

Sustainable Tourism Future

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The content of this course was developed by faculty from the following institutions:





Socially Responsible Tourism Enterprises

Socially Responsible Tourism Enterprises Module 10

Photo: Omri Raiter <https://www.flickr.com/photos/189941725@N06/>

Focus: Although local communities tend to be more actively involved in sustainable tourism initiatives, the residents – particularly those located in underdeveloped regions – are often faced with various challenges arising from tourism. There is also little indication in the research that their participation in mass tourism provides them with meaningful and sustainable livelihoods. As a result, socially responsible tourism enterprises are put forth as a market-based strategy to

address these challenges whilst maximising the benefits from tourism.

Learning Outcomes

- Apply critical thinking skills to anticipate future challenges facing tourism and hospitality stakeholders.
- Examine the key concepts of regenerative tourism, sustainability, sustainable tourism, and how they influence the related concept of sustainable livelihoods.
- Identify alternative tourism models that supports regenerative tourism.

Once students have completed this module, they will have a broader understanding of the issues and concepts pertaining to socially responsible tourism enterprises, and how local hosts can take a more active role in the process, and ultimately, receive a more equitable share of the benefits from tourism.



How can local hosts take a more active role in tourism initiatives and receive a more equitable share of the benefits from tourism?

The goal of this module is to start thinking about how local hosts can become more involved in sustainable tourism initiatives – as decision makers, policy makers, tourism entrepreneurs – and therefore receive a more equitable share of the benefits from tourism.

Photo credit: Kylie Wilson

Focus: Although local communities tend to be more actively involved in sustainable tourism initiatives, the residents, particularly those located in underdeveloped regions, are often faced with various challenges. There is also little indication in the research that their participation in tourism provides them with meaningful and sustainable livelihoods. As a result, socially responsible tourism enterprises are put forth as a

market-based strategy to address these challenges whilst maximising the benefits from tourism.

Module Objectives

Upon successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- Analyze sustainability in tourism from a business context.
- Understand the difference between commercial entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.
- Determine the most appropriate context for different forms of social enterprise.
- Evaluate the challenges holding local residents back from participating within the tourism sector.

Using Bloom's taxonomy, this module is based on analyzing, understanding, determining, and evaluating the challenges that hold local hosts back from participating fully within the tourism sector.

Once students have completed this module, they will have a broader understanding of the issues and concepts associated with the challenges holding local hosts back from participating in the tourism sector.

Pre-Module Readings

In preparation for this module, students should read the following information from the accompanying course notes booklet.

- Pollock, A. (2018). [*Social Entrepreneurship in Tourism: The Conscious Travel Approach.*](#)
- Aquino, R., Luck, M. and Schänzel, H. (2018). *Tourism Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Community Development: Review and Conceptual Framework.* Conference: CAUTHE Conference: Paradoxes and Possibilities in Tourism, Hospitality and Events Education and Research, University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia.
- Lund-Durlacher, D. (2015). [*Corporate Social Responsibility in Tourism.*](#)

In preparation for this module, students should read the following information from the accompanying course notes booklet. Reading this information before they start the module will help set the context for what they are about to cover.



Image credit: Red Rocks Rwanda: <https://www.redrocksrwanda.com/>

Rwandan women involved with the Red Rocks Rwanda socially responsible tourism enterprise, planting tree seedlings with visiting ecotourists.

Social Responsibility in Tourism

A guiding business policy whereby tourism companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their own business mission, strategies and operations as well as in their interaction with their stakeholders.

~ Dagmar Lund-Durlacher

Definition of Social Responsibility in Tourism

Source: Dagmar Lund-Durlacher (2015)

Intro to Socially Responsible Tourism

- Aims to limit any potentially negative impacts on host communities.
- Uses locally owned infrastructure whenever possible.
- Shares the financial benefits with local people and local operators.
- Provides employment and leadership opportunities for local people.
- Respects local customs and culture.
- Educates guests on sustainable initiatives
- Limits physical impact on the natural and cultural environments.
- Provides support to local organizations and local communities.
- Provides authentic opportunities for guests to interact respectfully with hosts.
- Actively discourages participation in activities that exploit animals.

Communities are like ecosystems — a delicate balance between locals and their land, economy, government, each other. Introducing new elements (i.e. tourists) into the ecosystem, much like in nature, can upset this balance. For a community in a developing nation these new elements or people can create a booming economy but can also create a new underclass, cause displacement while simultaneously improving the quality of life for some, and strain weak infrastructure or build it up.

Imagine a small fishing village that suddenly becomes an international tourist destination—perhaps now fish go to serving visitors, the cost of life goes up and wages stagnate, locals begin overfishing and overtaxing their natural resources to meet growing demand. These resources that once existed in that delicate balance to sustain this community can become inaccessible to the locals who once lived off them and a once independent community becomes dependent.

This can be a lot to consider for the average tourist. The answer is not for everyone to retire their backpacks and passports and stop traveling, but to become more conscious about the choices we make and the way that they effect these existing ecosystems. That is what socially responsible tourism (or sustainable tourism) is all about.

Source: <http://www.unavainabienspanish.com/socially-responsible-tourism/>



Image Source: Sustainable Travel International: <https://sustainabletravel.org/our-work/social-enterprise/>

This image depicts a Surinamese man maintaining his indigenous traditions through weaving a craft for sale to local tourists.

Doing well by doing good ...

- Supporting socially responsible tourism enterprises helps bring underserved communities (eg. at-risk, youth, women, indigenous populations), into the tourism value chain.
- The goal is to support local opportunities and build the capacity of local communities who wish to offer tours, accommodations, handicraft businesses, and other tourism-related enterprises.
- Through connecting local hosts with the economic benefits of the travel sector, these projects have the potential to alleviate poverty and improve well-being.

Source: <https://sustainabletravel.org/our-work/social-enterprise/>

The business benefits of doing good

~ Wendy Woods



The business benefits of doing good | Wendy Woods

"The only way we're going to make substantial progress on the challenging problems of our time is for business to drive the solutions," says social impact strategist Wendy Woods. In a data-packed talk, Woods shares a fresh way to assess the impact all parts of business can have on all parts of society, and then adjust them to not only do less harm but actually improve things. Learn more about how executives can move beyond corporate social responsibility to "total societal impact" -- for the benefit of both a company's bottom line and society at large.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7t6Ry4PITo



Encouraging Social Enterprise

- Tourism businesses can drive transformative change.
- Tour operators may support host communities by hiring local guides and partnering with restaurants that use locally-grown ingredients.
- Hotel may reduce their environmental footprint by installing water saving devices and eliminating single-use plastics.
- Socially responsible businesses integrate sustainability into their operations and products.
- Businesses can contribute to environmental conservation and promote community development in the places they operate.

Tourism businesses can drive transformative change for people around the world and play a vital role in protecting our planet.

A tour operator may support host communities by hiring local guides and partnering with restaurants that use locally-grown ingredients. Or a hotel may reduce its environmental footprint by installing water saving devices and eliminating single-use plastics.

These are just a few examples of how tourism businesses can integrate sustainability into their operations and products. By doing this, businesses can contribute to environmental conservation and promote community development in the places they operate.

But if businesses employ unethical or careless practices, they can instead be detrimental to people, environments, and cultural resources that their own success depends on.

Source: <https://sustainabletravel.org/our-work/conscious-business/>

Learning Activity #1

Conduct a google search of a country you haven't yet been to, and look for a community owned tourism enterprise that you would like to visit someday.

What is unique / most interesting about the socially responsible tourism enterprise that you selected?

B Corps & Community Based Organizations

B CORPS

Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.”

CBO'S

Community-based organizations (CBO's) are nonprofit membership organizations open to all residents of the local community, focused on issues and concerns at the local level.

CBO's work to improve the physical, economic, and social environment for its residents, by addressing issues of housing, health, education, microfinance, water, sanitation, etc.

B CORPS:

A Certified B Corporation, commonly known as a B Corp, is a new type of company.

B Corps are companies that voluntarily meet the highest standards for social and environmental performance. They go through a rigorous certification process, completing a comprehensive assessment of their company's impacts on all stakeholders, and having their assessment verified by B Lab, the nonprofit behind the B Corp certification.

Unlike the traditional corporation that gives priority only to financial profitability, B Corps actually look at the [triple bottom line](#) and use the power of business to address social and environmental problems.

Source: <https://www.cultivatingcapital.com/b-corporation/>

CBO's

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are nonprofit membership organizations (public or private) open to all residents of the physical community (a neighborhood for example), and focused on issues and concerns at the local level. They are institutional blueprints for improving citizen's abilities based on local sociocultural conditions (Dill 2010). The primary purpose of community-based organizations is the improvement of the physical, economic, and social environment of its geographic area of operation. They achieve these goals by addressing one or more critical problems of the area – housing, health, education, microfinance, safe water, and sanitation.

Source: https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-20928-9_144

The UN-SDG's and Social Enterprise

- Social entrepreneurship offers a path for people to transform their own lives.
- Social entrepreneurs have a key role to play in contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Social entrepreneurs need a favorable and enabling business ecosystem to thrive and to bring their impact to scale.
- Lessons learned must be shared with other entrepreneurs to showcase the importance of social entrepreneurship as a driver for achieving the SDGs
- Social Enterprise fosters employment and revenue generation, and improves access to investment.

Social entrepreneurship offers not only a path for people to transform their own lives, but also a way to empower others. Social entrepreneurs have a key role to play in contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are increasingly using innovative business approaches to respond to today's challenges and tomorrow's problems.

However, social entrepreneurs need a favorable and enabling business ecosystem to thrive and to bring their impact to scale. These entrepreneurial ecosystems require the collaboration of different stakeholders as well as specific interventions and programs supporting innovations to scale particularly in the rapidly growing area of social entrepreneurship.

Efforts must be made to further deploy the learning content to other partners and entrepreneurs to showcase the importance of social entrepreneurship as a good driver to achieve SDGs.

A direct impact of this initiative will be on fostering employment and revenue generation for social entrepreneurs. By making social entrepreneurs more competitive and visible, there is also a direct contribution to the SDGs in their

respective field of intervention and it can inspire, on the longer term, other people to follow their paths.

Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=33475>

Learning Activity #2

List some of the benefits that occur when host communities create and manage their own socially responsible tourism enterprises.

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- Help your students start thinking about some of the benefits that can be realized when host populations take an active role in socially responsible tourism enterprises.

- Eg. Creates employment, enhances self esteem, etc.

Case Study: Red Rocks Rwanda

Click on the photo, and read over the variety of different socially responsible tourism initiatives that Red Rocks Rwanda and the local residents are managing



Case Study: Red Rocks Rwanda

The Red Rocks Rwanda Initiative ensures the sustainable social and economic development of host communities in the Virunga Mountains region by supporting community-based environmental conservation and sustainable tourism programs. Their goal is to enhance local livelihoods through environmental conservation, arts and culture, and community health initiatives. Through employing socially responsible business initiatives such as campsites, guesthouses, and restaurants for gorilla trekkers, Red Rocks Rwanda is able to create employment, provide training and skill development, and earn a sustainable income for local residents.

Source: www.redrocksinitiative.org

Image Credit: Lindsay Seegmiller

Discussion Question #1

- COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on tourism to Africa. From our discussions and readings, what 'checks and balances' can local communities add to their tourism enterprises to adapt to future downturns in tourist arrivals?

Use this question to generate discussion and dialogue amongst the students. Encourage the students to use examples from their pre-class readings, as well as their own personal observations, as they formulate their responses.

Discussion Question #2

- From your pre-module readings, which socially responsible tourism enterprises seem to be the most effective for host communities in lesser developed regions? In order for those enterprises to enhance effectiveness even further, which business skills do you think are the most crucial for individuals wanting to participate in them?

Use this question to generate discussion and dialogue amongst the students. Encourage the students to use examples from their pre-class readings, as well as their own personal observations, as they formulate their responses.

Key Takeaways

- In order for host communities to receive a greater share of the benefits from tourism, they need to be involved in all aspects of the tourism sector.
- Socially responsible tourism enterprises are an excellent way for local hosts to enhance their participation in the sector.
- Socially responsible tourism enterprises aim to earn a profit, but also put equal emphasis on mitigating the environmental and social impacts.
- Social enterprise plays an important role in meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Key takeaways from this module



Image credit: Snider, R.

A closing image of a Kenyan Maasai community hosting visitors on a cultural visit.