question about the "essence of man". For if we assume

- that today's modern human behaviour patterns of intensive fossil fuel burning are accelerating global warming,
  - that future life chances are increasingly impaired as a result,
- and when we realize
- that the preservation of future life chances is thus essentially in our hands and thus our responsibility,
- then it would be imperative for us tourism researchers to develop suitable countermeasures to prevent or at least minimize this foreseeable damage.

However, this raises fundamental questions that have hardly been asked in tourism research so far:

- What role do the principles of human dignity and human self-determination play in choosing appropriate methods to promote transition?
- To what extent is it ethically legitimate to use instruments of manipulation of people to influence their behaviour in a future-proof direction? (Think of the behavioural economics method of "nudging").
- Under which conditions is the use of coercion to preserve threatened life chances also effective, legitimate, but also free from the danger of critical rebound-effects, for example in the form of collective resistance or even escalating collective conflicts?

For example, does it make sense to introduce a speed limit in traffic to effectively reduce traffic emissions if such a measure would lead to severe political unrest or even to a triumphant march of radical political parties that would annul previous achievements in environmental and health protection for populist motives?

We can already see that ethical questions are always inseparable from the first Kantian question about the possibility of fundamental knowledge of the world. For providing informed

answers to the latter questions, research in the field of big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning is developing powerful tools. Those tools can support by identifying patterns in highly complex systems in a very short time. By doing so, those tools can contribute significantly to a better understanding of collective human behavior. This allows the development of highly effective methods and tools for influencing human behavior. How successfully such methods and tools can be used is shown by their systematic application in China. The methods of AI-based surveillance and "guidance" of the population practiced there are considered in the West as massive violations of human rights. This system of collective surveillance and control clearly contradicts our Western notions of "quality of life" as well as associated individual development rights (King & Petty, 2021).

This Chinese example of the intensive use of Big Data and artificial intelligence for political purposes illustrates in an outstanding way the central ethical dilemma for researchers in the field of sustainable tourism and climate protection:

- The increasing climate-damaging emissions caused by consumption-oriented tourism practices require, on the one hand, corresponding instruments to change these practices in the direction of "sustainability" in order to be able to maintain the greatest possible degree of individual freedom - both in the field of tourism and in everyday life.
- On the other hand, the successful development of such effective instruments also brings with it the danger of their misuse and thus the loss of individual freedom.

How can this dilemma be resolved? Or should the question rather be:

How can we preserve our vital environmental resources in the best possible way in the face of the given framework conditions and increasing threats, while at the same time preserving the greatest possible degree of individual freedom?

The insights provided at this conference are undoubtedly inspiring pieces of the puzzle in the search for appropriate answers to this fundamental question.

Let me summarize my thoughts so far. The use of powerful artificial intelligence tools is becoming increasingly indispensable for an evidence-based, goal-oriented understanding of the (tourism) world regarding sustainable (tourism) development. At the same time, however, there is a growing need for a critical examination of these and other research tools. After all, sustainability always means cushioning or even preventing undesirable rebound effects. In the case of big data and artificial intelligence, these are shortcomings such as risks of bias and, above all, their potential for abuse. Just as you can use a pencil to write a love poem or physically hurt someone, big data and artificial intelligence can be used to better understand the world, but they can also be misused to the detriment of many and the advantage of a few. So if the rapid, unregulated development of Artificial Intelligence could, in extreme cases, even run counter to our notion of sustainable tourism development, is it still dispensable for prudent researchers in the age of ChatGPT to address the ethical implications of Big Data and AI in the context of sustainability in tourism?

This brings me to the last Kantian question:

What can I hope for (or "What can I believe in"?)

As a convinced follower of the epistemological paradigm of "Radical Constructivism" (Watzlawick, 1980), I can answer from deep conviction: I don't know! I cannot know!



However, based on previous experience, it seems plausible to me to doubt that a naïve belief in the "good in people" would be very helpful without a correspondingly prudent, critical assessment of the inherent dynamics and risks of technology and the development, based on this, of helpful instruments for coping with such undesirable effects.

My core thesis is therefore that responsible tourism research in the field of sustainability, regional development, quality of life, climate change and environmental protection in the age of ChatGPT makes a critical examination of the opportunities and risks of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence essential. In summary, the axiom can be formulated as follows: "At the latest since the public availability of ChatGPT, tourism ethics is obsolete without the consideration of Big Data ethics."

Perhaps this could be a stimulus for discussion at the next ATLAS Annual Conference.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I wish you a safe, pleasant and climate-friendly journey home!

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State Secretary for Tourism of the Republic of Austria

Susanne Kraus-Winkler, State Secretary for Tourism, has more than 40 years of practical experience as an entrepreneur in the hotel and restaurant business. As an industry representative she worked in the hospitality industry, as well as in tourism consulting and academic lecturing. She was a founding partner of the LOISIUM Wine & Spa Resort Hotel Group, with the LOISIUM Wine World in one of Austria's leading wine regions, two wine & design hotels in Austria and one wine & design hotel in Champagne Region of France and one wine hotel project Alsace, France. In addition, she was partner in several hotel management and

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### **Food as a Key Solution to the Climate Crisis: Can our Self-interest save the World?**

Today's global food system is the single biggest driver of global biodiversity loss and responsible for 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions. It also occupies half of the world's habitable land and uses up 70% of its fresh water. Yet demand for food is steadily and rapidly increasing as the world's population is expected to grow to over 9 billion by 2050. Thus, we could make a big difference if we changed our diet and food choices for the better.

For most tourists, food is an important part of their vacation, and tourists usually want to experience the destination with all their senses. Eating local, authentic food enriches the vacation experience. The health aspect of food is also a growing concern, especially in modern society where food allergies and various diet plans are playing an increasingly important role. In addition, rapid sociocultural changes are taking place in many countries, raising the question of how we can protect local food cultures and traditions. But which foods are good for us and our planet? How can we experience the unique flavors of our destination while protecting our planet?

The tourism industry has an important role to play in reducing the environmental footprint, not only in developing more sustainable food offerings, but also in changing the way guests consume food. And most of the changes needed would benefit the industry and the tourists alike, whether in terms of our wallets, our health, or our tourism experiences.

As we need to take our guests with us on the journey towards low-carbon and sustainable food production and consumption, it is particularly interesting to show that many climate protection measures also have benefits for tourists and the tourism industry, through which they could be encouraged to take action.

This presentation will show how climate protection and other sustainability measures can be implemented in the hospitality industry, what challenges arise and what future solutions for a healthy planet and healthy people might look like.



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Dr. Daniel Scott is a Professor and Research Chair in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management at the University of Waterloo. He is also an International Research Fellow at the School of Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Surrey (UK). Daniel has worked extensively on sustainable tourism for 25 years, with a focus on the transition to a low carbon tourism economy and adaptation to the complex impacts of a changing climate. He has advised and led projects for a wide range of government agencies and tourism organizations around the world, including the United Nations

World Tourism Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, European Tourism Commission, World Travel and Tourism Council, International Olympic Committee, OECD, the Caribbean Tourism Organization. He has also been a contributor to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Assessments and their 1.5°C special report. In 2021, he was ranked in the world top 250 climate scientists by Reuters. His tourism research publications have been downloaded over a half million times and have been featured in many leading media outlets, including The Economist, New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, BBC, Time, Scientific American, and National Geographic.

### **Tourism in a +3°C World – Are we Ready?**

The summer of 2023 was the hottest recorded, with heatwaves, fires and floods impacting millions from North America, to Europe, to India and China. The media was replete with images of tourists struggling with extreme heat and being evacuated from devastating fires. This is climate change; we no longer need to use our imagination. But this is climate change in a +1.2°C world. Most countries have committed to net-zero emissions by 2050, but as the recent United Nations Stocktake on climate action revealed, the world is missing its necessary interim targets. A survey of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scientists found over 60% expect the world to warm by at least 3 °C by the end of the century. What would that mean for tourism? Such futures are rarely considered by the tourism community. Together we will explore the implications this climate future for tourism development and climate justice. A review of the state of climate change adaptation in the tourism sector will ask - are we ready?

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Tourism and second home geography

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## Abstracts

### **Competences for sustainable travel planning and hybrid excursion realization in higher education**

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Geodata-based web applications are an integral part of travel and tour planning and play a significant role in the digitization of tourism. In order to simultaneously address current and future challenges such as pandemics, climate change and sustainability, an innovative teaching module for the real conception and implementation of a hybrid excursion co-designed by students is being developed as part of the Xtravel project. Key applied concepts are excursions as a practice-oriented teaching method, hybrid learning as an innovative and inclusive method in higher education, integration of digitization in tourism teaching and tour planning as a way towards sustainable tourism. A hybrid, student co-created excursion is consequently perceived as an innovative teaching method, that responds to future challenges in teaching, including the increased use of technological innovations, blended learning and participatory project-based learning. First, module handbooks were analysed, followed by a mixed methods research to identify the initial state and interests of students and lecturers. Resultant, a toolbox database including interactive learning material was implemented. To digitally link learning content to the excursion itself, a geodata web-based application was employed. The module is being tested and further developed in a participatory manner in summer semester 2023. The evaluation of the initial implementation of the module and the test of transferability is planned by further developing and using elements such as the toolbox. After finishing the developed module, students should be able to plan and realize an excursion with touristic and educational features for a defined target group in the sense of sustainable tourism. This includes various sub-objectives, e.g. know and use geodata web-based applications, video and audio production, digital competencies (digital learning/legacy/collaboration) and storytelling, understand sustainability dimensions, the role of tourism for the SDGs, excursion fundamentals and tour planning, recognize the roles of nature protection and compensation, learn about challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism for both tourists and providers and analyze mobility development in global and regional contexts. Besides the hybrid excursion, the module includes a wide range of methods, e.g. seminar teaching, webinars, lectures and workshops in presence, self-study and group works and the provision of a digital toolbox and learning platform. The hybrid excursion connects an on-site field trip with the content of the associated course on the (digital) campus. Students who are unable to attend the excursion thus have the opportunity to participate in the entire process of preparing for and following the excursion and to access all (exam-)relevant content. Due to the digital provision, the excursion can be carried out independently by the students at a later point. Additionally, a double change of perspective is created (student-lecturer/organizer-participant). Summarized are excursions a well-tryed, efficient and practice-oriented teaching method. In order to adapt to current and future demands, the teaching module developed in Xtravel combines future skills, participative approaches and current topics while being flexible applicable to various study fields and including all students.



## **Promoting Health and Well-being tourism through Community Participation, A Case Study from Kerala, India**

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Tourism is one of the major contributors to the economy in most of South Asian countries. They are blessed with nature, warm beaches, indigenous and traditional health practices and way more. This has opened opportunities for developing world class hospitality centres in these countries. Many South Asian countries are embracing sustainable tourism practices, recognizing the importance of preserving their natural and cultural heritage for future generations. The promotion of health and well-being is a critical aspect of sustainable tourism and sustainable development. As we strive to build healthy communities and combat climate change challenges, it is essential to explore innovative ways of promoting physical, social, and mental well-being. This study focuses on the learnings from Tula, a one of a kind integrated clinical wellness centre in Kerala, India which strives to integrate sustainable tourism and well-being of the community. This study will deep dive into the innovative farm to table concept integrating the community farming in promoting health and well-being for both residents and guests, with a particular focus on the bio-diversity conservation. The community has established a sustainable food production network that connects local farmers, food artisans, and home chefs to provide guests with a unique culinary experience while promoting regenerative agriculture. While catering the needs of luxury class, the entity will also support in livelihood development and improvement of income for the residents. The study concludes that local participation in production, distribution of food will support the local farmer in preserving the local varieties and help the tourist to gain local authentic experiences. This paper will evaluate evidences on how promoting local produce for local conception will help in reducing carbon emissions, protection of bio-diversity.

## **Sustainability through community-based tourism in Mexico: A literature review**

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Tourism increases the economic activity of host communities due to the demand and consumption of goods and services. This allowed the economic growth of tourist destinations until 2020, but the global pandemic of COVID-19 exposed that tourism is concentrated in urban and coastal areas. The foregoing is shown in global reports that emphasize the economic decline of these destinations. This concentration causes unequal territorial distribution of wealth, massification, social disruptions and pressure on local culture and natural environment. Tourism in rural areas allows the wide distribution of the benefits of the sector in local communities. The benefits of tourism are related to the sustainability of projects that develop small-scale activities, since they include: socioeconomic opportunities, reduction of migration, valuation of a territory where tangible and intangible heritage is preserved, active participation of the community and

equitable improvement of the quality of life. However, community participation is the most relevant factor to achieve the sustainability of the project, since this activity is disappointing for the community when it does not meet their contextual needs. The practices of such communities are related to sustainability principles. It is mentioned that these tourist destinations are dispensable in the fight against extractivism and poaching, while their biological and cultural diversity allows the development of a relevant tourist activity for the sector. Some tourist communities have enterprises that have adopted industrialized processes, but their objectives are far from profit and seek the common good. Indigenous tourism in Latin America has different approaches. Public policies lead the sector with extractive practices that harm communities, while in other countries the government seeks collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote responsible and sustainable tourism. Lack of management generates an increase in tourism and threatens natural and cultural conservation, while proper management generates rural development. In addition, community-based tourism generates the conditions to advance towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Similarly, studies in Mexico show that public policies and NGOs are involved with objectives that are contrary to community priorities, resulting in practices that prioritize economic growth and favor cultural and natural commodification due to a lack of commitment to the SDGs. This paper identifies the context of community-based tourism and sustainability aspects through a literature review. Likewise, the establishment of policies and procedures that favor indigenous communities in Mexico in the short term is proposed so that they are included in the decision-making processes and their territory and priorities are respected. This process generates the empowerment of the peoples and favors the political agenda on indigenous issues, while promoting responsible and sustainable tourism in the long term.

### **Attraction Visitors' Shifting Needs due to Climate Change**

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Within Austria the province of Lower Austria has positioned itself as an important cultural tourism destination. Much effort has been put into diversifying its cultural and natural heritage and making it accessible to both local and international visitors. However, attractions and visitor experiences are influenced and impacted by climate change to various degrees. This aspect has been highlighted by several authors from different disciplines ranging from conservationists (e.g. Daly, Downes, & Megarry, 2018) to tourism experts (e.g. Becken & Hay, 2012; Pröbstl-Haider et al. 2020). In Lower Austria, heat waves and significant droughts will become more common in the summer months due to increasing temperatures and reduced precipitation (BMWFJ, 2012). Such scenarios have already become commonplace with the effect that visitors have come to change and adapt their behaviour. However, little is known about their experience of climate change in relation to different kinds of attractions. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate climate change and its consequences on visitor behaviour. More specifically, it will examine (I) how visitors choose attractions and plan their visits, (II) in which ways climate change has an influence on the experience of different kinds of attractions, and (III) in which way weather has an impact on individual physical experiences (e.g. weather sensitivity, temperature thresholds). For this study qualitative research was used in the form of a focus group discussion with six participants followed by five individual semi-structured interviews to achieve information saturation (Hennink et al., 2011). Selecting participants was guided by using a purposive sampling procedure (Marshall, 1996) including different age groups, origins,

and preferences when it comes to visiting different types of attractions. Transcripts were coded in MAXQDA2022. Overall, thematic analysis was applied following Braun and Clarke's (2021) approach. The findings reveal that weather is one of the most important elements when planning a visit to an attraction. People have different strategies when planning, especially when it comes to periods of hot weather. While some try to shift their visits to different times of the day such as morning, others choose a different location or type of attraction ranging from those inside to those with cool areas, and others give up their plans altogether and choose not to make any visits at all. While families with young children and elderly people pay more attention to the weather forecast and try to plan their activities ahead accordingly, young people seem to be more spontaneous. Overall, people are concerned that they have the right outfit, don't travel long distances, and that refreshments are available along the way. Their individual sensitivities to hot weather are also quite different. However, what they all share is that they tire more easily and cannot take in too much information. Understanding the emerging needs and desires of attraction visitors as a consequence of climate change is vital for attractions to stay competitive and can help them respond in a more strategic way.

## **Honest climate neutrality for destinations - from footprint monitoring to climate neutrality**

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Background: According to the government resolution, Switzerland should not emit more greenhouse gases by 2050 than natural and technical reservoirs can absorb. This means net-zero emissions by 2050 and this also applies to tourism. Concrete concepts on how to achieve net-zero emissions in tourism do not yet exist, and Switzerland's long-term climate strategy does not specifically address tourism (SECO, 2021). Three destinations - Arosa, Davos and Valposchiavo - now want to face up to this responsibility and find a model path to possible climate neutrality in tourism. In the tourism context, the term "climate neutrality" is used inconsistently in connection with holistic products, such as accommodation establishments or destinations, as well as with various partial services, such as overnight stays or flights. While clear calculation standards exist in the - comparatively simple - mobility sector (flights, car journeys, etc.), there are so far no uniform and comprehensive guidelines for calculating the emissions of a destination in order to arrive at a transparent and comprehensible basis for further steps towards climate neutrality. The previous approaches of so-called climate-neutral destinations in Switzerland and in the Alpine region were either not successful (e.g. Arosa around 2011), or rather tied to marketing (e.g. Ischgl / AT, whose cable car operations are 'climate neutral' through reduction and compensation; but in marketing the entire destination is presented as climate neutral). Above all, the previous approaches did not include mobility (arrival and departure, guest and employee mobility on site) and the products used in tourism (food, etc.) in the calculations. Research question: In addition to the overarching question of how the establishment of a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral destination can be embedded in the context of political framework conditions and planning as well as sustainable regional development and assessed from these two perspectives, the following research questions arise: • how can the tourism carbon footprint of a destination be delineated and calculated in a way that is easy to operationalise but still comprehensive? • how large is the tourism carbon footprint of the destinations involved? • what measures can be taken to reduce it and achieve the goal of CO<sub>2</sub> neutrality? Method: The above set of questions was approached methodically as follows: a) With the help of a system analytical approach, the question of system delimitation was

addressed and an agent-based model (Balbi et al., 2013; Filitova et al., 2013) was developed for the respective destinations. This requires cantonal statistics as well as interviews with key persons from the region and additional surveys by means of questionnaires. Specifically, the tourism actors (actor groups) in the destinations need to be named and characterised (description and possibly classification into subgroups) and their CO<sub>2</sub>-relevant activities identified. By mapping them in the model, the analytical framework is created for scenario-based simulations to calculate the respective CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. b) Using LCA, life cycle and footprint literature and databases (e.g. Atmosfair, 2019, energie.ch, 2011, 2014; Gössling et al., 2015; various CO<sub>2</sub> balance calculators, such as CO<sub>2</sub>OL.de, n.d.) and in cooperation with a relevant compensation foundation, the emission factors for the individual activities of the tourism stakeholders were determined and used to calculate the current CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of tourism and inserted into the model above. c) The knowledge gained from a. and b. (e.g. system limits, data availability, etc.) was further developed through reflection with responsible stakeholders into an operationalisable tool that can be applied in other destinations. d) On this basis, destination-specific climate programmes were developed that avoid and reduce emissions and compensate for the unavoidable remainder. Results to date (May 2023): The system delineation (along the customer journey as well as the tourism value chain) and the availability of data is ready. In parallel, model businesses and the three DMOs are being analysed to test the practicability of the indicator set and to obtain additional exemplary values for extrapolations. The tourism climate footprint calculation of the three participating destinations should be completed by the ATLAS conference. In addition, the paper can address the first results of the further research question from the same project - What does climate communication look like that can lead to motivating traveller engagement and compensation?

## **Home-stay Tourism in Nepal: Challenges of Preserving Authenticity of Culture**

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Home-stay tourism is one of the emerging sectors of tourism in Nepal. It is a model which is practiced in recent years as a part of sustainable tourism development. The conventional tourism that has been practiced in Nepal has a low impact on the socio-economic transformation of the local people. The role of community in the tourism development was also limited. Home-stay tourism provides a sense of belonging that cannot be obtained from other types of tourism. It is also a concept of collaborative involvement in local tourism activities and sharing of the benefits to the community. The homestay concept allows the tourists to live with the local community and involve and see the different social and cultural lives of the local people. In Nepal, the homestay offers a unique potential to develop sustainable tourism by utilizing local resources and products, local structures, and the natural environment. It is also used as an environment-friendly tourism activity which has less effect on culture and environment. Home-stay tourism is still a fully unexplored tourism activity in Nepal. Nepal is rich in cultural heritage, laden with natural beauty, villages in its pristine state, and unheralded plains and gorges in Nepal. Villages are wonderful; they are there, to be exploited; however, we are not reaping the benefit of our unheralded, unexplored pristine villages of rural Nepal. It carries big possibilities as there are big markets around; India and China, which can be a source of income for the villagers. But there are many challenges in home-stay tourism, like lack of awareness, and insufficient facilities; no proper planning and marketing. We are still focusing on

mass tourists rather than quality tourists. One of the main challenges of home-stay tourism is the degradation of indigenous culture and its impact on the natural environment. If such effects could not be minimized there will be high chances of cultural change in the community. In this paper, the researcher mainly examines how homestay tourism in Nepal could be an alternative tourism approach for the socio-economic transformation of the local community. This paper also examines the impact of home-stay tourism on society and culture as well as how it can be mitigated. The issue of preserving the authenticity of culture is a big issue today mainly in the tourism sector. One of the important aspects of this paper will also be to identify the existing challenges of the development of home-stay tourism and suggest possible solutions to it.

### **Active commuting among university students in Southeast Styria and its predictors.**

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Background: Active mobility can make a key contribution to health and physical activity promotion. For students in particular, active commuting to and from the university can help increase activity levels and therefore health. Active commuting means using physically active modes like walking or biking for transportation. Because physical activity is associated with numerous benefits for physical and mental health, it is of particular importance to promote physical activity. Active commuting is influenced by personal, social, and environmental factors. For health promotion in rural areas, it is important to find the factors that predict active commuting in this setting. At the same time there is a lack of knowledge about active commuting of students and its predictors so far. Especially research in rural regions barely took place. Using the example of students, this study elaborates which predictors exist for active commuting in rural areas. Aim: The objectives of this paper are to examine the active commuting behaviour of students in a rural, remote study location and investigate its predictors in this setting. Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted at the rural study location FH JOANNEUM Bad Gleichenberg in Southeast Styria, Austria. Online survey data was collected in spring 2022. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistical analyses in form of a multiple linear regression model was performed. Variables collected include commuting behaviour and the extent of active commuting, individual factors such as gender, income and intention, social factors such as subjective norm, and environmental factors such as quality of infrastructure, active commuting networks and safety. Results: 123 students (12.24 % male, 87.76 % female) were invited to the survey in Bad Gleichenberg and 98 responded (response rate: 80 %). The two most used modes of transport to come to the university were walking (n=58) and using a car (n=51). Three students used the bicycle, and three students used public transportation services. On average 0.89 minutes of moderate physical activity and 0.38 minutes of intensive physical activity spend participants in Bad Gleichenberg on their way to and from the university. They reach on average 18 % of the WHO weekly physical recommendations by commuting to and from the university. The predictors for active commuting of students to and from the university in a rural region are

gender ( $p < .001$ ) with being male leading to a significant higher extent of active commuting and the intention, to commute actively ( $p = .001$ ) with having a higher intention leading to a significant higher extent of active commuting. Conclusion: Active commuting of students on their way to and from university in a rural region is influenced by their gender and their intention. Encouraging female active commuting and increasing the intention to commute actively by improving bicycle networks could be considered to promote active commuting in rural areas. From a public health perspective, it is important to include predictors of active commuting in the planning of measures in rural areas to shape healthy, sustainable, and liveable communities.

## **Cycling in Winter: a multi-disciplinary View**

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There are many reasons for not cycling in winter - slush, cold and equipment, for example. However, what if it were possible to break down these barriers and integrate the bicycle even more strongly as a means of transportation in everyday life? This article takes up the question and discusses the tourist offer of "cycling in winter" as a bridge to a higher rate of use of the bicycle in winter in everyday life. The discussion is based on the various ecological, economic and social changes of the advancing climate change, which are predominantly perceived negatively. For example, warmer winters in the Alps are causing snow-based tourism to "sweat". Humans and the economy, however, have always been characterized by their adaptability. For example, winters with little snow in the Pannonian regions open up new forms of exercise, such as "cycling in winter", which could have high economic and tourist relevance in the future. However, not only tourism-related potentials result from this form of exercise. For example, contributing to the reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions, to the increase of well-being and health or the common cycling experience to strengthen social relations. The positive effects of cycling are well known. Nevertheless, numerous hurdles still exist to overcome before a nationwide tourist offer can be established in winter. As a data basis, this article uses the results of an online survey in which 996 guests of a destination in the Pannonian region participated. The study shows that only about 4% of the respondents, already in winter, use the bike as an active element of their vacation. The vast majority (~ 70%) cannot imagine being on the road with a bike in the winter as part of the vacation. Above all, the cold, lack of equipment and the condition of the roads are seen as the biggest obstacles. The results are comprehensively discussed from a sociological, health-promoting and destination development point of view and thus provide a basis for further considerations in the academic discourse. The aim is to remove obstacles and derive the necessary framework conditions to establish the population's behavior positively in the direction of using the bicycle as an environmentally friendly and health-promoting means of transport also in winter.

## Hydrogen as an alternative zero emission mobility fuel for the tourism Industry

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With UNWTO report predictions on tourism demand and CO2 transport emissions set to rise drastically in the future to alarming levels, just how aware are tourists of their CO2 footprints when travelling? The Paris agreement 2015, the recent Fit for 55 are setting the regulations but how is the tourism sector working towards these goals? Through the availability of affordable, more regular connections, and easier travel in general, the world has become more accessible but at what cost to the planet and its future generations? “One of the main challenges facing the tourism sector today is the need to decouple its projected growth from the use of resources and greenhouse gas emissions” (UNWTO 2019). As scientists and experts around the world tell us on a regular basis, it has become near enough impossible to ignore the fact that we are standing on the verge of a climate crisis, now is the time for action and in terms of travel, a time for alternative fuel recognition. Hydrogen mobility, runs on hydrogen, green hydrogen. Green hydrogen is produced from renewable energy sources, for example wind and solar and can be used to power aeroplanes, boats, trains, trams, cars and bicycles. All that a hydrogen vehicle leaves behind is water. Hydrogen as an alternative fuel is a relatively new concept but one that according to the experts and leading associates of the World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam, 9-11th May 2023, (which I attended), is ready to go, the technology is there. Public awareness of hydrogen is relatively scarce, mainly because other alternative energy sources have been pushed and backed by climate activists, governments and commercial companies in recent years. Of course, they are all important in the global green energy transition but we shouldn't leave behind hydrogen and its potential to transform the future of the travel and tourism sector. Hydrogen has needed time to develop, to improve its safety and for technology to evolve, which it has in so many ways. Hydrogen has many positive features, for example its versatility, lightness, and cleanliness. It can enable longer travel distances, and shorter, easy refuelling procedures to that of electric mobility for example. Hydrogen is developing fast, it is building its own value chain which if the tourist sector is to be a part of in these early stages, there seems to be a need for interest and involvement. With public acceptance and joint support of this new alternative fuel, the current high price could be driven down considerably, providing, economical zero emission transport of the future. This enabling tourists and residents to travel leaving behind zero CO2 emissions, only water, on the way to, from and around their chosen destinations. World Tourism Organization and International Transport Forum (2019), Transport-related CO2 Emissions of the Tourism Sector – Modelling Results, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284416660>.

## **Extending the event experience by utilizing blended event format**

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This paper examines emerging new event formats and discusses hybrid vs blended events, their benefits and challenges. The paper is based on experiences and insights gained in a project called Digisti Live-Tapahtumien uusi aikakausi (Digitally Live- The new era of events) run by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences during 2021-2023 and financed by the European Union. The main aim of the project is to enhance the event customer experience through innovative digital solutions and to create new services. The project uses service design processes to gain customer understanding, create prototypes, test and improve in an iterative process. In this paper, we will discuss how events' blended formats enable community building around topics related to the event. Blended events are events where various formats merge into a seamless customer journey throughout the whole event span. This blended event format and its theoretical conceptualisation is still quite new, and oftentimes used for referring to hybrid events. The authors of this paper use the term blended events to describe an event where online and face to face encounters happen in different stages of the customer journey. Whereas hybrid events offer online and face to face encounters to two audiences simultaneously and event participants can choose which offering to follow. The benefits of blended events include prolonging the event life-span pre- during and post event, as well as deepening the event experience through participant activation. Online encounters and pre-event networking and learning can take place prior to the event, similar to flipped classroom thinking, where the learners prepare themselves for face to face sessions by familiarizing themselves with given materials and topics. The authors of this paper are inspired by blended learning formats which have become more common in universities of applied sciences. In this paper we focus on one case event, SMAKU food festival. This festival is arranged in the city of Porvoo and gathers food lovers from the whole Southern Finland. One important target group is food bloggers and influencers on social media and the project Digisti Live supports the creation of a new pre-event gathering for food bloggers and influencers in May 2023, prior to the actual festival taking place in August-September 2023. We are creating a new pre-event concept with livestream to youtube of the live show where chefs prepare tasting portions and prerecorded video presentations of all participating restaurants. The invited guests will enjoy a physical event with digital elements enhancing the whole experience. During the event the project team collects data through observations and interviews, afterwards we will collect feedback from participants through a survey. The data supports the main research question of how this blended format adds value to the festival experience and how it strengthens the community around this festival.



## **Employer Perspectives on Fair Work in the Scottish Hospitality Sector**

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The Scottish Fair Work Convention recognises hospitality as a key sector of the economy and aspires to put fair work at the heart of workplaces by 2025. This paper shares the views of hospitality employers, from a recent survey, on fair work in the Scottish hospitality sector. We asked questions about fair work based on the principles of fair pay, conditions, contracts, management and representation. This study follows a hospitality employee work experience survey we conducted in 2020 (see Hadjisolomou, 2022). The results of the employee survey raised several concerns about hospitality work: a high level of abuse and harassment (incl. sexual) of hospitality workers by customers in particular; a number of employees neither receiving the national minimum wage nor paid holidays; a high prevalence of insecure contracts; limited management support; and a lack of employee representation in the sector. These findings echo longstanding challenges associated with hospitality work and workplaces (see Baum et al., 2020). Through the work of the Fair Work Convention, there is a policy drive to improve working conditions also specifically in the hospitality sector in Scotland. We would argue that transformational leadership is needed to foster fair work in the sector. As per the transformative service approach (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder, 2016), the onus is on organisations to be socially responsible by prioritising employee well-being and taking on a duty of care for their staff. The buy-in of employers, therefore, is imperative to bring out fair work in their organisations. The aim of this study is to open up conversations with industry representatives on the role of management and transformational leadership for fair hospitality work. We further aim to formulate industry recommendations and design policy instruments to encourage positive change with respect to employment relationships and work conditions in the hospitality sector. The researchers undertaking this study are part of the Global Hospitality Research Alliance doing comparative international work in partner countries.

## **Renaissance, resilience or inertia? Exploring Lisbon's hotel growth during the pandemic**

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Three years ago, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, posing unprecedented challenges to the global tourism industry, many scholars believed it could be a turning point for the sector. Until then, urban tourism had often been lauded as an almost limitless source of economic

growth for cities. Suddenly, the pandemic revealed the fragility of this assumption. At the same time, the pandemic was said to may induce a shift in the way people travelled, emphasizing off-the-beaten track destinations. Some optimists suggested that this could be an opportunity for the industry to develop in a more sustainable and welfare-oriented way in the future, avoiding overtourism and promoting a greater respect for local communities and their interests. In Portugal, tourist flows between 2020 and 2022 have bucked traditional trends. Coastal regions and urban destinations have been squeezed out in preference to inland and rural regions. This lent some credence to the belief that cities could be de-prioritised in favour of rural and natural areas in the 'new normal'. Perhaps surprisingly, however, 29 new hotels were opened in Lisbon during the very same period, strongly challenging this hypothesis. Despite the short-term disruption caused by the pandemic, many investors and developers apparently believed that urban tourism would rebound and continue to grow in the future. In this presentation we share the results of our research into these new hotel investments. Detailed research has been carried out into the owners of the hotel properties, the hotel management companies and the location and type of venues being created. The first objective of this presentation is therefore to provide a picture of this new generation of investors and investments. Interviews were conducted with hotel managers to understand if there is a paradigm shift in this generation of hotel investment. Based on the results of the interviews, we will discuss whether this new generation of hotel investments that emerged during the pandemic period should be understood as a sign of resilience, a renaissance, or simply a product of inertia and path dependency. In short, the fundamental question guiding this research is to understand whether these new investments represent a simple return to business as usual or whether there are signs of change. By sharing the results of this research, we hope to contribute to a better understanding of the trends shaping the current landscape of hotel investment and tourism development in cities.

## **Approaching a Value Based National and Regional Cycling Network in Bulgaria through Spatial Multicriteria Evaluation**

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The paper presents an authentic approach for spatial multicriteria evaluation of leisure and tourism linkages to become the backbone and skeleton of a national and regional cycling network between the Danube and Iron curtain trail EuroVelo routes. Bulgaria has both long cycling and tourism traditions which have transformed in the recent decades into more massive and critical modes of mobility and leisure. It is argued that the return to more sustainable tourism and mobility models goes through extensive development of cycling routes around the diverse and impressive landscapes of the Bulgarian countryside and through intensive development of cycling infrastructure around various bottlenecks. Such concerted actions can

provide light in energy throughput, diverse in health gains and mutually beneficial for visitors and hosts means of travel and exploration of the natural and cultural values of Bulgaria. The approach to the issue of conceptualization and prioritization of cycling routes and interventions follows a geospatially supported set of steps for studying, classifying, ranking, connecting, assigning, overlaying and outlining a hierarchy of linkages and narrow spaces. Those need further field studies for an excellently established and conductive cycling network. It can serve more than cycling purposes but also to become a significant lifestyle changing factor for post Covid-19 active and fossil independent travel to rural areas, for recovery of the peripheral rural economies and shrinking communities, and also for exploration of the invaluable wild and cultural landscapes, deeply rooted settlements and inspiring resilient people in the Eastern part of the Balkan peninsula.

### **Public Private Partnership for Improving Quality of Life and Well-Being in Tourism: Case of Jammu and Kashmir**

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The tourism industry has a significant impact on the global economy, particularly in countries like India that are still developing their infrastructure. The expansion of tourism not only benefits the tourism industry itself but also has far-reaching effects on various sectors of the economy. In this context, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a crucial mechanism for fostering the growth of the tourism industry in emerging economies. The article explores the prospects of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir, India, through the lens of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). It emphasizes the role of PPP projects in promoting sustainable tourism development driving economic growth, and eradicating poverty in tourism host communities. The article adopts a qualitative design, utilizing semi-structured interviews with experts from various backgrounds. The primary data collection employed purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The findings are thematically analyzed, focusing on general issues related to sustainable tourism and the impact of PPP implementation on the economic social, and environmental conditions of tourism destinations in Jammu and Kashmir. The research highlighted that the full potential of PPP development for long-term economic infrastructural needs in tourism destinations has not been adequately realized. The lack of sufficient commitment from the government and over-reliance on the private sector alone have resulted in a failure to create enough job opportunities for local communities, limiting improvements in prosperity. However, the implementation of PPP initiatives has positively influenced the preservation of traditional values, cultural heritage, and intercultural tolerance in the tourism destination areas. This has led to enhanced intercultural interactions, increased business activities, entrepreneurial development, and economic empowerment, contributing to poverty reduction within the host communities. In conclusion, while PPP projects in Jammu and Kashmir have shown positive outcomes in terms of cultural preservation, intercultural interaction, and economic empowerment, there is room for improvement in realizing the full economic potential and creating more sustainable job opportunities for local communities. A stronger commitment from the government and a balanced partnership between the public and private sectors could lead to improving quality of life and well-being in tourism.

## **Social media and mountain visitation – is this ‘friendship’ sustainable?**

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Social media has become an indispensable part in all spheres of daily life, including tourism, playing the role of a key source of information, and providing travel ideas combined with useful practicalities to organize a trip. Although research suggests that in general social media stimulates tourist visitation to destinations, still the application of User Generated Content (UGC) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) raises questions about their trustworthiness and credibility. As far as mountain tourism is concerned though, this expected increase in visitation as a result of information sharing in social media, may become an issue in protected territories and fragile mountain ecosystems, decreasing their aesthetic and biodiversity value. The current study aims to identify the role of social media on mountain tourism using an online survey, conducted among the members of a Bulgarian Facebook travel group called ‘Mountaineers’. This social media was chosen as it is the most popular one in the country and the group members represent the target population to be studied. The group amounts to more than 50,000 members who share posts with pictures, comments and discussions about interesting areas in the Bulgarian mountain ranges. The design of the questionnaire consisted of closed, as well as open-ended questions, enabling both quantitative and qualitative information to be collected. The results revealed that the main reason for participating in such an online group is the possibility to acquire useful information. The perceived reliability of this information though, as far as mountain activities are concerned, is still lower compared to the one received from more traditional sources like friends and websites. Despite this, most of the respondents plan to visit or have already visited a place in the mountains only because it was recommended by a member of the Facebook group. The main reason for doing this was that this place was a new destination for them and looked attractive in the pictures posted, while its popularity in social media had almost no significance. The environmental concerns connected with overcrowding, possibly as a result of too much publicity, are generally not considered to be a problem by the respondents. These results raise questions regarding the need for park authorities to pay special attention to social media - both as a source of information on travel patterns and trends, and in the process of visitor management.

## **The individual in sustainability interventions: is she or he worth the effort?**

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This study classifies the pro-environmental behaviour interventions used in tourist accommodation sites based on two frameworks: Ives et al (2020) matrix of pro-environmental interventions and Meadows (1997) points to intervene in a system (leverage points). Ives et al.'s matrix uses four anchor points: external-internal and individual-collective to place sustainability

interventions. The resulting four quadrants are the individual (I and my values, beliefs, etc), communities (We and our culture, etc), systems (they and their policies, etc) and technology (It and its implementation). Meadows' interventions points have been broadly classified into four hierarchical groups: parameters (easiest but least effective), feedback, design, and intent, including the mindset out of which the system arises. The two frameworks can be roughly blended together to explore whether the individual and her mindset (e.g. guest or indeed host) sits in relation to sustainability efforts, or whether systems, social norms and technology is or should be our main focus. We apply the frameworks to our own research which works alongside My Green Butler to develop a bespoke suite of intervention-based changes co-created with tourist accommodation partners that take into account their context (rural/metropolitan, tropical/temperate), size; ownership structure, the hosts' environmental literacy, the type of guest, etc. The term intervention in our case applies to the suite of actions, not to one single, isolated initiative, as we adopt more a systems-thinking (hence Meadows' systems intervention) approach to sustainability in tourist accommodation settings. We audited our project to determine how we engage the individual versus technology, social norms, and policies etc. We found that our initiatives were strongest on the first 10 intervention levels (1. parameters/numbers; 2. increasing buffers; 3. changing the structure of material stocks and flows; 4. shortening delays in feedback; 5. strengthening negative feedback loops; 6. increasing the gain from positive feedback loops; 7. changing the structure of information flows; 8. redesigning the rules of the system; 9. improving the power to self-organise; 10. changing the rules of the system). However, we did not actively or strategically target the eleventh intervention level (changing the mindset out of which the system arises) and even less so the final and deepest intervention level (the power to transcend paradigms). Based on this audit derived the frameworks, we can make predictions of how effective our sustainability interventions might be in a tourism accommodation context, and note that adding a focus on the deepest intervention point might enhance the outcomes of our research and the effectiveness of the sustainability interventions. This requires understanding how our own mindset influences our research approach, how our partners' mindset influences how they engage with the research and how the guests' receive and respond to the research. Connecting with this deepest leverage point requires boundary thinking that question our current economic and social models (they, we and it in Ives et al.'s matrix) and moves more decolonial models of being.

### **Fighting for locality. How crises may be stepping stone reclaiming emblematic festivals**

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Tourism and leisure activities have undergone substantial changes, not only in the way they are designed and produced but also in how they are lived and experienced. Both academic and industry communities have long been interested in analyzing participants' experiences of cultural activities and events; not only those linked to local communities, but also those oriented towards tourism and placemaking perspectives. Current tensions and conflicts have left more space for locally-oriented activities on a frame of overloaded touristic destinations. Such activities have in turn been transformed and adapted during crises particularly in terms of their rediscovery by citizens and local communities. This article focuses on the transgressive reactions and responses of citizens and communities of the city of Barcelona, now rediscovering and reclaiming leisure spaces, festivals and events for themselves. We employed in-depth

interviews and participant observation, which permitted understanding of the context and breadth of the current situation and the experience lived by both participants and organisers. We conclude with a critical appraisal of the options now open for managing and reconfiguring the tourism saturation that Barcelona was experiencing pre-pandemic.

### **Tourism as a Means to Sustainable Development: A case of Everest**

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Nepal, being a home to eight out of ten eighthousanders, is one of the famous tourism destinations of the world, especially among the tourists seeking to witness and experience mountains and associated features. However, the highlands which are otherwise very rich in natural beauty and diversity, have minimal options for the livelihood. The Highlands of Himalaya are usually barren land with nill to very low possibility of agricultural practices. The barren land and tundra vegetation restrict the local communities to practice commercial farming as well. However, the region is equally gifted by the scenic and beautiful landscapes with mountains in the backdrop. After the formal start of tourism in Nepal in 1950s, the usual unproductive land of highlands saw new opportunities in the form of tourism businesses. The case study discusses the opportunities tourism brought in the region and livelihood of the local communities of Nepal's highlands.

### **A Heroine Song for Arranmore: Indigenous cultural activism at an Island Singing-Festival**

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Emphasising the local heritage and aesthetic of traditional Irish song and story, visitors are invited to experience the unique culture, tradition and place of Arranmore Island during a small festival. Situated in the north Atlantic, off the coast of Donegal members of the indigenous Gaelic speaking community established a collaborative music festival to empower the restoration of island life and preservation of their language. Considering niche tourism and developing regenerative culture practice, this paper critically reflects on Féile Róise Rua, named after the local singer Róise na nAmhrán. She was a custodian of traditional song, taught the island's cultural heritage to the local population and was recorded in the 1950s by Seán Ó hEochaidh for the National Folklore Commission. Inspired by her legacy, Féile Róise Rua celebrates and commemorates a woman's life as a musical conduit between past and present culture, within a broader national identity. The festival attracts prominent musicians and singers from the Irish traditional music scene, who interact with the local community, which in turn draws tourism to the island. Using ethnographic data from key stakeholders to illustrate different perspectives and layers of meaning ascribed to the festival experience, this paper demonstrates the legacy of individuals who embody cultural identity of a place and time. Focusing on music as a form of expression, cohesion and attraction, this paper identifies the experiences stakeholders

may have and demonstrates how an island community are embracing regenerative events to engage the conservation and revival of local traditions.

## **Sustainable tourism consumption and production through tracing goods in “product origin tourism”**

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Hope exists for the tourism industry to experience a shift towards a socially inclusive and sustainable pathway, particularly since the COVID-19 crisis (Cheer, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2020), with tourists taking increasingly more decisions towards localized and small-scale options that benefit society and environment (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020). Without doubt, many began to challenge and question their consumption patterns and buy with a greater consciousness regarding sustainability and the sourcing of their products (Cambefort, 2020). As argued by the UNWTO (2023), the crisis has also created a fruitful ground for thinking in a more circular economy mindset, given that it “raised awareness of the importance of local supply chains and the need to rethink how goods and services are produced and consumed, both key elements of a circular economy.” (n.p.)

This interest by consumers to better understand where their products come from, has already been part of people’s travel behavior for a while – it is not new that tourists seek to learn more about origin and production of their day-to-day goods while travelling, above all in the context of gastronomy/ culinary tourism (Sloan et al., 2015; Stone et al., 2021). However, the question that emerges now is whether this newly discovered interest in more sustainable and conscious consumption is giving rise to what I term “product origin tourism”, a form of tourism that is specifically aimed at exploring products’ origins and production processes in the form of an immersive educational experience. In addition, it is worthwhile investigating whether this kind of tourism bears potential to, in turn, reinforce more sustainable consumption patterns – also in line with circularity.

This research therefore traces the development of “product origin tourism”, a form of tourism that not only answers changing consumers’ demands, but at the same time can foster education, community involvement and more beneficial tourism encounters based on the admiration of locals’ skills and knowledge. In addition, it offers reflections on the link between tourism and ideas of circularity, with the consumer not only playing a crucial part in shaping the tourism value chain (Renfors, 2022), but tourism offering a space to stimulate consumers’ desire and knowledge regarding the source of daily products.

At the same time, this presentation critically discusses the motivations of companies to offer “product origin tours” as a marketing strategy to further profit-driven interests and thus contribute to the machinery of capitalism through practices of greenwashing. This presentation is of conceptual nature, discussing the significance and meaning of a kind of tourism where the true “soul” and origin of the product are at its core. It does so by drawing on examples such as tourism linked to the production of wine, beef, chocolate or herbs in Austria. At the same time, it presents first ideas for primary research avenues with both tourists and communities in “production sites” in the destination. The aim is therefore to create a research agenda for a kind of tourism that has the potential to challenge consumption and production patterns in tourism and beyond.

## **Reshaping ‘Maps of Compassion’ through International Volunteering. Learning from Global South**

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In the last decade, social research scholars have examined North-South geographical imaginaries with respect of how they are enacted through international volunteers’ experiences and how they are mirrored in contemporary international development debates. Mostafanezhad (2013) has coined the term ‘maps of compassion’ to pinpoint one of the main components of the international volunteers’ geographical imaginaries. However, in such North-South spatial binary, the majority of the studies was conducted by researchers from the Global North and mainly focused on the perspective of Global North volunteers. To go beyond this limit, the general purpose of this research is to explore and understand the geographical imaginaries of international volunteers from the Global South that might contribute to the so-called ‘maps of compassion’. Particularly, the study is conducted with nine international volunteers from the Global South who volunteered in Germany, using two photo elicited focus group discussions (FGDs). The geographical imaginaries of the Global South volunteers emerged in the FGDs reflect an orientalist narrative: the Global North is perceived homogeneously as modern, advanced and civilized. The volunteers perceive themselves as learners, travellers to the ‘modern world’ offered by the Global North, which is far from the altruistic approach – an essential constituent of ‘maps of compassion’. Moreover, the study shows that the volunteers from the Global South are not estranged from the idea of traveling with productive outcomes, where they develop themselves and expand their network. Apparently, international volunteering is a practice that is naturally ‘productive’ and a worthy attempt to experience different cultures and other countries in a global economy. Hence, it underlines the presence of a neoliberalist ideology in international volunteering experience. Overall, from the research findings and discussion, international volunteering is a complex phenomenon that harbours various complications of different ideologies. The legacies of imperialism that centres around the Global North are evident. Therefore, it is critical to have a wider awareness of delinking from a western-centric way of thinking to move forward decolonial justice.

## **Ethical travel post-Covid: The importance of connecting with community in Cambodia**

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In the decade prior to the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent halt to tourism in early 2020, Cambodian tourism was rapidly increasing. However, the majority of these tourists (58%) only visited one region– Siem Reap – the gateway town for the heritage-listed Angkor complex (Asian Development Bank, 2022). This saw the overdevelopment or ‘overtourism’ of the region (and the country more broadly) with large investment from key markets such as China. While a key focus of Siem Reap’s Provincial Tourism Development Master Plan 2021-2035 is to boost



the mass tourism numbers, this conflicts with the national approach. The emphasis of Cambodia's National Tourism Recovery Roadmap 2021-2025 is on resilience and sustainability. It is the latter that is the focus of this study. In retaliation to Cambodia's environmentally unsustainable tourism expansion, as well as to an unearthing of the exploitation of children in the tourism industry (Guiney, 2018; Guiney & Mostafanezhad, 2015), several groups and community organisations began to emerge which delivered and supported alternative (sustainable) tourism in Cambodia (Carter et al. 2015). Our research emerged in response to the burgeoning responsible tourism offerings and the literature on sustainable tourism in the Global South. It is also a response to concerns that travel organisations and travellers can perpetuate global inequalities and extend neo-colonialist structures in developing countries (Chilufya, Hughes, & Scheyvens, 2019). Using a qualitative approach, we ask: how ethical alternative forms of travel can best get done in practice?, particularly given global inequalities, neo-colonialism and post-crisis. We undertook online semi-structured interviews with 11 local community-run tourism owners/operators that proclaim to be 'ethical' in nature. These are members of Collective for Good and/or Experience Mekong Collection which showcase responsible and sustainable travel experiences in Siem Reap and the Greater Mekong Subregion respectively. As a research team we conducted broad thematic analysis manually and via NVivo and came together to compare our coding. Our major themes centre on defining ethical business as 'doing the right thing'; cultural challenges to ethical business; cultural and value tensions; community as enablers to ethical business; and Covid disruptions. Based on our findings, we present a best practice framework for practicing ethical travel in Cambodia that may be transferable to other countries, especially those in the Global-South.

### **Not inclusive tourism: cognitive barriers for accessibility in Spanish destinations**

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This study investigates the degree of implementation of good practices in the development of resources, strategies and means that facilitate cognitive accessibility for all those who wish to enjoy holidays in urban environments in Spain. As established by the UNWTO (2022), inclusive tourism "seeks that tourist environments, products and services can be enjoyed on equal terms by anyone, with or without disabilities" which it also promotes through the proposal of a guide to good practices that already are being developed, although up to now it is an area with limited examples at the international level. The complexity lies in the fact that in tourism, to make vacations inclusive, it must include the entire chain from the beginning to the end of the trip, which includes services, products, and the destination. We will do a review that allows us to identify the adaptations and the development of practices that contemplate the diversity of uses and accesses, proposing practices that are inclusive. The first objective is to obtain an overview, in the form of a map, of the state of the art of accessible and inclusive tourism in urban spaces in Spain. The second objective is to identify reasons perceived by the agents linked to the tourist activity (stakeholders) that have influenced the limited implementation of measures to promote autonomy and access to information with equal conditions. The factors that influence the potential development of resources and strategies that allow greater access to tourism for all are analyzed from a multiple perspective, which includes knowing the political agendas in the administration, training and attitude among professionals and the availability of associations. to participate in processes to update measures: (1) with institutions dedicated to tourism promotion

to learn about the plans that are included in destination planning that promote the development of these objectives. (2) Assessment of workers in the sector to know the frequently detected needs of services offered and specific training. (3) With associations representing groups that are related to these demands (cognitive disabilities, seniors, etc). The methodology used is mixed, with quantitative and qualitative data. The results inform us of a considerable delay in the planning and management of destinations to promote inclusion, the lack of training for professionals in the sector and the need for collaboration and participation of the community related to functional diversity, among the most featured.

## **Tourism Education in Austria in Transition to Sustainability?**

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Non-academic tourism education has long been criticized for focusing teaching content on the everyday practice of the hospitality sector and neglecting the teaching of competences for strategic thinking, especially for an orientation of work areas towards sustainability. In Austria, where tourism education at non-academic level has a long and successful tradition, the consideration of sustainability aspects in the curriculum is explicitly required by law since 2015. This applies to gender and diversity competences and to competences in the field of economic efficiency, regionality and sustainability in its three dimensions. To evaluate the current state of implementation of these legal requirements, a survey was recently conducted among the 27 tourism schools in Austria using an online questionnaire. The survey comprised 6 closed and 8 open questions on the extent of the integration of sustainability in teaching, on the concrete form of the teaching of sustainability, and especially on the challenges about the fulfilment of the legal requirements. The survey had a response rate of 71% (22 out of 27 participating schools). The results give the impression that sustainability already plays a role in the tourism schools and, with one exception, meets with "high" to "very high" interest among the students. In concrete terms, the topic is integrated by most schools as a cross-sectional topic in as many subjects as possible. Preference is given to resource-saving aspects such as the reduction of food waste, the consideration of regionality and seasonality as well as the reduction of energy consumption and emissions. Nevertheless, the commitment to date is self-critically assessed as "somewhat too little" or even "clearly too little". For example, no indications of the relevance of teaching climate competence can be derived from the answers. However, this was not explicitly asked about. As desired support for the stronger integration of sustainability in tourism education, additional teaching units as well as suitable further training offers for tourism teachers were mentioned most frequently. While these results give a diverse picture, there is a widespread acceptance of the need for practice-oriented tourism education to be aligned with the principles of sustainability to continue to be successful and credible. This could be cautiously optimistically interpreted as a form of paradigm shift in tourism education. As is well known, the practical implementation of a new paradigm is a long way over numerous hurdle. Future research in this area should therefore focus more on how educational institutions and especially tourism teachers can best be supported and empowered to communicate sustainability and climate competence confidently, convincingly and persuasively.

## Assessing Tourism's Contribution to build a Circular Economy: A Case from Sweden

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Tourism literature has adopted the concept of circular economy only recently (Sørensen & Bærenholdt, 2020; Vargas-Sánchez, 2021). It has been put forward that tourism's circular socio-relational spaces facilitate regenerative processes for places, natural assets and living creatures by prompting a multiplicity of transformative relations, interactions and networks among stakeholders (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022, 344). Circular economies are characterized by synergies and symbiosis among different industrial activities, socio-cultural resources and sectors which mutually contribute to their improvement. Despite these arguments and although circular tourism requires methodological knowledge, indicators and data to evaluate this new paradigm, literature remained mostly conceptual so far. Behind this background we present an advanced Input-Output (IO) methodology to assess how regional tourism may favor the formation of a circular regional economy. The approach has been employed for the Swedish county of Jämtland-Härjedalen. First, regional IO-coefficients are obtained after adjusting National IO-tables by regional tourism's size in terms of regional tourism employment, selling and purchasing, respectively (Flegg & Tohmo, 2013). Subsequently, the method provides estimates for regional tourism's economic output over multiple periods (Kronenberg et al., 2018). However, to assess tourism's contribution to socio-economic autonomy and to enhancing the circular economy, we focus on inter-sectoral linkages, leakages, and importation shares induced by regional tourism sectors. Interestingly, among all tourism-related sectors, the creative, arts & entertainment sectors demonstrate strongest linkages with the regional economy. However, development trends after 2010 are negative implying that the potential to empower the regional circular economy weakened over time. Moreover, regional import shares differ considerably across regional tourism sectors. After discussing findings in more detail, the proposed method will be critically examined by its ability to assess tourism's contribution in building a regional circular economy. The outlook sketches how intersectoral linkages mirrored by regional IO-coefficients could be used to conduct network analyses at the macro-level of regional tourism sectors. Technically, sets of structurally equivalent and strongly interlinked sectors are identified (Tsekeris, 2017). It is then possible to determine tourism sub-sectors that are most strongly involved in the regional economic production process, thus strengthening regional circular economies.

## **'I experience, therefore I am': Transformational tourism in small/medium-sized cities in Europe**

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Fuelled by escalating attention towards liveability, sustainability, and overall hedonism, which has gained increasing momentum since the COVID-19 pandemic, tourists are now seeking experiences in urban spaces that are more meaningful, memorable, and transformative. Usually associated with positive sensorial and emotional cues, these experiences give tourists the possibility to achieve their full potential as individuals, acting as the 'prosumers' of the activities they engage in, while simultaneously fostering greater quality of life and mental and physical health and wellbeing. This presentation will reflect upon the development of transformational tourism experiences in small and medium-sized cities in Europe and how they are becoming privileged loci for tourists' involvement in co-created/co-designed activities, volunteering, close host-tourist relationships through community-based tourism activities, green tourism, and collaborative consumption, to mention a few examples. Although these cities are similarly subjected to global imperatives and cosmopolitanism, they are usually characterised by their worldliness, being more liveable, inclusive, and human scale, boasting a slower pace of life and an increasing sense of place and belonging. In addition, their size and compactness necessarily increase mobility and social interaction, which facilitates processes of creativity and innovation that capitalise on home talent and creative genius, thus empowering local communities and encouraging more active and participatory expressions of citizenship. This examination, whose methodological framework privileges literature review, participation observation, and fieldwork in some small/medium-sized cities in Europe, will also take into consideration how the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, launched by the European Commission in 2020, is now shaping city spaces and activities to become more aesthetically appealing, sustainable, and inclusive. Through the NEB Compass, launched in February 2023, decision makers are now being urged to apply the NEB principles and motto - 'beautiful, sustainable, together' - to the initiatives they produce. Thus, this presentation will also seek to analyse how the NEB can contribute to the development of transformational tourism experiences, especially in small/medium-sized cities in Europe.

## **Sustainable, physical active transport in rural areas: a Public Health perspective**

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It is known that increasing physically active travel is contributing to population health. It was shown, that active travel decreases the risk of all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease incidence and diabetes (Dinu et al, 2019). Evidence on the impact of active travel on physical fitness suggests that it has positive effects on several attributes of physical fitness (Henriques-Neto et al, 2020). Above all, active travel contributes substantially to accumulation of physical

activity (Sahlquist et al, 2012; Olivier et al, 2020). In addition, active traveling is also considered to be an important climate change mitigation behaviour (Ratwatte et al, 2023) and the potential to decrease emissions is considerable (Bauer, 2021). Research supporting the important role of active travel is well developed for urban areas. Less is known about the role of active travel in rural and remote communities, where travel distances are long and public transport is sparse (Ratwatte et al, 2023). The presentation will deal with defining active travel and its determinants and measures to promote active travel with special consideration of issues related to rural areas. However, first of all the term “rural” needs more attention. There is a variety of definitions available. To figure out the most adequate for a specific research aim or practice project may have major implications on the results. Different definitions of “rural” will be discussed and a definition for the purpose of the discussion on active travel will be proposed. (Hart et al, 2005). Then the presentation will look at the role of active travel to achieve recommended physical activity levels. The narrow concept of active travel (mainly walking and cycling) and an expanded understanding will be introduced (Abbildung 4, Cook et al). Furthermore, the determinants of active travel and frameworks that explain travel behaviour will be presented (PASTA framework, Götschi et al 2017 und Guell et al social theory). Hereby, central diversity factors like gender, race or people with disabilities will be touched on. The application of the concepts of active travel and its determinants to rural areas will be discussed. A wide range of measures varying from policies on various levels to positive and negative strategies to change travel behaviour on a population level are available. The second part of the presentation will deliver an insight into possible interventions and their effectiveness from a public health perspective. (Winters et al, 2017, Xial et al, 2022) The question will be asked which interventions might be adequate to be implemented in rural communities.

## **Barriers and Opportunities of Responsible Marketing in Tourist Accommodation Businesses**

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What are the barriers and opportunities that Responsible Marketing plays in promoting and delivering tourism experiences designed to improve quality of life in tourism? Based on my consultancy with independent SMEs in the tourism accommodation sector, I share insights into the challenges of encouraging a mindset change around marketing sustainability. From my extensive interaction with owners and managers, I have detected a fear of doing things differently, not just because of the time investment required to implement changes, but also due to fear of how incorporating sustainability may change existing business operations and structures. This leads to token attempts to make what already exists green, or greener, rather than considering the holistic trajectory required to design experiences that are intrinsically more sustainable. We know a growing number of people are concerned for their health and many travellers seek rejuvenation and renewal, and one of the roles of marketing sustainability is to promote how and why it delivers a deeper, more connected, and restful experience. I provide examples of how SMEs can successfully use health and wellness to build and market sustainable products that meet consumer’s needs, as well as insights into the main barriers to responsible marketing success that have been highlighted in my work with business owners. To demonstrate this, I will share the six-part framework I use in my coaching programme that breaks down the necessary work that needs to be done to build and market a more sustainable

business into manageable pieces. It allows me to explain the areas where business owners struggle to incorporate change and how tailored coaching helps overcome their struggles, as well as the opportunities that redesigning products and services with sustainability and purpose in mind can bring to the business. A summary will be made of the challenges and fears business owners face in embracing and integrating sustainability into business operations and marketing, and the conclusion will suggest areas for further research to help tourist accommodation providers a) understand the benefits of doing this work, and b) more easily navigate the challenges once embarked on the journey.

## **Improving Sustainability Literacy for Staff in Tourist Accommodation Businesses**

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Introduction of Learning Topic: It has been detected that sustainability action in tourist accommodation businesses requires all staff to understand why they are being asked to make changes to the way they do things. As a result of this need, a six-module training programme has been created by WISE Sustainability that is online, interactive, engaging, and innovative. Key Applied Theories/Concepts/Models: Merrill's Principles of Instruction has been used as the core problem-based model as it includes demonstrations and examples to gradually build knowledge based on the daily tasks, roles, and experience of staff in the hospitality industry. The training follows the principles of activation, demonstration, application, and integration as being necessary to the success of a learner. Learning Objectives: • To enhance general literacy around the subject of climate change mitigation and adaptation. • To encourage behavioural change at the micro level (i.e., the way people do routine things every day at work and at home), to reduce energy and water consumption and to minimize waste generation. • To provide the tools and confidence for tourist accommodation owners to find success in their attempts to integrate sustainability into their business operations. The Teaching Method: Technology-based learning created with instructional design principles and delivered through an online platform employing gamification and interaction to encourage self-motivation, progress, and completion. The Learning Experience: Each Learning Block (Module) is made up of a series of Learning Experiences (Lessons) that are structured to improve literacy by connecting the teaching to real-life scenarios at work. They are designed to build on one another, enhancing general subject knowledge and encouraging behavioural change. Conclusion: This six-part training programme is currently being beta tested by tourist accommodation sites in various geographical locations. A summary will be shared of the findings that detail the challenges hospitality staff face when learning about sustainability and will also highlight the areas that are the most successful in achieving the learning objectives. The conclusion will suggest areas for further research around encouraging behavioural change through sustainability training and will invite interested parties to use this training as an intervention tool for further research.

## Climate educational and experiencing city tours: overcoming the attitude-behaviour-gap

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The tourism industry is responsible for approximately 7% of global emissions. In order to impede global warming it is a necessity of the entire industry to rethink tourism in a way that enables sustainable mobility and minimizes the negative impact of travelling on the environment. In this context, especially since the covid 19 pandemic, local and regional tourism have gained greater significance. Studies show there exists a so-called attitude-behaviour-gap, meaning people are aware of climate change and the impact of global warming caused by humans but do not actually adapt their behavior accordingly. In consequence, Stuttgart by Bike (a local bike tour and team building event organizer) developed a concept of involving not only tourists but also citizens into the process of improving their own city's climate by organizing climate educational and experiencing tours. Goal is to impart a climate-friendly behavior by combining experience tourism with educational measures. Participants are empowered to act themselves by absorbing the necessary knowledge during the tour to then change behavioral patterns in their daily lives. Based on gamification-approaches participants are engaged in active measures (e.g. watering trees, collecting waste and correct recycling, etc.) throughout the tour. Tours are guided by local guides and include places of interest as well as touristic attractions and culinary stops at local businesses, thereby supporting the local economy. The concept of integrating educational and experience tourism aims at sensitizing individual tourists and citizens as well as organizations carrying out team (building) events fostering corporate social and environmental responsibility. SbB's concept of educational-adventure tours supports local tourism and development. It is expected to have a direct positive impact on the climate through the active mobility and measures taken during the tour but also indirect positive impacts through the educational component. Goal is to establish a form of tourism that unites environmental responsibility with the classic expected tourism experience on a global scale. SbB is a local bicycle tour operator offering bicycle rental, cycling tours, team building events and repair as well as cycling classes. Its vision is to transform Stuttgart, an automotive-dominated metropolis into a cycling-friendly city. Its mission is to demonstrate locals how smooth cycling can be and to get them to cycle more, not only in leisure time but also for commuting. A new tour concept has been developed which empowers tour participants to acquire knowledge on environmental issues and take actions right on the tour. Participants learn to integrate theoretical advice into their behavior on the spot. The merit of this innovative tour concept is the combination of game-based learning and empowerment of citizens and tourists inducing a positive impact on the environment. SbB's concept of educational-adventure tours supports local tourism and development.

## **The PABEM Tool: Participative Needs Assessment for Enhancing Active Transport in Rural Communities**

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The design of the built environment in communities has a significant impact on the physical activity levels of citizens and tourists, as well as the sustainability and resilience of the community in the face of climate change. However, existing tools for quantitatively evaluating the built environment were primarily designed for urban areas and created by experts. To address this gap, the Participative Assessment of Built Environment Modifications (PABEM) was developed as a needs assessment tool that involves citizens, tourists and community decision-makers in a structured process to identify necessary changes for promoting walking and cycling in rural areas, while also taking into account the community's sustainability goals. This presentation outlines the seven steps involved in the PABEM process: (i) qualitative interviews, (ii) expert assessment of the built environment, (iii) citizen assessment of the built environment, (iv) social media interaction, (v) household questionnaire, (vi) participatory workshop, and (vii) evaluation and scoring workshop. The process was evaluated following its initial use in three rural towns in Austria. The PABEM process identified key modifications necessary in rural towns, including the revitalization of existing walking and cycling facilities, the construction of new barrier-free and safe sidewalks, cycling routes to schools, public transport facilities, and central public places, and cleaner and inviting seating. Other necessary modifications included creating a car-free school environment, reducing speed in town centers, increasing the number of crosswalks, and improving cleanliness in public places. One of the strengths of PABEM is its emphasis on collaborative participation between citizens, tourists, and local decision-makers, which encourages ongoing dialogue about the built environment's requirements, user needs, and opportunities for implementation throughout the process. By engaging citizens, tourists, and decision-makers in this participatory process, PABEM fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the built environment and its impact on the sustainability and resilience of the community.

## **Sustainable mobility for the first and last mile access to the JUFA hotels in Austria: a scientific study**

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This study addresses the need for sustainable transport options in the hotel sector, focusing on JUFA hotels in Styria and Lower Austria, Austria. The heavy reliance on private vehicles and the limited availability of public transport in the region contribute to traffic congestion and environmental concerns. The aim of this study is to explore sustainable transport solutions for JUFA hotels in order to mitigate negative environmental impacts and improve the overall guest



experience. By analysing the current transport infrastructure, assessing guest preferences and challenges, and gathering expert insights, the study aims to develop practical and effective solutions tailored to the specific context of JUFA Hotels. The methodology adopted a multi-dimensional approach, including site visits, personal experiments, literature reviews, surveys and expert interviews. Site visits and personal experience revealed significant transport problems due to limited access to public transport and inadequate last mile connectivity. Surveys confirmed guests' strong desire for more sustainable travel options, with the majority expressing a willingness to switch to greener modes of transport. Based on the data collected, proposed solutions were developed. These solutions include implementing shuttle services between hotels and public transport hubs, improving cycling infrastructure, introducing attractive public transport ticket options and establishing carpooling and ride-sharing programmes. Collaboration with local transport companies and the use of technology-based platforms for on-demand systems were recommended. E-bikes were also suggested for local transport and leisure activities. The study concludes that the proposed solutions offer practical and feasible approaches to addressing the transport challenges around JUFA hotels. Implementation of these solutions is expected to encourage guests to choose sustainable transport alternatives, thereby reducing traffic problems and environmental impacts. The results contribute to the promotion of sustainable tourism and transport in Austria and can serve as a guide for JUFA hotels and other accommodation providers facing similar challenges. Cooperation with regional tourism associations and local stakeholders is essential for effective implementation and long-term sustainability. In summary, this study highlights the importance of sustainable transport for JUFA hotels in Styria and Lower Austria. The proposed solutions provide valuable insights into current transport challenges and offer practical approaches to improve the guest experience, reduce environmental impacts and contribute to the overall sustainability goals of the region. Further research and action is recommended to promote sustainable transport options for JUFA hotels and to advance the wider sustainable tourism efforts in Austria.

### **What determines the quality of PT connections between cities and mountain areas?**

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Complete title: What determines the quality of PT connections between urban centers and rural hiking tours in Austria – results from a discrete-choice experiment Outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism have seen a steady rise of interest in the past few decades, especially from the part of urban citizens. While being economically desirable, the increase in mostly car-bound recreation trips results in various negative externalities that could be prevented by using public transport (PT). In Austria, PT-accessible outdoor activities are abundant but are often seen as less attractive due to limited accessibility or flexibility. Such perceived accessibility issues may relate to various aspects, including an actual lack of PT stops, insufficient service intervals as well as the reliance on less comfortable and reliable bus services. The present paper aims to understand in more detail how the quality of PT connections is conceptualized and assessed by urban outdoor recreationists in Austria. To do this, a survey was conducted with mountaineers (hikers and climbers) in Austria in May and June 2023. The survey consisted of two parts: (1) The first part includes questions on their sociodemographics as well as their

outdoor recreation and transport preferences. In this section, respondents also select the starting point for their recreation trips from a list of eight major Austrian cities. (2) The second part consists of eight randomly selected sets of a two-dimensional discrete choice experiment (DCE). In this DCE, respondents are asked to choose their preferred alternative among three hiking tours with two transport options (car/PT) each. For each of the three alternatives, the DCE provides information on both hiking features (i.e. distance, duration, elevation, round-trip or crossing) and transport features (i.e. duration, nr. of changes, type of PT: long-distance vs. regional trains vs. busses and their share of the total trip). The DCE results will be used to build an indicator for public transport-based accessibility of mountain sports destinations in Austria. The weights each of the included transport features has on PT quality will be determined using a discrete choice model. The present paper illustrates the results of the discrete choice model regarding the importance of different transport features for the perceived quality of PT connections for outdoor recreation trips. The derived indicator is relational; hence it assesses the quality of O-D-combinations between the eight origins and all included hiking tour destinations. Furthermore, the results include descriptive results on the PT quality from both an origin and a destination perspective. This will allow us to derive insights on clusters of good mountain sport accessibility and “black holes” where we can find a supply of hiking paths but a lack of high-quality (or any) PT access. These results can serve tourism destinations and local transport providers in designing better and more needs-oriented transport offers.

### **Addressing the Self-Society Duality: An Analytical Framework for Post-Pandemic Volunteer Tourism**

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Volunteer tourism is positioned at the intersection of two seemingly conflicting pastime activities: traveling, which largely revolves around self-oriented aspects (e.g., pleasure), and volunteering, which revolves around society-oriented aspects (e.g., aid). This apparent self–society duality leads to ambiguities in academic and non-academic debates regarding the morality of volunteers and of volunteer tourism as a social practice. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased this duality. In pandemic times human mobility between locales also means the mobility of the virus variants across the locales, which makes a personal quest for pleasure run counter to public health and the common good. Since adhering to moral standards is an essential part of individuals’ self-worth, individuals tend to avoid participating in activities that can undermine their self-worth. In the case of tourism, risking public health can stop individuals from traveling. This risk is even higher in volunteer tourism because the practice usually takes place in deprived regions in the Global South. Therefore, understanding post-pandemic volunteer tourism requires addressing the self-society duality analytically and theoretically. Drawing on pragmatic sociology and analyzing 48 in-depth interviews with volunteer tourists this study addresses this matter. The findings show that volunteer tourists comprise narratives that intertwine the self-serving aspects of volunteering and multiple beliefs about the common good. Through these narratives, interviewees move between self-serving and society-serving aspects, overcome moral ambiguity, and deem themselves as living up to moral standards. The different elements that comprise the interviewees’ narratives reveal a narrative form about moral good particular to tourism. Highlighting these elements, this study proposes an analytical framework

through which volunteer tourists' moral views and the relation between self-serving and society-serving in volunteer tourism can be explored.

## **Connecting cultural landscapes and local nature-related knowledge into a cultural route in Lower Austria**

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This study aims to investigate the sustainable use of local/traditional nature-related knowledge and cultural landscapes in different rural areas of Lower Austria, and to analyse their potential of becoming unified cultural routes, representing rural traditions, agricultural knowledge and local products. The described cases from rural Austria, where nature-related knowledge and practices (e.g. agricultural knowledge, wine-making etc.) serve as tourism offers, demonstrate how they can contribute to sustainable tourism development by creating shared benefits for the communities. Furthermore, practicing and recreating traditional and local knowledge expands cultural capital and contributes to building regional identities. The focus is on cultural landscapes and local and traditional ecological knowledge (Berkes, 2017) as part of the intangible cultural heritage, which can be considered as an attraction in special interest/cultural tourism. In Europe such nature-related activities (e.g. collecting wild herbs) are no more a “necessity” but rather a “pleasurable activity” or “time off” in search for “connectedness with nature” (Grasser et al., 2012). The growing public interest towards this type of knowledge, especially wine-making, collecting and using herbs, gardening etc., and the trend of romanticizing traditional knowledge about nature (Davis & Ruddle, 2010), is also reflected in the “do it yourself” culture and media. As indicated in a previous study (Katelieva & Muhar, 2022), some rural cultural tourism offers in Lower Austria, (e.g. the “Poppy village Armschlag” and the wine-making offer “Rent a Rebstock/Retzerland” ) are rather remote and remain isolated from other, often similar cultural tourism products in the region. Physical remoteness, insufficient public transportation and the rather small size of the attraction/offer makes it difficult to attract visitors for a whole day or a weekend. By linking these offers and creating cultural routes, based on cultural landscapes and shared agricultural knowledge and traditions related to them, they would diversify their offer, become more visible and fill a market niche by “telling the story” of local agriculture, local products and the related traditional knowledge and culture. In this study data from 19 interviews with members of four communities were analysed and categorised in “social” “cultural” “educational” and “bio-physical” factors for creating and participating in such tourism offers. These results show that bottom-up approach is crucial for creating sustainable tourism products based on shared cultural assets, such as knowledge, as the product success depends fully on community members’ drive, action and cooperation. Furthermore, mechanisms of stakeholder engagement, benefit-sharing, and other governance practices are boosted by engaging in such offers, leading to better local business cooperations and social benefits. Furthermore the potential for connecting several isolated tourism offers in one cultural route will be analysed using transdisciplinary research methods (participatory approach). An unified product, experience design and marketing details will be elaborated with local stakeholders and different scenarios for establishing a cultural route will be developed. Furthermore, ownership issues and opposite understandings of cultural and educational values as potential challenges to strengthening social capital, as well as possible solutions will be discussed.

## Requirements for a regional cycle path network for everyday and touristic traffic, theory and practice

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Background Due to the climate crisis and the possible secondary diseases caused by obesity, people need to change their mobility behaviour towards an environmentally friendly, but above all more active mobility. Walking and cycling can help the environment and reduce obesity through physical activity. Objective Research The RVS (Road Traffic Regulations) and the CROW "Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic" provide a good planning basis for the design of a well-functioning cycle infrastructure network. But how well can these guidelines be applied in existing situations? The aim of this project is to investigate if there is a match or a discrepancy between theory and practice. Research methods The method used in the research is twofold. The first is a literature review of the main design guidelines for cycling infrastructure and their effect on cycling. The second part is the actual application of the found factors on their functionality to improve cycling infrastructure. For this purpose, the route Amstetten - Ardagger was examined. There is a public demand for a good cycle connection between these towns. But can this connection become an attractive cycle route when the design guidelines are implemented? Outcomes The RVS indicates how the cycle infrastructure should be designed. For example, when mixed traffic (motorised traffic and cyclists) is possible and when the two forms of mobility should be separated. The RVS also gives information about the width of the cycling infrastructure, the hierarchy of routes, the expected number of cyclists per 24 hours and the corresponding level of development A to D. However, these are all technical interpretations for making cycling more attractive. There is no link between these technical guidelines and the actual use of cycling infrastructure. The CROW "Design manual for bicycle traffic", however, addresses the factors that are important for people to see cycling as a good alternative to satisfy their mobility needs. These factors are 1. Continuity: Cycling infrastructure should be connected to form a coherent whole. 2. Directness: Cyclists are only willing to make small detours. 3. Safety: Cyclists are vulnerable in mixed traffic due to differences in mass and speed. 4. Comfort. The characteristics are • Avoidance of unnecessary effort (as little as possible stop-and-go, and gradients / differences in height). • Flat surfaces. • Few conflict points with motorised traffic. 5. Attractiveness: The attractiveness is strongly influenced by the subjective perception of the user. But a route with a pleasant and varied environment is considered attractive. Using the factors from the technical guidelines of the RVS on the desired route between Amstetten and Ardagger, a direct route is possible, but not feasible in reality. The problem is that it is in an environment with existing spatial functions. The available width of the space isn't sufficient for high quality cycle infrastructure according to the RVS guidelines. This means that land must be acquired from residents/businesses, which is very difficult to do. Therefore, possible alternative routes are sought where the RVS could be applied correctly. The problem with these routes is that they are very indirect, not very comfortable due to differences in altitude and gradients, and not very attractive as they go through an open agricultural landscape with no variation, shade, etc. This means that there is a great discrepancy between theory and practice within planning cycling infrastructure and therefore are difficult to use to stimulate people to use the bike as main transport mode. Conclusion Technical design

guidelines improve the quality of cycle infrastructure since it is well thought through. The problem is that they are only technical guidelines and do not correspond to the needs of the users. The opportunities to promote cycling as a mode of transport are negated by strict regulations, which ultimately makes it difficult to implement the required infrastructure in the existing environment according to the 5 factors of CROW.

## **Inappropriate behaviour towards under-represented groups at Finnish music festivals**

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The awareness of inappropriate behaviour at music festivals has increased during the last two decades. However, academic research on the issue is still limited, concentrating on the English-speaking western world and women's experiences. Under-represented groups have not gained much prominence. One of the reasons might be the difficulty of reaching them for research purposes. The Finnish Festival Barometer 2022, a biennial audience survey, included a specific section on inappropriate behaviour at music festivals. Over 18,000 responses were received, including many members of under-represented groups (N=1,395; 8% of all respondents), which enabled us to scrutinise their experiences. The measured forms of inappropriate behaviour were: harassment because of gender; sexual orientation; ethnicity; disability, functional or mental capability; age; language; clothing or appearance; sexual harassment; physically threatening situations, and physical violence. Overall, 30% of all respondents had experienced inappropriate behaviour at Finnish music festivals. However, the figure was as high as 49% for those belonging to an under-represented group. The defined under-represented groups were: ethnic or national; language; religious or ideological; gender; sexual minorities; disabled; chronically ill, and other. Those in any of the under-represented groups had experienced proportionally more inappropriate behaviour than others, that is, members of the "majority". Furthermore, those belonging to two or more minorities had faced it even more. For example, 10% of members of the majority had experienced harassment because of gender, whereas the figure was 30% for those belonging to two or more minorities. It was predictable that ethnic minorities faced harassment because of ethnicity, and disabled people experienced harassment because of disability, functional or mental capability. It was alarming that all the minority groups also experienced physically threatening situations more often than those in the majority. The analysis demonstrated that belonging to any minority group increased the threat of facing inappropriate behaviour and thus, increased the chances of spoiling the festival experience. If there were intersecting minorities, for example being a member of both gender and sexual minority, or being a disabled member of an ethnic minority, the possibility of facing inappropriate behaviour increased even more. This phenomenon is generally well-known in society, and it is shocking to be found in such high numbers at festivals as well. Facing inappropriate behaviour means that these festivalgoers are prevented from having fun and enjoying themselves. Eventually, they might cease attending festivals altogether, hence reducing the diversity of the

participants. It is essential that social inclusion is improved at festivals through determined implementation of safer spaces policies.

## **Climate change projections and adaptation of water-related tourism: The case of Slovenia**

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In Slovenia, water-based activities such as bathing in thermal or natural waters and participating in water sports are an important part of tourism offer. The research aims at analysing climate change impacts on Slovenian water-based tourism to provide appropriate climate change adaptation recommendations for tourism stakeholders in Slovenia. The analysis was performed on seven different weather stations in Slovenia, which were chosen as they are geographically close to tourist destinations known for water-based activities. Different temperature and precipitation indicators were analysed as thermal comfort is one of the tourists' most important decision factors. It also heavily affects the daily habits of the tourists on holiday. Climate index CIT-3S was calculated for historical and future periods concerning RCP 2.6, RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 scenarios. An index approach is often used in assessing weather suitability for tourism because of the multifaceted nature of weather and the complex ways that weather variables come together to give meaning to climate for tourism. Climate change projections and past data were interpreted for each of the selected destinations, taking into account the ideal climate conditions necessary for a comfortable holiday experience. The projections show an increase in the number of days per year with ideal conditions for all analysed destinations. Lakes and rivers will likely become more attractive in the future with an increasing number of days with higher temperatures, while coastal destinations can be negatively affected due to extreme temperatures. Among the most serious threats of climate change on water-based tourism is the increase in extreme temperature, directly affecting human health safety. High air temperatures are a major health risk factor, especially for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, chronic patients and children, which are dominant visitors in Slovene natural spas. Heatwaves in Slovenia will increase in number, strength and duration. Higher air temperature also implies an increase in water temperatures, which negatively increases the chances of bacterial and chemical infections and leads to an increased bloom of harmful algae. Projections also show a decrease in ideal conditions for sports activities on wild waters and fishing. Ultimately, the paper outlines the proposed adaptation measures at the individual, organisational, local, destination and national levels. The most important areas of proposed adaptation measures are infrastructure adaptation, measures in response to the health safety of both personnel and tourists, activities adjustments according to the time of the day and the adaptations of organisations to the future prolongation of the seasons. This paper is an output of Target research programme Climate change and sustainable tourism development in Slovenia co-financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.

## **Volunteering and place attachment. How do eco-communities foster environmental stewardship?**

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Ecovillages are intentional communities formed by people who share a common vision and lifestyle goals based on principles of sustainability. People who join eco-communities often want to live according to what they perceive as an authentic or unconventional way of living. These places often rely on organic food production, sustainable architecture and systems design, and close-knit social ties to support themselves. Ecovillages often invite volunteers to participate in their daily operations, and many even offer educational opportunities to their visitors. Through these various opportunities, such as internships and programs, volunteers at eco-villages get educated in environmental sustainability and alternative ways of living. The residents of ecovillages are also an important part of the learning experience of visitors by teaching them new skills during their daily activities as they integrate the community. Education in environmental sustainability is vital for the future of the planet because it aims to transform people into better environmental stewards. Environmental stewardship means living according to principles of care for the environment, seeking to have as little negative impact on it as possible. Volunteer programs can have a positive effect on the environmental behaviour of the people taking part in them. Arguably, volunteers at eco-villages can become better environmental stewards through their formation of a place attachment towards the community. Place attachment describes the relationship or bond with a place and its people that people form over time. When it comes to volunteering, researchers recognize that the connection with the community and its members, as well as the connection with other volunteers formed during the experience, is important to transformative learning. However, transformation based on the formation of place attachment during the eco-village volunteer experience has not been established as a significant element of environmental stewardship. There is little tourism research on volunteering and ecovillages. However, these places are important providers of environmental sustainability education, whilst also representing popular destinations for young adults seeking an alternative tourist experience. As such, we explored how an ecovillage influences its volunteers to become better environmental stewards. We demonstrate the role that the affective connection to place and people plays in the transformation of volunteers towards better environmental stewardship. The data was collected at Cloughjordan ecovillage, Ireland. Interviews were conducted with current and former volunteer program participants, who were asked about their experience at the eco-village. The results demonstrate that volunteers learn to appreciate soft skills over hard skills in their effort to make a difference and become better people, learn from each other and community-members to take meaningful action to care for the environment, and learn to share the community's values of environmental and social sustainability by developing attachment to its people. The results can support ecovillages in their management of educational volunteer programs, which would not only result in more successful outcomes for eco-communities, but also for global goals of educating for sustainability.

## **VR Customer Experience from Finland: Driving Personalized Service through “Extended Dinner”**

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Hospitality enterprises are embracing new digital trends and smart technology to make the customer journey as seamless and enjoyable. As a result of the development of technologies and their active implementation in various sectors of the economy, there is an urgent need to study digital experiences in the field of hospitality to create favorable conditions for the further improvement of the provision of quality services to people. This research study examines the real experience of a group of XAMK students at Kuopio (Finland) restaurant which provides an “The Extended Dinner”. The “Extended Dinner” is a unique way of dining wearing VR glasses. Results of the 7-question survey analysis “Digitalization as a part of service production in the hospitality industry” are presented in this research. Analysis shows that this experience is rather expensive and could be affordable by customers rather rare; digital technology is not creating an experience, it is only the tool of building a potentially more profitable business model and thus reaching a new level of communication with customers.

## **Party in the Polycrisis! How tourism and events will save the world**

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This abstract presents a case study of the comprehensive approach undertaken to develop an assessment and accreditation framework that integrates the principles of Doughnut Economics into an accessible and easy-to-use toolkit created for use throughout the sector. The presentation will discuss how the toolkit was designed to provide event organizers, hospitality venues and associated civic and commercial organisations with a comprehensive framework for assessing events and venues based on their sustainable and accessible provisions, providing tailored advisories as well as aggregated data sets that inform strategic decisions within a growth-agnostic context. Already in use by several HEIs across the UK (and subject of national pilots within the events commissioning and licensing practice) this presentation will offer an insight into latest developments in this work, inviting delegates to reflect on their own practice, and how they might adapt this in the future. The concept on which the toolkit is based - Doughnut Economics - forms the foundational pillar of this work. Doughnut Economics suggests an economic model that operates within the planetary boundaries and ensures social foundations for all. Using well-evidenced, community driven standards frameworks in the Green Events Code of Practice and the Attitude is Everything Charter, the toolkit presents a set of guidelines to promote sustainable and accessible event management practices across the UK that have been adapted for wider economic use. The Green Events Code of Practice emphasizes the importance of reducing energy consumption, utilizing renewable energy sources, promoting waste reduction and recycling, and encouraging the use of sustainable materials. Attitude is Everything's Charter provides a framework of best practice taken from incorporating accessibility and inclusivity principles into place management, event planning and



governance. By integrating these codes the toolkit provides a practical roadmap to help minimize organisations' ecological footprint, simultaneously prioritizing accessibility and inclusivity as part of its recommendations. Additionally, the toolkit provides advisory outputs for the user that inform the necessary measures an organisation may be required to take in order to create an accessible and sustainable environment in any context. The presentation will cover the social value model at the heart of the toolkit, which allows organisations to identify areas of improvement and focus. This model helps organisations to instantly 'action' their findings - setting sustainability targets, improving accessible provisions and developing action plans to enhance overall performance through an automated, curated advisory process. The case study will provide specific examples of how this is working in practice in Cheltenham already. By presenting a snapshot of this action research in progress, this presentation will examine the paucity of practical experience in this area, suggesting that our changing understanding of the emergent polycrisis our planet faces needs a cohesive and considered response, and detailing why the multifaceted, risk-specialist worlds of events, tourism and hospitality might actually be the ideal candidates to provide such a response.

## **Re-framing volunteer tourism: Cultural exchange in Peru and Fiji**

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This blending of short-term volunteering and development in volunteer tourism has been widely critiqued over the past decade, reflecting a tension between activities that are perceived as morally 'good' and activities that are considered to be morally insignificant, and a concern that volunteer tourism that involves volunteers from the global North working in the global South may be a form of (white) saviourism that increases the influence, reach and power of the global North under the guise of 'making a difference'. As a step towards addressing these inequalities and paradoxes, voluntourism is often now conceived of as an 'exchange', whereby both volunteers and providers or recipients benefit from the relationship. This involves a focus on relationships, mutual understanding and respect for different cultures and knowledge systems, while moving away from discourses of 'doing good', helping and development. In this paper we explore the intersection of voluntourism and cultural exchange through qualitative case studies from Peru and Fiji. The Peruvian study focussed on a small, volunteer English teaching agency that operates in both state and private schools in Lima, while the Fijian study focussed on the Fijian office of an international, for profit, youth volunteering agency. While very different, these agencies and their volunteers emphasised cultural exchange as a key purpose for volunteering, and the studies highlight the ways in which cultural exchange was used as a means of re-framing the role of volunteer tourism and circumventing the language of 'development'. Both were somewhat successful in this regard and there was potential for these encounters to increase mutual understanding and respect. However, the research also showed that emphasising cultural exchange does not automatically encourage volunteer-tourists to face difficult questions regarding inequalities and differences across cultures, and that the context of significant inequality and difference, alongside the commodification of the volunteering experience, undermines the claims to equal exchange. The studies therefore raise some

significant questions about justice, equity, and cultural understanding and we argue that voluntourism, when undertaken – as it often is – by volunteers from the global North working in the global South remains a highly inequitable, neo-colonial practice. Reframing volunteer tourism as cultural exchange may further mask and even perpetuate this injustice and inequality.

## **From Conservation to Circularity: Circular Economy in Museum Practices and Exhibitions**

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Circular economy is a concept to help the contributions to sustainability. The shift to a circular approach and business models is particularly important in the tourism sector, which has prospered in peacetime and is a key driver of income and job creation in many countries. But this sector is also prominent in terms of its negative impact on the environment: huge energy and water consumption, food waste, congestion and carbon emissions (Kaszás et al, 2021; Rodríguez et al., 2020). Cultural attractions and sights are the most visited tourism attractions – hardly any travel is realized without visiting a local museum, event or anything connected to the local or universal culture. As a central element of the tourism product, and also because of their educational nature, cultural attractions play an important role in shaping tourists' attitudes. This research explores the implementation of circular economy principles in museums of Veszprém, the European Capital of Culture 2023. The whole ECoC programme had core values one of which was sustainability - and the new developments and projects had to embrace this concept. The main goal of this research is to examine the local museums and exhibitions if they applied any part of the circular economy. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, consisting of a content analysis and case studies to investigate the current state of circularity in museums, to identify local best practices and areas for further investigation. The first step was to analyze the homepages of the museums. This content analysis was applied according to a predefined list of factors that were formulated in a dichotomous question form to increase the reliability of the data. After this good examples were chosen for interviews with the museum staff and management. The findings suggest that there is a general awareness and interest in circular economy principles, but a lack of knowledge and resources to implement circularity in museum operations and exhibitions. The interviews also reveal the potential barriers to adopting circularity in museums, such as the costs and logistics of circular initiatives, the need for stakeholder buy-in and collaboration, and the potential trade-offs between circularity and other museum objectives, such as preservation and education. The recommendations provide guidance for museums seeking to integrate circularity into their operations and exhibitions and emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and experimentation. The recommendations also highlight the potential for museums to engage visitors in circular initiatives, creating a more sustainable and participatory museum experience.

## **The Impact of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Kathmandu Durbar Square, Nepal**

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Kathmandu Durbar Square is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a prominent cultural hub in Nepal, attracting thousands of tourists every year. Cultural tours in Kathmandu Durbar Square are popular among visitors seeking to explore the rich history and heritage of the Nepalese people. There might be several problems associated with cultural tourism despite its high potential. Further, it is necessary to assess the sustainability of cultural tours on this heritage site. So, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the impacts of cultural tours in Kathmandu Durbar Square, analyzing their effects on the local community, economy, and environment. Also, the problem faced during cultural tours and the future potential of the destination heritage site is assessed. A mixed-method approach was used with a survey of 200 tourists and an in-person interview with 15 local residents. Tourists were surveyed on the site during their tour while local residents were approached on their available time for the in-depth discussion. The information collected from the tourists was analyzed in SPSS and presented as tables and graphs. The interview was transcribed, translated, coded and thematically analyzed. The survey data collected from the tourists show that the tourist preferred the unique experience and culture in Kathmandu Durbar Square. This implies that the tourists were interested in visiting heritage sites more frequently. The tourists were more fascinated with the heritage structures and carvings and the significant amount of socio-cultural diversity connected with Kathmandu Durbar Square. Moreover, the findings showed that cultural tours have a significant positive impact on the local community, as they promote cultural preservation and awareness, encourage the participation of the local community in tourism activities, and generate income for local businesses. However, cultural tours have negative impacts on the environment, as they contribute to pollution, waste generation, and habitat destruction. These negative impacts can be mitigated through responsible tourism practices, such as reducing the use of plastics and promoting sustainable transportation. In terms of the economy, cultural tours in Kathmandu Durbar Square have contributed significantly to the growth of the tourism industry in Nepal, creating jobs and generating income for local businesses. However, the over-reliance on tourism can also lead to economic vulnerability, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concludes that cultural tours in Kathmandu Durbar Square have both positive and negative impacts, and their sustainability depends on responsible tourism practices and the involvement of the local community in decision-making. Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between tourism development and cultural preservation, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed fairly among all stakeholders and that the negative impacts on the environment are minimized.

## **BeyondSnow - Enhancing the Resilience of Snow Tourism Destinations and Communities to Climate Change**

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The Interreg Alpine Space project “BeyondSnow” aims at exploring measures, sustainable development paths and implementable solutions to enhance the resilience of snow tourism destinations to climate change. Based on a thorough analysis of the snow-dependency, climate adaption strategies will be participatively developed within 10 specific pilot working areas, focusing on the amelioration of the viability for residents and the attractiveness for tourists. The pilot working areas, spatially distributed across six Alpine countries, differ in size, development level, and challenges faced by climate change. Trainings and awareness-raising activities for citizens and decision-makers at the different technical and political levels will be implemented. Participatory approaches are the fundament of the development of viable concepts for transition processes targeting climate change adaptation. An encompassing participation strategy, including sensitization, knowledge transfer, integration of stakeholders, and the public will be the approach to improve decision-making processes and herewith support governance structures. This project will contribute to awareness raising amongst stakeholders concerning climate change and its implications for winter and snow tourism. Formats of participatory methods will be used and analyzed for their impact. A practice-oriented model for citizen participation including the necessary instruments will be developed and communicated to the project partnership and beyond. The model and lessons learned are transferable to other destinations and can foster sustainable tourism development in snow tourism destinations.

## **Cultural Routes as Motors of Sustainable Regional Tourism Development: The Castle Road**

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Cultural routes are designed to thematically bundle cultural tourism offers in a specific region and thereby promote regional tourism development. When well designed they do so in a sustainable way that benefits a large number of regional stakeholders as well as addressing the interests of tourists. Key to successful sustainable development focusing on a cultural route is to coordinate efforts by a large number of stakeholders and in a common co-creative effort to strengthen regional identity. This is a crucial part of the effort to give a destination a narrative that is distinctive, which in turn gives tourists a reason to visit it. A cultural route thus has the potential to stimulate the regional economy, and because cultural routes generally are not conducive to mass tourism, the possibility to do this “softly” is great. Sustainability is therefore a natural companion in the development of a cultural route. Because they are generally built around themes involving some unique aspect of regional culture, cultural routes are almost inevitably tasked with helping to sustain and preserve cultural heritage. That often involves a combination of tangible and intangible culture—a set of historical buildings and the ideas that unite them thematically, for example. When observed from the perspective of the potential traveler along a cultural route, the route itself is a cultural journey. The narrative presented by the route encourages tourists to engage in a cultural dialogue with the landscape of the route. A pilgrimage route such as that ending at Santiago de Compostela is the most obvious example of this phenomenon, but other less famous routes perform the same function. They help inform the guest about a specific theme and at the same time encourage him or her to place what is learned into the context of what they already know, leading them to question their previous perceptions and prejudices. A outward journey is thus transformed into an inward journey that can ideally contribute to personal growth and development. The present paper will explore these themes using the Castle Road as an example. This cultural route began more than 40 years ago as a regional development project linking castles and palaces in southeastern Austria. It has recently grown to include ones in Slovenia and Croatia, as well, thus becoming a cross-border project involving 45 historically significant objects. In addition to a common marketing effort, the Castle Road also promotes sustainability by sharing experience in historic preservation as well as in cultural interpretation. Located in an historically multiethnic region, it provides the opportunity to explore themes involving both inter-ethnic cooperation and competition.

## **Inclusive sustainable packaging - cooperation between hospitality and transport**

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The hospitality industry is more and more aware of the fact, that creating and acting in a sustainable way is becoming crucial for its future. Most sustainable actions set within hospitality are related to measurements within the hotel itself, like saving energy or water, reducing food leftovers, and cutting down on carbon emissions or considering social sustainability in terms of workforce and staffing. All these procedures are highly important to the hotels themselves as well as for the customer experience. For some accommodations there is even another chance to optimize their packaged offers in terms of sustainability. Due to one of the latest reports of the UNWTO, transport-related CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions of the tourism sector are 22% of the whole emission from transport and therefore enhanced cooperations with the transport sector are essential. (cf <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/tourism-emissions-climate-change>) Another important factor are the guests, who are increasingly interested in using eco-friendly transportation. When it comes to environmentally friendly transportation, tourists are interested and open to new sustainable packaged offers which should also consider the transportation to and from the accommodation of the chosen destination. An important aim for the future is to improve cooperations between the hospitality and transportation sectors. Real sustainability goes beyond the walls of the hotel. Hence, especially making sustainable traveling not only more accessible but also more comfortable and convenient. For example, in Austria the car is still the most used means of touristic transportation for the main holiday in domestic tourism (over 80%). Travelling to a skiing destination by car is very often simply the best option, because guests can have plenty of luggage, skiers and bags, which are more comfortable to transport by car. It is the human laziness which makes people use the car instead of public transport. Therefore, it must be an important aim to find solutions to make trains or similar public transport more convenient. There are some opportunities for this problem: Hotels could offer packages which already include luggage-transport and train tickets. So, customers book their all-included holiday with all services, such as transportation of the luggage from their front door until their hotel room, the ticket for the train journey and the transportation from the train station to the accommodation at the holiday destination, for one total packaged price. Finally, there is one problem left: Tourists would like to be flexible during their holiday and like to have the possibility to explore the chosen destination by car. The solution for this problem could be to offer pool (E-)cars or (E-)bikes for their guests to be able to be as flexible as possible during their stay. All these services already exist, but they have to be arranged and coordinated to an attractive touristic package. In conclusion, this essay demonstrates the importance of cooperation and creativity in planning sustainable hotel packages. It also shows how much significance the desires and needs of guests have, especially when it comes to comfort of traveling. This abstract also gives prospects of further research demand, like sustainable cooperations in tourism.

## **An exploration of local government tourism innovation in Irish destinations: processes, triggers and roles.**

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At a time when we face significant global issues such as sustainability, climate action and post COVID-19 recovery many tourism destinations are re-thinking and re-strategizing their goals, objectives and focus. Nunes and Cooke (2020) believe that innovation needs to play a role in this new world which is focused not just on political and financial objectives. Thus, it is an appropriate time to investigate the process and triggers of innovation in tourism destinations and how this may have changed in recent times. Innovation is a key element in the development and management of tourism destinations and as noted by Hjägler (2010, p.5) the 'public sector is often a key stakeholder and codriver in tourism innovations systems'. While types of innovation have been classified as product, process, organisational/managerial, market and institutional, 'aside from a few exceptions empirical work in the area exploring determinants of the innovation process is explorative' (Visekera and Nguyen, 2018, p.998). Furthermore, there is limited research and examples of tourism innovation at the county and regional level. Thus, this paper explores what triggers innovation and what processes of innovation are utilised in county councils in the Republic of Ireland in terms of tourism and asks whether global (or other external) issues are having an impact on these activities. It further provides an overview of different types of roles that are evident in tourism innovation at the county level. A qualitative methodological approach was taken to explore in depth triggers, processes and roles of innovation. The data employed to explore this issue comprise of analysis of the tourism development plans that have emerged since COVID-19, and interviews with 18 local government officials who are responsible for tourism in their county. The key research questions addressed are: What are the triggers and processes of innovation of local government tourism officers in Ireland? What roles do these individuals play in terms of innovation in their county and what types of innovation are they involved in? What factors influence their idea generation? Have global issues such as sustainability, the war in Ukraine, climate change and COVID-19 impacted on their innovations and plans for innovation? The findings explore how innovation has been affected by COVID-19 and identifies the different innovation roles played in different county councils, ranging from facilitating to generating innovation. Consideration of global issues are evident in the shift in focus in the new tourism plans, and triggers and influencers of idea generation are identified. Thus, this paper informs deeper understanding of public sector innovation in tourism destinations and explores how global issues influence these local strategies.

## The transformational learning circle - from student, to tourism destination to academics

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**Introduction and focus of paper** The focus of this paper is an examination of transformational learning in a food tourism module on a Masters in Gastronomy and Food Studies programme offered in TU Dublin, Ireland. It explores to what extent transformative learning has taken place across 5 cohorts of students since the programme commenced. Furthermore, it explores in detail the transformative impact that was evident in the case of 5 graduates who have played integral roles in the development of food tourism in Co. Wicklow. The role of networks, shared experiences, co-location, place attachment and serendipity are identified as key factors that have driven this transformational learning to have cumulative local impact. The paper also shows how transformational learning is now happening in a circular way as the academics modify their assessment practices as they learn more from and build closer connections to the lived experience of those operating in food tourism in Co. Wicklow. **Key concepts** The concept of transformational learning was first put forward in 1978 by Mezirow. While the concept has had many iterations, and been the focus of many studies (Desapio, 2017) it is primarily understood as 'the transformation of learner's meaning, perspectives, frames of reference and habits of mind' (2006). **Learning objectives and Teaching Method** The objective of the module is to provide students with knowledge and understanding about food tourism but more than that the aim is for learners to develop key skills such as critical thinking and analysis and be able to identify further avenues that are of specific interest to them to explore as part of their assessments. **Teaching Methods** A wide range of teaching methods are used including lectures, workshops, discussions, field trips and guest talks. **The Learning experience** Student feedback on this module is captured annually, but this paper explores this in a more detailed way using reflections over the last 2 years where students have been asked to reflect on the nature of their learning in this module. As part of this research we sent a short survey to students who have completed the programme over the last 5 years to collect their views on their learning experience. In depth interviews were also conducted with the five graduates who are now involved with Wicklow Food Tourism. **Conclusion** This paper deals with the meaningful and topical issue of transformational learning. It is important because it explores this from more than just the student's perspective which is the usual focus, and so adds to our understanding about this concept by not only looking at the impact on the learner but exploring at the secondary impact of this transformation on a tourism destination and on the lecturers and future students learning experience.



## **European Cultural Routes: Tourism as an instrument for sustainable tourism and cross-border cooperation**

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The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are transnational grass-roots networks which act as channels for intercultural dialogue and promote a better knowledge and understanding of European shared heritage. Cultural Routes signify the main values of the Council of Europe such as human rights, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue focusing on the shared culture, heritage, and history of different European states. This paper focuses on the integral role of culture in Europe and the enormous potential of Cultural Routes for small business development, entrepreneurship, niche tourism development, marketing and promotion of lesser-known destinations. Drawing on practical experience gathered from fieldwork and expert evaluation missions as a part of the initiative, it seeks to provide good practices and examples of successful stakeholders' relationships, particularly in the context of heritage tourism and sustainability.

## **Tourism Sustainability in the World Heritage site: Basantapur Durbar Square Kathmandu, Nepal**

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Tourism sustainability has emerged as a significant issue in many World Heritage sites, including Basantapur Durbar Square in Kathmandu, Nepal. This paper examines a collaborative approach to the relationship between heritage management and cultural heritage tourism sustainability. The purpose is to examine stakeholder collaboration and management roles, heritage tourism development, and the interdependence of the heritage conservation and cultural heritage tourism relationship. The paper aims to study the ways to promote collaboration between heritage conservation and tourism through stakeholder involvement. Tourism has been a crucial component of World Heritage Site management and designation in the last forty years. This research examines how heritage preservation and sustainable tourism concepts meet and range in practice. It emphasizes the value of incorporating tourists, stakeholders, and local communities in planning, developing, and administering heritage tourism activities to ensure that they are culturally acceptable, ecologically responsible, and economically viable. This research discusses many strategies for protecting cultural heritage, including community involvement, legal frameworks, and conservation and restoration techniques. The influence of urbanization, cultural heritage tourism, and political instability are potential problems related to cultural heritage preservation. Academic literature, government documents, and interviews with local stakeholders are some of the few sources that the research examines. For many years, the square has been a popular destination for visitors. However, its popularity has brought forth a number of sustainability issues. The concept of sustainable tourism is explored, along with the specific challenges that Basantapur Durbar

Square has been encountering and the strategies used to promote sustainable tourism in the vicinity.

## **Health, Heritage and Tourism: A Plasmatic Perspective**

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Drawing on case studies from mangrove heritage management and tourism in Singapore, this presentation builds on a plasmatic perspective (Ong, 2023) to interrogate health, heritage and tourism. By plasmatic perspective, Ong meant a framing drawing on metaphors from physics that attends vividly to both fluidity and power in our sociomaterial worlds. Deploying such a plasmatic perspective, mangrove heritage tourism in Singapore is found to constitute 'plasmatic' forms of power relations. Advocacy, capitalistic and governance motivations for health, heritage and tourism produce 'charges' which 'ionises' our social and material situations. These proceed to supercharge our worlds, pulling in and stabilising heterogenous entities from mangrove trees, climate advocacy communications to the ice kacang and attap chee (allegedly healthy palmyra fruit and sweetened sliced ice dessert). Beyond the spectacular heritage, health and touristic performances lie significant power negotiations and hidden inequalities as mangrove advocacy groups, tourism providers, housing developers and the state jostle over the futures of mangroves in the tiny island state. The purpose of such an endeavour is to contribute to understandings of heritage, health and tourism taking into consideration complexities of our sociomaterial worlds and the ways in which power operates within such social and material entanglements.

## **When the Grass Isn't Greener: Changing Career Paths in Tourism**

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The tourism industry has long been a popular career choice for those seeking adventure, travel, and the chance to meet new people. However, recent labor shortages in the industry have highlighted the challenges of working in tourism. Many tourism jobs, particularly those in hospitality, require long and unpredictable hours, low pay, and seasonal employment. As a result, some individuals who initially pursued careers in tourism may find themselves reconsidering their choices and looking to shift to more stable or fulfilling career paths. While career changes can be challenging, they can also provide opportunities for personal growth and career development. Ultimately, finding a balance between passion and practicality is key to achieving career satisfaction, regardless of the industry or profession. Employee wellbeing in

tourism refers to the physical, emotional, and mental health and happiness of individuals working in the tourism industry. It encompasses various factors that affect the overall quality of life of employees, including work-life balance, adequate pay and benefits, job satisfaction, stress levels, and access to healthcare. In the tourism industry, employees may face challenging circumstances, such as atypical working hours, low salary level, high levels of customer interaction, and physically demanding work. These challenges can impact employee wellbeing and job performance. To promote employee wellbeing in tourism, employers may implement strategies such as providing flexible work schedules, offering wellness programs, providing mental health support, and creating a positive work environment. By prioritizing employee wellbeing, employers can create a more productive and engaged workforce, which in turn benefits the overall success of the tourism industry. The current research focuses on tourism graduates from University of Pannonia to find out their career paths, decisions and changes. In this stage in-depth interviews were carried out with former tourism students about their career paths and changes and the motivations and reasons behind. One of the most interesting findings was that these people liked working in tourism but had to quit for some reason. The paper presents cases of how the employee's wellbeing was influenced by various factors resulting in returning to tourism from time to time, or changing the career - but finding a job where they can have similar activities than in tourism.

### **Sustainable tourism: strategies and success factors in Norway. A comparative case study between Norway and Austria**

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The present study investigates the current challenges of the tourism industry and its impacts on socio-economic and environmental levels, and presents the sustainable development as a powerful tool to achieve sustainable standards. Additionally, the investigation is based on two case studies: The Master Plan for Tourism (Plan T) of Austria (2019) and the National Tourism Strategy 2030 of Norway (2021), this latter as a benchmark for sustainable achievements. The study calls tourism practitioners and academics to take part in individual semi-structured interviews, to evaluate how these strategies are implemented by the industry and, in particular, whether some knowledge can be transferred. The data will be analysed according to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Barbier's Triple Bottom Line framework, and then categorized. A final SWOT analysis will help to determine the advantages and drawbacks of both initiatives plans. Moreover, the findings from the data analysis will allow assessing whether one or more Norwegian measures can be tailored and implemented into the Austrian framework, or if anything can be done to strengthen Austrian sustainable development. Previous research has always focused on sustainable development and its three spheres within tourism, but a comparison between the Scandinavian approach and Austria is lacking within the literature.

## Zero-emissions tourism in 2050: how to act now?

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Human emissions must reach zero by 2050 to avoid dangerous climate change. Most sectors have found a downward path for their GHG emissions, but tourism's emissions have continued to grow, with only a short period of reduced emissions during the COVID-19 crisis. The UN Paris Climate Agreement governs most elements of tourism, like accommodation and car travel. The exemption is air travel, which causes most of global tourism's climate effects and appears hard to abate. This paper explores ways to reduce aviation emissions to zero by 2050. The study uses the Global Tourism and Transport Model (GTTMdyn). This model covers the whole tourism and travel sector and thus places aviation within its full tourism context. Despite many pledges by the tourism industry, there is a lack of understanding of what changes are needed and the global effect of all the accumulated pledges. A global tourism and transport integrated scenario showing the way to a zero-emissions sector provides the necessary focus for policy-makers and the sector. Based on data about a century-long travel & tourism, the GTTMdyn provides a systems approach to the relationships between suppliers, consumers, global demographic and economic development and technological innovation. The model describes a BAU (business-as-usual) scenario up to 2100. This BAU scenario is a long shot from the Paris Agreement goals or the tourism pledges in the 2022 Glasgow Declaration. Therefore, we explored 40 intervention types, such as carbon pricing, ticket taxes, efficiency improvements, offsets, behavioural changes, technological revolutions, and sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). Though all these measures are advocated by science, industry, and policymakers, only a few significantly reduce emissions. One of the causes is that many policies suffer from strong feedback loops causing the rebound effect. Other interventions are limited by several global resources (like renewable energy supply for producing SAF) or appear to not work in the longer term or even at all (like off-setting). The solution appeared first to introduce a global SAF-mixing mandate starting in 2025 at 1% and ending at 100% in 2050. The growth of air travel should stop by assuming an international cap on airport slots to avoid unreasonable renewable energy shares being used. To safeguard zero-emissions aviation growth after 2050, the current development of disruptive aircraft technologies should be accelerated. For tourism, the opportunities in this scenario are plenty: the number of trips, nights, and global revenues will grow as in BAU or even more. Trillions of investments in high-speed rail will vastly improve the accessibility of many worldwide destinations to green transport. The additional growths in guest nights are good news for the accommodation sector. Shifting prices will help remote destinations to generate more revenues per guest night, while main-stream destinations will accommodate the desires of main-stream tourists. A list with practical recommendations concludes the presentation.

## **Sustainable Tourism and Countryside Capitalization Nexuses to Alleviate Rural Poverty**

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One of the most frequently debated worldwide dilemmas throughout the years is poverty alleviation, which has been seen as a critical element of global sustainability. The recent updates on the Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP) indicates that about 46.9% of the world, or 3,634 million people, live in extreme poverty, on less than \$6.85 a day. South Asia is one of the regions that has contributed the most to this recent rise in poverty estimates at the higher poverty lines. Unexceptionally, Sri Lanka also undergoes poverty, inequality, and a dearth of socio-economic welfare, particularly in rural areas. The ration system, food and other commodity subsidies, free health and education, land redistributions, and irrigation for smallholders are the different approaches often used to eradicate rural poverty in the country. However, rural areas are still undergoing various socio-economic and environmental challenges along with deprivation and marginalization. Thus, the prevailing poverty alleviation programmes have failed even though rural areas are embraced with plentiful natural, human, and geographical resources that have the potential in generating diverse socio-cultural and environmental capital. Because tourism is one of the most trusted industries in Sri Lanka's growth model, this study investigates the possibility of capitalizing rural resources in a responsible tourism model to eradicate the rural poverty. Ihalagalagama and Rideegama of Sri Lanka were chosen as the rural villages for the study because they are situated on the way to Badulla and Anuradhapura, two of the nation's most well-known tourist destinations, respectively. The study adopted the qualitative inductive approach to bring-forth naturalistic interpretations. Focus group discussions, in-depth interviews of key informants through snowball sampling, direct observations, and artifacts in the villages were used to explore the potential resources. The findings derived from triangulated analysis confirmed that the villages lack access to financial capital, but they are abandoned with variety of socio-cultural and environmental capital that has not been at all considered in any of the poverty alleviation programmes. Diversity of resources in the two villages led the study to identify two distinct rural tourism models. Ihalagalagama is a well-cultured mountain hamlet with a variety of habitats, making it the perfect place for an ACE Tourism (Adventure, Cultural, and Ecotourism) model. At present, Sri Lanka possesses many sites for pilgrim tourism, not for spiritual tourism. Therefore, the present study identifies the first ever-sustainable spiritual tourism model in Sri Lanka to explore the components of life that lay beyond the physics and contribute to body-mind-spirit harmony using the resources available in Rideegama. Both models strive to capitalize the rural resources in compliance with the principles and criteria of responsible tourism that ensures socio-economic and environmental sustainability. Building the human and physical capacity for responsible tourism development would ensure the sustainable capitalization of countryside to eradicate poverty in rural areas.

## **Where Art Is: The role of art in the visitor economy**

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Cultural heritage and artistic activity hold significant potential to develop innovative concepts of cultural and creative tourism, which is highly called for in building more resilient and sustainable destinations in the post-covid society. The basic tenet is that cultural creativity, through exponents in art, craft & design, provides important attraction value to places, while the entrepreneurial enterprises in the visitor economy cater for hospitality services. These two sectors operate largely side-by-side, although their mutual dependence is often acknowledged (UNWTO 2018). However, it is a known fact that “the part of the tourism product with greatest experiential value often has the lowest profitability” (Kamfjord 2002:102), which renders an imbalance between cultural exponents of attraction values and the hospitality sector. “Where Art Is: The role of art in the visitor economy” explores and develops the nexus between the cultural placemaking of art, craft & design, and visitor economies and probes the potential for actors in the cultural sector to advance their creative production by innovating novel links to the hospitality sector, reinforce capacity for cultural placemaking and foster sustainable destination networks. This integration takes many different forms and shapes and are developed and co-created case by case from local levels in a down-to-earth and bottoms-up approach where proponents from the cultural sector and the visitor economy take part. The results are key-activities and roadmaps enabling competitive and “value-net” based collaborative solutions. The empirical context is cross-sectoral participation from exponents of art, craft & design, public organizations in culture and/or tourism (DMOs) and MSMEs in hospitality in rural areas.

## **Travel Writing as a Tool for Teaching Innovation in Tourism**

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Travel writing is a tool that has the potential to be employed for teaching and facilitating various students' skills, among them digital technology and new media skills, which are among the most desirable contemporary skills in newly employed tourism professionals. By employing new media, new technology, and combining writing with digital platforms, various written texts have the ability to contribute successfully to the distinctiveness of destinations, tourism products and services. At the University of Maribor travel writing has been used for encouraging and teaching writing and helping future travel bloggers and those working in destination management and city branding. The process started with students getting acquainted with the concept of travel writing and various narration techniques for tourism. Within MS TEAMS a team with supporting materials had been created by the teacher. A team of young professionals in Slovenia began with Step 1, the Library investigation of the town of Brežice. The first workshop was to write about heritage. Underlying the training of new writers is the need to build confidence in the new writer's own emotional response to cultural artefacts when they encounter them. The next step

in the deep-mapping process was to research for links in the collection of local museum to the local foods and plants still available to tourists today (ethnobotany). This was a step towards co-creation. The tourism team settled on a local museum. During the workshops, students combined research work in the libraries, field work and more specifically, dialogue journaling on the topic of local heritage in their MS TEAMS and MS OneNote files. They established a model for transmission of knowledge through travel writing for a new public and started building a new heritage platform that was drawn on methods, such as ethnographic interviewing and interpretative phenomenological analysis to engage local citizens in sharing and in taking authorship of their own intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Evaluation of this teaching confirmed that students' writing skills were further developed, and that travel writing has the potential to be employed as a useful tool for encouraging research, innovation, creativity, reflection, and identity development whilst simultaneously gaining practical familiarity with ICT, in the form of digital platforms that prepare students for future cooperation on platforms that represent homes of tourism networks. With the design of a mobile-friendly document specification, these cultural artefacts can be shared within platforms, new museums and on the walking trails developed around heritage themes. Thus, travel writing skills, especially when combined with ICT, can indeed be a valuable addition to tourism graduates' competencies.

### **Tourism research and assemblages of renewable energy transition: What are the possibilities?**

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Renewable energy transitions appear notorious for conjuring up diverging social imaginaries amongst those involved in the micropolitics of place. While renewable energy development is widely seen as a desirable technological solution to problems of the Anthropocene, the impact of its material infrastructure on local landscapes have sparked the imagination and an array of affective responses in many places around the world. In this presentation, we propose that social imaginaries of renewable energy futures and their material production can best be understood through assemblage thinking. For Manuel DeLanda, assemblage thinking focuses on the capacities of the components of a system to produce multiple space of possibility. Assemblage thinking explains geopolitical processes such as climate change adaptation as “the combination of situated human and non-human, material and semiotic components of political thought and practice” (Córdoba Azcárate et al., 2021) which through their interactions lead to a host of potential situated outcomes. Unavoidably, tourism and tourism research get tangled in the assemblage of space during sustainability transitions. As such, how does the space of possibility that tourism and tourism research create informs understandings of geopolitical assemblages of renewable energy transitions and their (in)stability? We explore this question in relation to our research on tourist perspectives of wind power infrastructure in natural areas of Sweden where we identified the emergence of two types of geopolitical assemblages. During the project, we were intrigued by how stakeholder groups enrolled different imaginaries of tourism possibilities in their daily activities and employed them to lobby their preferred outcomes during talks about local renewable energy infrastructure development. As a result, we argue that different social imaginaries based in different interpretations of planetary vulnerability and

capitalist accumulation influence rural possibility space for quality of life and climate action in the Anthropocene. However, we also consider our role as tourism researcher in creating rural possibility space. Tourism is notorious for its pragmatism; it can be made to work if only done sustainably. What does this pragmatism mean for tourism research on renewable energy transitions? What position should tourism researchers adopt when tourists to nature destinations seem to accept the presence of wind turbines though they cause local tensions? What does sustainable tourism mean in such cases? Assemblage thinking has gained popularity in human geography since it offers a way to integrate a wide range of existing tensions, from the affective and personal to the production of global discourses and infrastructure, in the critical study of space. Researchers are considering renewable energy transitions as a geopolitical assemblage of materiality, affect and imagination that affect local quality of life. Ultimately, using assemblage thinking to approach place, energy technology and tourism imaginaries and research problematizes simple abstractions of the possibility space of the Anthropocene. As people protest the erection of renewable energy infrastructure in landscapes that bring them well-being, and others support the development of green technologies for the sake of the planet, it becomes crucial to effectively conceptualize the multiple assembling components behind the micropolitics reproducing tourist places in renewable energy transitions.

### **"I can come and go as I wish": Solo attendees at live music events**

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Prior to 2000, very little tourism research had been conducted on solo travellers but now there is a very substantial international literature dealing with the motives, intentions, meanings, experiences, constraints and benefits of solo travelling. Today, it is true to say that comparatively little research exists on solo festival or solo event attendees, but this is now changing. Marshall, Johnson and Brown (2023) have just published qualitative research on people who attend music events on their own in the UK. They believe that the solo event goer has been overlooked in the literature. This paper concurs and suggests that for a whole variety of reasons it is now opportune to pay research attention to those who choose to attend events on their own. Historically, studies intent on understanding festival and event attendees have stressed the importance of social interaction as a factor shaping both motives to attend and satisfaction with the experience (Packer and Ballantyne 2011). Countless studies have identified that people usually attend with friends and/or family and seek to enjoy the benefits that arise from social interaction and bonding (Wilks 2011). Yet, a small minority of people attend festivals



and events alone. Why? What does it mean to attend alone? Is socialising a consideration for the solo event attendee? This paper reports findings from the 2022 Finnish Festival Barometer Survey which was distributed by 24 music festivals in Finland via social media. Some 626 respondents, or 3% of festival attendees, were found to have predominantly attended alone. The paper draws on data generated through a range of closed and scale questions and also from an open-ended question that asked solo attendee respondents how going to music events alone makes them feel. As such, it is a mixed methodology study meaning that both qualitative and quantitative data and analysis methods were used. The study concentrates on solo attendees, but data on other event attendees are also used so as to compare solo attendees with others. The findings emphasise the manner in which the social conditions created by music festivals enable people to enjoy the flexibility and freedoms that come with attending alone while experiencing the sociability created by being in the company of other like-minded music enthusiasts. Festivals are found to constitute safe spaces where people who attend alone feel included and at ease in the presence of others who also share an interest in the music being performed. The experience is not perfect for all solo attendees and there are moments and spaces within the festival setting where some would like to have company, but this void is compensated for by the freedom and even the sense of empowerment that being alone affords. Implications for further research and for improving the solo attendee experience are discussed.

### **Cultural routes and cultural heritage in times of war: Threats, challenges, approaches and research gaps**

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Ukraine has an impressive amount of cultural heritage belonging to different historic epochs, including 109,930 monuments under state protection, more than 130,000 objects of cultural heritage on the state register and 7 UNESCO cultural heritage sites. Since Russia began its full-scale military invasion on February 24, 2022, the toll in mass killings, rapes, missile attacks has been massive. The long-term colonialist policy of Russia, of which the invasion is a part, is aimed at destroying not only the independent Ukrainian state, but also Ukrainian cultural heritage. The war impacts, damages and destroys Ukrainian cultural heritage in different ways. This research aims at comprehending the impact of Russian military invasion on the Ukrainian cultural heritage and cultural routes during the on-going war, including the temporary occupied Ukrainian territories, through highlighting threats and challenges faced as well as identifying existing research gaps.

Despite the absence of comprehensive data on the real number of damages and destruction of the cultural heritage, reviewing the official documents, statistic data, media publications, stories of the real people led the author to analyze the impact of the war on the Ukrainian cultural heritage from different perspectives, including destruction and damage, occupation, heroic preservation efforts, and creation of new cultural heritage during the war. The ways, instruments and technologies aiming at protecting and saving cultural heritage which were quickly developed and implemented during the on-going war as a response on the attack to cultural heritage are investigated.

The damage and destruction of the Ukrainian cultural heritage due to the Russian military invasion had significant impact on the cultural routes, tourism flows, attendance of the tourism attractions, local and regional development. Since 2021, Ukraine is a Member State of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes and currently is crossed by three certified

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe namely Via Regia, European Mozart Ways, and European Route of Industrial Heritage. Based on the analyses of the tourist flows from the accessible data sources and expert interviews results, the author intends to evaluate the impact of the war on the cultural routes and regions. Ukraine has a lot of own touristic routes initiatives. Thus, due to the mass rapes and killings in Irpin, Bucha new cultural routes (so called “routes of memory”) were created.

The on-going war, lack of data and access to the Ukrainian territories which are occupied, mined or under mortar shelling, create strong challenges for this research, thus the author searches for new perspectives and ways to answer the research questions and considers international scientific collaboration crucially important to reach this goal.

### **Unpacking the contribution of humanitarian celebrities in shaping volunteer tourism via Instagram representations**

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Humanitarian celebrities have become influencing agents within humanitarian aid-related contexts such as volunteer tourism, especially with the increase in social media platforms. However, few scholars have analysed the relationship between humanitarian celebrities and volunteer tourism in an online scenario. Therefore, this article explores how humanitarian celebrities portray volunteer tourism experiences on social media, in particular on Instagram. To this end, this paper collects all available Instagram posts of 27 well-known celebrities acting as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors. These posts are examined through a content analysis based on an inductive approach. The results highlight that humanitarian celebrities reproduce voluntourism’s colonial and gender dynamics, especially in their posts about international trips with UNICEF. Given the influence power of such celebrities, negative impacts derived from their pictures and messages may come to be reflected in voluntourists’ motivations and behaviours. Therefore, this article proposes to develop a code of ethics and/or conduct concerning humanitarian celebrities’ online presence to avoid reproducing colonial and gender-based stereotypes in volunteer tourism.

## **Sustainable Tourism Practices in India: Role, Scope, Challenges in The Midst of Global Health and Climatic Concerns**

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Tourism industry plays an important role for all nations and their economy not just from the perspective of financial gain but also for showcasing the rich heritage across various segments of national and international travelling population. For India it is a major conduit towards earning foreign exchange as well as enhance the visibility of the country. The paper sought to assist in arriving at a common definition and understanding of sustainable tourism practices from the Indian context across multiple stakeholders. Given the advent of COVID -19, the tourism industry in India like other nations underwent through a turmoil of epic proportions. The problems were compounded due to its scale and magnitude, the underlying geo political events, as well as uniformity of the problem across the continents. Accordingly, the study was aimed to understand the current state of sustainable tourism practiced within India and the scope, challenges and role of various important stakeholders in the midst of a renewed healthcare and climate related concerns. While trying to elicit the view across various stakeholders, the paper sought to specifically understand the government policies and schemes concerning sustainable tourism in India and the various initiatives taken from the dimension of promoting the industry keeping sustainability in mind specially during special situations across various verticals. Additionally, the study intended to find out the out of box solution that various stakeholders as well as Governments took to ward off the crisis and provide a soft grounding to the stakeholders in the aftermath of the crisis. At the generic level, study was loosely focused to get a first-hand information about the impact of Government policies and programs on their specific sector which the stakeholder represented. Lastly, the paper sought to identify the gaps and challenges in sustainable tourism in India. Keywords Sustainable, Tourism, health, Responsible, climate, stakeholder, Government, industry, academia Paper type Conference paper Purpose – Due to limited work in the field of sustainable tourism in India, the study aims to find out the role played by stakeholders, including the scope and challenges of promoting sustainable tourism. Design/methodology/approach – The design of the study was qualitative in nature with a focus group discussion conducted as part of the research with participants representing the demand and the supply side. Participants were put to two round of discussion. One of the discussion took place pre covid while the next discussion took place post covid. Research limitations – The study involved a limited number of stakeholders who were thought to represent the sector so as to convey the view point of the sector they were representing. The limited number of representatives could be considered to be a limitation of the study. Implications – the discussion that took place in detail with the stakeholders from various representative sectors from demand and supply side provided insights which would add value to the tourist professionals working in the field.

## Putting residents into the spotlight: Perceived tourism impacts and quality of life

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The insatiable desire for leisure experiences has contributed to a sustained increase in international tourist arrivals. While economic benefits were realized, the industry has been criticized for its neo-liberal growth maximization strategies in which social and environmental aims were often secondary. Residents are increasingly displeased and show their dissatisfaction in form of anti-tourism movements. This demonstrates that social sustainability is increasingly being threatened. However, the industry's footprint not only translates into resident dissatisfaction, it also contributes to environmental degradation. Reshaping conventional tourism practices means overcoming the prevailing implementation gap and finding solutions to ensure more ethically responsible and sustainable tourism production and consumption. A tourism destination's success not only heavily relies on natural resources, it also depends on the host community's well-being as well as their consciousness of tourism as an industry. Thus, scholarly interest in understanding residents' perspectives has grown. With the aim to develop an indicator that enables to monitor tourism success beyond economic measures, the tourism acceptance score (TAS) was introduced in Germany. TAS depicts the balance between residents perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism on residents' place of living. Although a positive balance was computed, declining acceptance levels have been witnessed since 2019. Results also demonstrate that Germans understand tourism as an economic driver, yet they are less aware of tourism's contribution to their own well-being. Furthermore, they perceive tourism as a contributor to environmental impacts (e.g. traffic). Ideally, tourism is not only accepted by residents, but positively contributes to their perceived quality of life (QoL) and their living spaces. While numerous studies have looked into the influence of leisure travel on a traveler's QoL, only few investigated the relationship between residents' QoL and tourism in their places of residence. This exploratory research applied a quantitative approach to identify potential influencing factors on residents' perceived QoL. Alongside general satisfaction and importance of aspects of QoL (e.g., health, income), special emphasis was given to the role of tourism-induced impacts along the triple bottom-line. A quota sampling strategy was introduced to realize a sample that is representative of the German population between 18 and 74 years. A total of 3,939 Germans participated in the online survey between September and October 2022. Results indicate a high level of Germans' self-perceived QoL and show that they are particularly grateful for their natural environment. Results from multiple linear regression demonstrate that several independent factors influence residents' self-assessed level of QoL, among others, their tourism acceptance. TAS is also influenced by various independent factors: Perceived negative environmental impacts, such as the increased shortage of natural resources through tourism, have a statistically significant negative impact on residents' TAS. These results stress the need for closing the implementation and theory-action gap as tourism-induced negative impacts not only bring massive risks to the longevity of ecosystems, they also aggravate losses in tourism acceptance among residents. Hence, environmental and social sustainability are equally being threatened. The research provides relevant theoretical and managerial implications for destination management organizations and beyond that will be presented at ATLAS.

## **Cooperative learning as a platform for development of soft skills in the tourism context**

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This paper aims at presenting the results of an experiment of cooperative learning approach, implemented within the context of INCOME Tourism project (Erasmus+, KA) at the Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Portugal. The project proposes an innovative learning program, integrating HEIs and businesses, dedicated to facilitate the development and enhancement of soft skills in a real working context supported by in-company tutors and University tutors – the learning trios. The results of the work developed by the learning trios, IPVC students and tutors, in close consultation with the companies' representatives, are presented. The relevant skills that graduate students should develop in order to improve their employability, the design of the disciplines, but also the conditions for these skills to be acquired and put into practice, but also the upskilling of the in-company tutors are discussed. Cooperative learning is key in the future of education. According to OECD and EU, higher education institutions need to focus on their local and regional communities, and to addressing local economic and community needs in their teaching and research, through collaborative learning approaches.

## **Events as a context for creating new narratives: an exploration**

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Stories play a vital role in how we make sense of our societies. Through narratives we create realities, describe our communities, and communicate our identities. However, in all societies certain narratives are dominant, and others are silent, or silenced. For many (minority) communities and groups it can be a challenge to get their story across because it does not fit the dominant narrative, or they are stuck in a single stereotypical story about them, in which they do not recognize themselves. Resisting dominant narratives is a long and difficult process. Events can play an important role in resisting dominant stories, telling untold stories, and creating new narratives, because of their capacity to attract attention. This conceptual paper draws connections between critical event studies, cultural studies, and storytelling. It explores the practices and mechanisms through which events can serve as a stage for creating and communicating narratives through concepts like voice, visibility, and performance.

## Smart Cities and Quality of Life

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Despite its popularity in urban studies, the smart city (SC) concept has not focused extensively on citizens' quality of life (QoL) until relatively recently. This study therefore examines the concept of QoL in SC using a systematic review of 38 articles from 2020-2022. This includes definitions, concepts and domains, as well as indicators that are used to measure QoL in SC and typical research methods that are used to collect data. Mixed research methods appear to be the most informative in order to collect objective indicators, subjective perceptions of both professionals and residents, as well as content-analysing policy documents. In many studies, smart living is highlighted as the most important domain of a SC including citizens' lived experience, participation and social inclusion. Some authors include leisure opportunities, cultural facilities and tourism in their research on smart living. It is important to analyse gaps between policies and practice in SC, as there is still a mismatch between citizens' needs and service design. Although smart governance is not always visible to citizens and therefore not ranked as highly in SC and QoL studies as other domains, it underpins urban planning and management and is often responsible for decisions about design and implementation of smart systems. Citizens should be engaged in the co-design of smart processes and solutions and planning should be long-term and strategic, rather than focusing on real-time and short-term problem solving. Research across several cities and comparative work is invaluable, but it is important to note that one model may not work for all cities and that adaptation to context is essential. Nevertheless, applying global principles of sustainability or good practice in citizen participation can work well in many different contexts.

## Cultural Routes' Interactions and Synergies: a case of the „Sultan's Trail“

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The concept of cultural routes has evolved significantly through the years, often outlining the interactive, synergetic, and sustainable character of such complex tourist products. The success and development of various cultural routes went in line with specialization trends in the tourism sector. Allowing diversity and certain flexibility, it provided opportunities for synergetic relations between nature, culture, and living societies, being in line with the sustainable development agenda. Apart from the growing specialization and diversification of tourist products, the development of cultural routes is also in line with current lifestyle trends that shape tourist behaviors towards the concept of “active tourism”, “slow tourism” and/or “solo tourism” having in mind the global trend towards more active individualist society. Cultural routes usually provide specially designed “tailor-made” products, a variety of information and digital support and tools available for tourists to provide quality information and experiences: maps and tourist guides, accommodation lists and ratings, information on destinations and attractions, useful advice,

traveler networks, and blogs, etc. However, its functionality and success are of a more complex nature compared to standard tourist products. The cultural route programs mostly develop in a form of destination networks and projects and highly rely on the enthusiasm and organizational capacities of the organizations that are dedicated to its development and functionality. This study examines the synergetic effects of various tourism concepts and presents successful management practices in the creation process of the European cultural route “Sultan’s Trail” as long-distance hiking and cycling destination, applying sustainable tourism practices to underdeveloped and still undiscovered but attractive region, the Balkans. The aim is to highlight the synergies between common philosophy and tourist promotion, safeguarding and conservation of heritage, and enhancing the economic, social, and cultural well-being of tourists and local communities (user’s perspective). It also outlines some challenges and opportunities foreseen from the local perspective, and some issues to overcome in the future from the developer’s perspective.

### **Exploring Actor Network Theory Volunteer in a Volunteer Tourism Context: Symbiosis and Disruption**

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Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork and using Actor-Network Theory (ANT), the authors trace the interactions of a primary actor and other agents within the context of the volunteer tourist experience at a children’s home in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This paper has two key objectives; first to sketch the volunteer tourism reality as the actions of different actors shape it, and second to showcase how the Covid-19 pandemic significantly disrupted this sensitively balanced ecosystem. Staying true to the ANT approach and ‘following the actor’ (Latour, 1993), the authors demonstrate how the volunteer tourist setting is relationally reproduced through the incessant alignment of different human and non-human actors and their sometimes-conflicting interests and actions. This leads to a symbiotic relationship that must be protected and understood further. In addition, we illustrate how actors that ‘control’ and serve the volunteers grow in influence as they pursue their interests while indirectly contributing (even unknowingly) to a good cause. By taking this radical approach, we reveal the need to reconsider the narrative that views all children in orphanages in the global South as victims and pawns of the ‘orphan industrial complex’ and how the children’s home in the study offers much-needed support to children and people that have no safety net. The children served by the Home examined are also part of this symbiotic relationship. Offering a new perspective, this paper showcases how the moral panic (at times justified) surrounding orphanage tourism does not always accurately reflect the environment and the need on the ground. Finally, by employing ANT, this paper offers a symmetrical outlook that ignores assumptions about power and one-way exploitation; instead, it offers an empowering view that the locals can exploit volunteers and their good intentions for their ends.

## **Sustainability in the catering industry: An approach to implement SDG goals into catering operations**

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Regional products and seasonal foods are currently the focus of sustainable catering. Is this sufficient to ratify the UNO-Agenda 2030? From a global perspective, monocultures, factory farming and the supply chain to the end customer are the tools of industrial agriculture and therefore drivers of CO2 emissions. From a national perspective, countries, and the European Union, are driven by food sovereignty and therefore are less dependent on food imports. From a caterer's perspective, food security and a flawless food supply hold significance for their operations and profitability. Hence, the answer seems rather simple, buying less international and more regional foods which are in season, make sense.

However, unpredictable weathers in Europe reduce vegetable and fruit yields. As a result, the food prices rose dramatically since 2020, with its peak in March 2022, caused by the food bans during the Russia-Ukraine war. Guests, the end consumers, demand regional products, but became more price sensitive. Especially in non-tourist rural regions, caterers have difficulties to implement price increases.

Therefore, a sustainable development, meaning a pattern of behaviors, is to be integrated into the catering culture and its operations. This paper introduces practical measurements for caterers by using the three pillars of sustainability: ecology, economics, and social issues.

## **Measuring Sustainable Wellbeing in European Spa Towns**

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Global trends, marked by uncertainty, instability, and unpredictability due to the current multiple crises as well as changing preferences in the global tourism post-pandemic market indicate the growing need for health and well-being, recreation, prevention and rehabilitation programs in European health tourism destinations through sustainable travel, vacation in preserved nature and regenerative effects of European spa heritage. There is much evidence that current polycrisis will be transformative for the global tourism sector, local communities and final consumers. It should lead to a critical re-examination of the global growth model and an opportunity to reorient it towards (and beyond) the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including structural transformation, regeneration and re-boot of tourism and its economic, environmental and social characteristics. Recent research and policy documents by relevant international organizations (UNWTO, WHO, UNESCO, OECD, ETC) indicate the need of a resilience-based framework for reviving the global tourism industry based on adequate government response, technology innovation, local belongingness and consumer and employee confidence, transforming a new global economic order characterised by sustainable tourism, society's well-being, climate action and the involvement of local communities. Sustainability, health and well-being are keywords in recent EU and international organisations' strategic and policy documents, including the SDGs. Sustainability and people's wellbeing or "sustainable



wellbeing” (O’Mahony, 2022) are also at the heart of the recent Europe’s Open Strategic Autonomy Foresight Report (EC, 2023). According to Mariana Mazzucato, alongside a healthy and sustainable environment, human health and wellbeing must be the ultimate goal of economic activity (Mazzucato, 2023). Sustainability, health and multidimensional human wellbeing, as key global policy priorities, became central points in the debate related to post-growth and post-pandemic agenda (Lew et al, 2020; OECD, 2021 etc). With the frequency and complexity of global crises increasing, various challenges affecting socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability, including climate change and health emergencies as well as devastating war conflicts and mass displacement of people stimulated discussion about the need for a new economic model, focused on the wellbeing of people and nature (EC, 2023). The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp relief the crucial importance of human and ecological wellbeing as a (pre)condition for any form of social and economic activity. According to Fioramonti et al. (2022), dramatic social and economic impacts of the health-related crisis, which have far outweighed any previous financial or economic crisis indicated also the economic consequences of environmental degradation’s impact on human health. An effective paradigm that pursues human and ecological wellbeing instead of material growth is the ‘wellbeing economy’, unifying a post growth and post-2030 agenda. The need for radical policy transformation, systems and paradigm change introduced a topic of holistic and integrated “sustainable wellbeing”, which integrates individuals, society and nature, empowering a sustainable transformation (O’Mahony, 2022). As fundamental human rights, health and wellbeing are in the centre of the current debate, which emphasize importance of the new economic narrative that transforms financing for health from an expenditure to an investment (WHO, 2023). Health and wellbeing are also prevalent and growing global post-pandemic tourism trends, aiming to promote and maintain the holistic health of the body, mind, and soul, striving for a continuous state of balance and harmony and consisting of products and services based on sustainable and harmonious interaction with the environment and the community (Tomljenović, 2022). Spas, as significant stakeholders of tourism supply, are facing constant and rapid market changes, growing competitiveness and pressures from different stakeholders (stockholders, employees, tourists/visitors, local communities, the government, etc.). The spa industry is also faced with many environmental challenges, considering that their supply depends on the quality of natural resource (clean water, clean air and uncontaminated soil). To address these challenges, they are required to implement more sustainable practices in order to be economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. Bearing in mind the global trends and policy documents, as well as the importance of health and wellbeing as fundamental rights and strategic priorities, but also prevailing motives in post-pandemic tourism, this paper deals with current issues and challenges of European health tourism destinations (spas) related to sustainability. The purpose of the research is to valorise European health tourism as an agent of positive transformative change and resilient society. The authors critically evaluate the possibility of sustainable transformation, regeneration and reset of the current global tourism development model, with special emphasis on the transformative role of health and spa tourism for the wellbeing of European citizens coping with multiple crisis. The research is focused on development of systems of sustainability indicators relevant to health tourism destinations/European Spa Towns. It includes identification of the indicators which could be used to monitor sustainable transformation as well as evaluation of sustainable standards and creation of innovative sustainability indicators model for European health tourism destinations/Spa Towns. The conducted pilot research included the review of relevant literature as well as a preliminary research: interviews with local stakeholders in Croatian health tourism destinations (continental spas) with the goal to define key sustainability issues through situational analysis and focus group with experts who discussed possible sustainability indicators models. Preliminary results indicated key sustainability issues but also complexity of the process of measuring sustainable transformation of health tourism destinations. The authors

proposed an innovative sustainability indicators model, which could be used in the next stage of the research, which will include interviews with experts from European spa associations and key stakeholders representatives in European Spas.

## **Valorising Common European Heritage through Transnational Networks - Development of Cultural Route of Central European Fortifications**

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The paper presents the research related to transnational networking aiming at valorisation of common European heritage by development of cultural routes of Central European fortifications. Thematic cultural routes, as the simplest and most affordable cultural-tourism product created by networking attractions and services, can help to strengthen local identities and develop regional economies in a sustainable way. The Council of Europe Cultural Routes programme celebrates its 35 anniversary this year. The project, launched in 1987, with the initial idea to emphasize the unity of European cultural heritage and the common foundations of Europe in an illustrative manner, has main objectives: raising awareness of European culture through travel and tourism, designing tourism networks linked to European cultural geography; promoting the most significant sites and crossroads of European civilisation as places of tourist interest. The European cultural itinerary is defined as a thematic trail that passes through one or two countries or regions, and is organized around themes whose historical, artistic or social interests are obviously European. The itinerary is based on a variety of features that represent European culture in general, and includes places rich in historical associations. The main idea of the project's founders was to provide greater visibility and respect for a common European identity, and to preserve and promote European cultural heritage in terms of improving life and social, economic and cultural development. Cultural itinerary projects became an instrument for understanding European values, and today play an important role in building Europe on the foundations of a common heritage and identity. The author started from the assumption that European cultural heritage, which includes former military and fortified areas, can contribute to more balanced sustainable urban planning and responsible territorial development, the quality of life of local communities and help to achieve the European Green Plan, the UN Millennium Development Goals and the European values of peace and democracy. Former military heritage and fortified systems in European border areas should become new European cultural corridors and meeting spaces for young Europeans, promoting a culture of peace, solidarity, civic initiatives, balanced cultural and social development, common European identity and intercultural dialogue. The conducted research indicated that multidisciplinary scientific research and European cooperation in the transnational valorization of the common European heritage can help in the implementation of best practices and finding solutions for the current challenges in the management of the multiple crises that the EU is facing, such as: the climate crisis, the energy crisis, the COVID pandemic and the resulting public health crisis, challenges to world peace, the inclusion of migrants and the sustainable development of local communities.

## Healthy rural tourism in the river landscapes? The case of the Vltava river, Czechia

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Tourism and recreation are considered to be a common part of life in present society and influence development of various types of landscapes. Among these are also river landscapes, the character of which is largely determined by the presence of a water course and to it related activities. Development of a river landscape thus mirrors practical as well as symbolic meanings of a water course. Moreover, river landscapes often contain important attractions, and natural and cultural heritage features. The existence and successful identification of such features is one of the preconditions for development of tourist and recreational activities. The aim of the paper is to discuss the development of tourist activities and the both negative and positive impacts of tourism and recreation on the landscape along the Czech national river Vltava, which is, beside its symbolic significance, the longest river in Czechia. The river interconnects major urban areas, among them the capital city of Prague, and other attractive rural places the recreation potential of which has been utilized since the 19th century. It has been the presence of the river that has become one of the major reasons for development of tourism in those places. Transformations of the Vltava river landscape have been influenced by diverse types of recreational activities, from establishing tramping sites in a relatively remote and pristine parts of the river valley in Central Bohemia at the beginning of the 20th century, to construction of water reservoirs and surrounding recreational areas in the second half of the 20th century. Recently, the Vltava river started to be recognized as a unique landscape phenomenon crossing regional borders. The example of the Vltava river landscape thus not only allows us to study and discuss the impact of tourism development on transformations of landscapes, but also provokes questions regarding the „healthy“ management of specific forms of mostly rural tourism and protection of river landscapes as unique environments. Key research questions focused on which forms and types of tourist activities and infrastructure have been influencing the river landscapes and if they reflect current trends and demands. The crucial methods of the research were an inventory of infrastructure and offer of tourist forms and activities based on accessible data, verification of the quality of quantitative data with field surveys, observations and interviews with visitors in the case areas of destinations at major artificial lakes on the Vltava River. The results indicated deepening of differences in quality and innovation of tourist offer in attractive and well accessible localities to the contrary of decline, dilapidation or transformation of some traditional destinations into “tourist brownfields”.

## **Sexuality and Gender Inclusive Servicescape in Asian Hospitality: Perspectives of LGBTIQ+ Customers**

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LGBTIQ+ perspectives are often considered by scholars to investigate the influence of cis- and heteronormativity on the use of public spaces. Historically, LGBTIQ+ communities created their safe spaces known as gay districts in many cosmopolitan cities due to violence, victimisation and discrimination. However, this traditional notion of segregated spaces has shifted towards newly developed servicescapes that connect diverse groups of consumers, including LGBTIQ+ communities, through sociability, commensality and hospitality. Despite the attempts to developing service settings that resonate LGBTIQ+ identities, behavioural shifts amongst LGBTIQ+ consumers result in transformation of service environments to be rather inclusive to all. Since the knowledge on this topic is still underdeveloped, this study aimed to explore how LGBTIQ+ people experience services in hospitality and tourism settings and identify key components of LGBTIQ+ inclusive servicescape. Servicescape has been widely adopted to delineate the overall surroundings that involve physical environments and influence on internal responses and behaviours of service workers and customers. Social aspects are considered as important for predicting attitude, satisfaction and post-consumption behavioural intentions. Moreover, the servicescape involves socially symbolic and uncontrollable natural stimuli that drive customers' attachment to the place, feelings of comfort, senses of belonging and inclusiveness. Besides, moderation of servicescape specifically catered to certain customer types to enhance their positive service experiences. Importantly, new dimensions of servicescape, such as safety, are relevant to contemporary issues and worth for further investigation. Additional dimensions are worth to explore by incorporating the experiences of LGBTIQ+ consumers into servicescape. For example, perceived safety of LGBTIQ+ people should include protection of privacy and anonymity rights, protection from verbal and physical aggression and harassment, equal treatment and acceptance on variance of bodies. Particularly, these issues are triggered by the disputes between regulatory frameworks, societal norms and gender performativity. Moreover, LGBTIQ+ people concern of sensitivity issues, such as LGBTIQ+ identities and medical conditions, are kept, documented and shared. Furthermore, inclusivity is an important component due to possible internal conflicts, power relations and identity politics. Additionally, empathetic, non-judgmental and respectful and normalised attitude and behaviours expressed in both verbal and non-verbal forms by service employees are essential. To understand develop theoretical foundation of sexuality and gender inclusive servicescape, queer theory was adopted as an ontological paradigm to deconstruct cis- and heteronormativity. Moreover, this study is epistemologically guided by pragmatism to integrate practice and theory that entails scholarly debates and discussions. This study adopted qualitative approach by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with 24 LGBTIQ+ respondents in Asia. To ensure inclusive spectrum of participants, maximum variation sampling was applied on basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex

characteristics (SOGIESC). Then, thematic analysis was used to discuss findings in different themes and emergent patterns. Eventually, the study developed the inclusive servicescape model based on SOGIESC and contributed to the body of mindful hospitality knowledge.

## **De-growth in tourism – reconsidering the tourism destination management mindset**

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There is a growing consensus among tourism stakeholders as to how the future resilience of tourism will depend on the sector's ability to balance the needs of people, planet and prosperity (UNWTO, 2021). However, this requires a significant shift in perspective with measurements for a successful tourism industry going beyond economic variables but instead following a degrowth strategy, that measures value in social, environmental and economic constructs. In tourism, degrowth outlines a different mindset that has at its core an imperative to decolonise the culture of consumerism and pro-growth ideology (Hall, 2009) upon which the tourism industry has been cemented (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Fletcher, 2019). From the consumer side, questioning tourism development from a degrowth perspective implies an interrogation of the modern tourist's mindset that implies, on the one hand, a desire to leave behind the restlessness and boredom of everyday life and, on the other, an urge to perpetually seek more novel tourism destinations and experiences to counteract this boredom (Fletcher & Neves, 2012; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010). A degrowth mindset questions the inequity of this type of tourism for the community that oft times does not receive the benefits (economic or otherwise) of the tourism activities (Perkumienė and Pranskūnienė, 2019; Baum and Hai, 2020). On the producer side, growth is not seen as the enemy and neither are growing numbers. Tourism growth can and should lead to economic prosperity, jobs and resources to fund environmental protection and cultural preservation, as well as community development and progress needs, which would otherwise not be available (Lapointe, 2020; Lundmark, Müller and Bohn, 2020). However, as Latouche (2006) suggested, what is fundamental is that there must be a shift in the values of tourism away from excessive commodification and exploitation. To truly achieve a sustainable mindset, there must be a clear engagement with the notion of limits, the idea of not going beyond absorptive regenerative capacity. Hence, the concept of "rightsizing" rather than "downsizing" (Hall, 2010; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). This paper provides exploratory research into the strategies and development of the Burren Eco-tourism network (BEN) in the West of Ireland and will determine whether their approach to development aligns with that of a degrowth framework. A literature analysis as well as qualitative in-depth interviews were completed using a community-based tourism case study methodology. It found that through the collaborative approach of the network, local businesses thrived and were supported through the availability of training and environmental awareness in achieving a sustainable, internationally recognised brand. Additionally, it found that the smaller members of the network played a key role in ensuring the environmental activities of the larger members while all members pledged to uphold a code of practice. Finally, the values of the community and its stakeholders were interlinked with those of the network. The results also indicate that although the intention of the network was not to incorporate a degrowth framework the outcomes of their actions align with

this phenomenon. Therefore, can the creation of a sustainable tourism network with a bottom up approach to tourism management provide a framework for the implementation of a degrowth tourism approach that measures value beyond the capitalist constructs of value and volume.

## **Regenerative tourism – Knowledge of and Challenges for the Tourism SME**

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At its simplest regeneration is shifting from the degenerative framework of growth simply measured in an economic capacity towards an approach that allows our ecological, social, cultural and political systems to thrive. The emphasis of regenerative tourism is on a whole systems approach that provides the host community and the tourist with the same prominence in terms of tourism development while purporting to the theme of ensuring the tourism destination is in a better place after the tourist visit. The whole systems approach to regeneration is about the land, the people, the culture/heritage, the community and the wildlife (McEnhill et. al., 2020). Regenerative Tourism focusses on innovations within the tourism industry that go beyond traditional measurements of success but instead entrenches tourism into the local community and the environment while also supporting social inclusion and the wellbeing of the entire ecosystem (Bellato & Cheer, 2021). The benefits of the regenerative paradigm go beyond economic sustainability but also ensure the future environmental and social sustainability of the destination. A bottom up approach to tourism development, allowing the host community to thrive and supporting the culture, heritage and biodiversity of the region. Thus, making the region an attractive place to live and work. There are numerous challenges to achieving a regenerative approach to tourism development and in particular is the fact that the tourism industry is predominantly comprised of small or micro indigenous businesses with 99.8% of the 3.2 million tourism organisations in the EU categorised as such. This signifies the fragmented nature and complexity of the tourism industry. Much of these SMEs reside in coastal and maritime (51.7% of EU accommodation) and rural locations (32.9% of tourist accommodation) which are most vulnerable to climate change. Conversely, many of these tourism SME's who operate in rural and remote areas of the EU region provide opportunities for employment, economic growth and the wellbeing of the community which other industries cannot. Covid 19 also had a significant impact on the tourism industry and the EU Tourism Transition Pathways Policy focusses on providing support and an agenda for the tourism industry to recover from the Covid 19 pandemic while also transitioning to the twin constructs of digitalisation and green. SMEs are particularly challenged by this transition as many lack the skills and resources to achieve these changes. The purpose of this paper is to assess the growing literature in relation to regenerative tourism and its constructs. This will provide the basis for determining a model for regenerative tourism that comprises academic research and best practice examples, particularly for the tourism SME. This will be followed by an exploratory quantitative survey of 200 tourism SME's across five countries in Europe (Ireland, Iceland, Poland, Netherlands and Finland) to determine the level of awareness of regenerative tourism, the current stage in sustainable tourism practice and the challenges that exist for the implementation of sustainable tourism. The results of this research emphasise the need for the

development of regional and national clusters and networks of diverse tourism stakeholders focused on a common theme of sustainable, collaborative tourism development that is regenerative in design and enables the local community to thrive.

### **How Responsible Technology can stimulate more sustainable hospitality improving the quality of guest experience and staff service delivery**

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Can responsible technology play a part in creating, promoting, and engaging more sustainable hospitality experiences? To date there has been very little research into the role technology can play in stimulating sustainable hospitality through the exchange between the host and guests. Based on my Ph.D. pilot sites and commercial clients I share insights from using live data to improve real-time decisioning for staff and guests. In particular, I provide case examples of guests (some with health concerns) and how technology delivered advice and created better thermal comfort quality with a resulting improvement in property performance - reduced consumption, responses to extreme weather events, and the care for guests' health. The presentation will include primarily data and action research. A summary will be made of the failings of tourist accommodation experience design taken from visits to various tourist accommodations and the opportunities of using Responsible Technology to fill the gaps and add value to the staff and guest experience. Finally, a summary is made from my book on the persuasive steps hosts can take to persuade guests to participate in sustainability where technology plays a role. The conclusion suggests areas for further research that could help tourist accommodation providers improve their guests' experience of comfort, and transparency of sustainability.

### **Contribution of Homestay Tourism to Strengthen the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Case Study of Tissamaharama, Sri Lanka**

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were declared by the United Nations, and the tourism & hospitality sector has been recognized as one of the best options for achieving the set SDGs. Tourism & hospitality has long been proven as an option for sustainable development for many developing countries. Homestay tourism is one aspect of community-based tourism where guests pay locals for offering space from their homes to spend the overnight. This approach to tourism can reinforce some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG1-No poverty, SDG5 – Gender equality, and SDG11 – Sustainable cities & communities. In many Asian

countries, homestay units are fulfilling a considerable portion of the accommodation requirements of tourists. As a result, genuine homestay units could make a positive contribution towards the SDGs. However, the possible options of homestay tourism to reinforce SDGs are still unclear in the prevailing literature specifically in the Asian context. To fill that gap, this research was conducted in Sri Lankan context by employing the mixed method. Taking the case-study approach, both interview and questionnaire survey instruments were utilized to explore the matter. Findings confirmed that there is a good opportunity & potential for local communities to positively contribute towards the SDGs by implementing homestay tourism within their regions. The results of this investigation confirmed many benefits which can contribute to strengthening the SDGs. SDG1 can be achieved by enhancing the cash income of homestay operators as well as other community members via the economic multiplier effect. Generating new economic opportunities for the local community also reinforces SDG1. Since homestay tourism creates an opportunity for women to take part in the business, women's employment will be reinforced and it strengthens the SDG5. Stronger community identity, structures, and practices are the primary indicators of cultural revitalization and they enhance the SDG11-Sustainable Cities and Communities along with improved waste management mechanisms and safeguard the local natural & cultural heritage.

### **Can we arrive at sustainable leisure and tourism by mimicking nature?**

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Nature has always been a crucial ingredient in both leisure and tourism. From the onset of our industry, nature provided the unique venues for our activities and stays. With recent trends like: sustainable tourism, active eco-tourism, wellness travel and even Shinrin Yoku; it becomes evident that nature's role has only gained in importance. This then leads to the following dilemma: "Many leisure and tourism activities are affecting nature in a negative way, whilst at the same time the continued success of the industry relies, to an increasing extent, on that same nature to do well." Hence, for the last couple of decades we have been researching and exploring how we can operate our businesses in a sustainable manner. One of the leading theories in our quest for sustainability has been John Elkington's: Triple Bottom Line; a model emphasizing that companies should focus as much on social (people) and environmental issues (planet) as they do on financial gain (profit). Among the main reasons as to why organizations are hesitant to commit to this model is the perception that the different bottom lines are contradicting each other. In other words, entrepreneurs are looking for the 'how?' and are in need of an example. So, what if we use that same nature as 'the example' in a case study; this is in line with the relatively young field of science: biomimicry. In short, the field of biomimicry covers the design and production of materials, structures, and systems that are modelled on biological entities and processes. In this specific case we analyze how organisms in nature manage to create value (profit) whilst ensuring their own continued existence (people) and contributing to life-enhancing circumstances for their environment (planet). A thorough analysis yielded that all natural organisms have a clear purpose at heart (why); which is achieved by following nature's six principles: values-based, adaptive, resilient, optimize, life-supporting and systems-based (how). As every organism is always part of something greater, it manifests itself in an ecosystem with six elements: policy, finance, supports, culture, human capital and markets (what). It is through these thirteen elements that natural organisms manage to thrive in a



sustainable way. When combined in a model, this results in a holistic purpose-driven approach that: enables wellness for the individual (people), ensures the wellbeing of the society and environment (planet), and yields economic prosperity/welfare through value creation (profit). The greatest significance of these findings probably lies in the fact that in natural organisms, looking after the individual species (people) and ensuring the wellbeing of the whole ecosystem (planet) are conditional to establish the overall value creation (profit). This implies that in order to arrive at true sustainable leisure and tourism activities: companies should be purpose-driven and look after the interests of people and planet first; this, as they are conditional in order to generate a sustainable profit.