focus europe

SPECIAL EDITION

Sustainable Tourism

PESTO
project and conference

Projects, developments and approaches on sustainable tourism

- Labour market challenges: qualification and training
- ICT based communication and Web 2.0
- Regional developments
- And more...

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E.N.T.E.R.
European Network for Transfer and Exploitation of EU Project Results

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Ready for PESTO?

Promoting and Networking in the Midst of Sustainable Tourism

Petra Kampf, E.N.T.E.R. (Austria)

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors in Europe and has become a global business with an unmanageable number of target groups, stakeholders and key actors, representing different interests, perspectives, demands and needs. In this setting, tourism is linked to many risks and it takes a lot of know-how, experience and competence to perform successfully in the different markets. It is not enough just to see the economic potential of tourism as having unlimited growth but much more, it is essential to be aware of both its destructive dimension and the limiations of its resources.

These problems have been evident for a very long time, leading to the development of the concept of "sustainable tourism", which generally speaking promotes as little interference as possible with the environment and local culture whilst improving local development and employment at the same time.

Nowadays, sustainable tourism plays a key role in each major development policy.

The challenging facts at a glance:

- Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors in Europe

- Limited growth in times of economical crisis

- Sectoral shortage of skilled workers

- Need of specific competences, skills, know-how and experience at strategic and operational level

- Lack of concepts and training programmes in EU specifically at VET level

- Lack of know-how exchange and cooperation between VET providers and economy

The importance of sustainable tourism developments is also reflected in the many EU projects which use the concept as a main topic in their activities and are supported by various funding programmes such as the Lifelong Learning Programme. So far there have been no attempts to link those initiatives with each other, or to develop formal/informal networks between the project partnerships, allowing them to learn from each other and providing them with special opportunities and platforms for promoting their projects and activities to target groups, stakeholders and the general public. PESTO was created to improve this situation by implementing a range of activities.

PESTO aimed to:

- raise general public awareness of the issue of sustainable tourism developments in Europe (including the presentation of general EU policies, opportunities, risks, chances and benefits in this context as well as the introduction of Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and educational counsellors specialised in this field)

- attract citizens from all over Europe to the concepts, opportunities, benefits and possibilities of sustainable tourism

- promote European policy and funding opportunities for lifelong learning and VET, especially in connection with sustainable tourism developments

- support EU projects dealing with sustainable tourism in their dissemination activities their project ideas and in building up reliable networks for stakeholders and target groups

- provide several platforms where all relevant target groups and stakeholders (e.g. VET providers, policy makers from local to EU level, representatives of tourism enterprises, environmentalist associations and NGOs, unions, chambers of commerce, representatives of EU funding bodies etc.) can meet, discuss and push forward the issue of sustainable tourism in Europe for its economic and ecological development.

The following is an overview of the main activities that were carried out:

- Collection of 20 good practice projects

- Organisaton of a two-day conference, with a project fair, in Graz (Austria), on 2-3 October 2014

- Publication of a special edition of the European Magazine FOCUS EUROPE on sustainable tourism

- Production of the PESTO video clip

All products are available at http://pesto-project.eu!

pesto

TOURISM – VIOLATOR OR SUSTAINER OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

Christian Baumgartner,
Naturefriends International (Austria)

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 in order to guarantee the rights of every individual everywhere. Human rights issues are becoming increasingly important in corporate governance and business management. In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council accepted the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

For many businesses in the tourist industry, it no longer matters whether but rather how they address their human rights responsibility. Tourism that aggravates the competition for scarce resources – such as water, food, and land –, that creates exploitive labour conditions, or ignores the needs of the local population will not remain profitable for long.

The **rights that are very often affected by the tourism industry** are the right to an adequate standard of living (including the right to housing, the right to food and the right to water) and the right to decent work, as well as procedural rights, such as the right to information and the right to participation in decision-making processes.

The **target groups whose rights are affected** include both staff and non-staff in the tourism industry: staff e.g. suffer from bad working conditions and from being prevented from collective bargaining; the rights of non-staff are mostly affected through land grabbing, competition for water and depriving local communities of their traditional income-earning means. The rights of children can be affected when they are forced to become sex workers or in cases of forced labour of children, those of women, when they are trafficked for sex tourism purposes, suffer from gender discrimination at a workplace or unwanted sexual attention, are the victims of economic inequalities increased by loss of traditional jobs, or of cultural barriers to entering jobs in the tourism industry. Indigenous people form another particularly vulnerable group: they often do not hold legal titles to the land they live on, even if they have been settled there for hundreds of years, making them particularly defenceless to big business attempts to displace them.

The **stakeholders accused of violating human rights** were most often government authorities, which, in a number of cases, seemed to have been cooperating with domestic and international tourism businesses. International tourism businesses were most often named to be the violators in the cases of right to water and right to decent working conditions. Tourists were accused of affecting the rights in cases of sex tourism as well as breaching the right to privacy. Other groups violating human rights include middlemen facilitating the human trafficking for sex tourism or forced labour purposes.

Over the last years the number of **instruments and activities dealing with human rights impacts** has increased. Most of those instruments focus on social aspects of sustainable and/or social and cultural rights, staying often rather vague and general. The most visible challenge of all instruments is the lack of monitoring and the lack of a compliance mechanism.

Very promising examples of responsibility taken by the industry are the activities of Swiss tour operator Kuoni.

Based on Kuoni's Statement of Commitment on Human Rights (2012) the tour operator implemented a systematic approach to assessing human rights risks and impacts that arise from its operations and business relationships. German and Austrian NGOs, together with some tour operators, founded a multi-stakeholder initiative, the ‚Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism' in 2012. The roundtable published - amongst other activities - a management guideline that addresses tour operators, assisting them in systematically implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

As a **conclusion** one could say that tourism could be both a violator of human rights or their sustainer. The latter should not be considered as good practice examples however, but rather a matter of course.

Cases and Good Practice Examples

Case: Porters

Many porters in the Himalayas are poor farmers from lowland areas, and are as unused to the high altitudes and harsh conditions as Western trekkers. Nepalese porters suffer four times more accidents and illnesses than trekkers do. There are many reports of porters being abandoned by tour groups when they fall ill. They have even been abandoned in life-threatening blizzards while trekkers get rescued by helicopter. In Tanzania, there are reports of porters having to carry portable toilets up and – once full – back down Mount Kilimanjaro (Tourism Concern Ethical Tour Operators Group, 2009).

On Machu Picchu, Peru, a campaign initiated by Tourism Concern has helped to reduce the abusive treatment of porters. A member of the Machu Picchu Porters' Syndicate describes conditions before the campaign began: "The wages we receive don't match the physical effort we put in. The tour operators don't offer us equipment like sleeping bags and waterproofs… We have to sleep outside. We are contracted as 'beasts of burden'…and treated as if we weren't human." Following a syndicate-led strike in September 2001, there is now a US$8 a day minimum wage for porters. The government fines agencies that fail to comply with the regulations and in some instances, has withdrawn their operating permits (Tourism Concern 2009).

Case: Kyan women

In the Mae Hong Son province in Northwest Thailand Baan lies Mai Nai Soi, one of three 'tourist villages' housing some 600 Kayan refugees. Kayan women wear brass coils around their necks, making them appear elongated. The villages are controlled by powerful Thai business interests, who earn a lucrative income from the tourists who flock there to stare at and photograph the so called 'long-necked' or 'giraffe' women (there are no men in evidence in the village – they do not wear coils around their necks so have no tourist value).

The poor treatment of the Kayan in Mae Hong Son and the widespread denial of their human rights is predicated on their vulnerability as refugees and their commodity value to the Thai tourist industry.

Similar situations are to be found with the Mursi tribes in Ethiopia, wearing large pottery plates inserted in their lips.

Case: Displacement of **Bushmen from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (Botswana)** resulting from diamond finds in the area in the 1980s. Several court decisions in the 1990s and 2000s legally backed displacement. In 2006, the Bushmen won the right to go back to their land again. The government prevented access to water (by cementing over traditional water boreholes whilst drilling new ones), prohibited hunting and gave permission to a tourism company (Wilderness Safaris) to open a tourist camp (including swimming pool and ‚bushmen tours') in the reserve area. in 2013 Survival International launched an international campaign calling tourists and tour operators to boycott tourism to Botswana.

Case and good practice example: Residents of the **Makuleke community (South Africa)** were forcibly removed from their lands in 1969. The land was incorporated into Kruger National Park. The community won back legal title over their lands in 1998 after a restitution of land rights process. The community decided to retain the conservation status and to establish a joint management board comprised of members from the community and representatives from the Kruger National Park. The community devised a strategy that would provide a sustainable source of economic development and income for the community and, at the same time, ensure the ecological integrity of the land and protection of endemic wildlife species. South Africa National Parks was identified in the agreement as the strategic partner for conservation activities while Wilderness Safaris was awarded the contract to partner in construction of the luxury eco-lodge that would become Pafuri Camp.

What emerged then was a unique partnership between a community, a private sector partner and the state. Ownership of the Makuleke community land was returned to the Communal Property Association (CPA), who held responsibility for the land on behalf of community members. The land itself remains part of Kruger National Park for a period of 50 years, subject to review in 25 years. A joint management board was established for the day- to-day management of conservation activities in the territory. All commercial benefits arising from the land would be accrued by the community. This solution was the winner of UNDP Equator Initiative prize.

Good practice example: Maori-centred tourism (New Zealand), a concept supported by Maori Tourism board, as well as non-Maori New Zealand tourism organizations, promotes Maori having control over their economic, social, cultural and environmental resources in a process of Maori self-determined development. Sustainability is achieved through incorporating Maori values into business and preserving their distinct cultural identity.

This approach to tourism is not a result of a specific project or a modern human rights campaign, but rather the way the involvement of Maori communities in tourism has evolved over time. "We are in charge of who we are as people. We are in charge of our culture and how it is portrayed. We tell our stories ourselves" - explains the Maori tour guide in the promotional video on the Tourism New Zealand website. Although the indigenous theme is present to a varying degree, what connects these experiences is the fact that the Maori population has a high level of control over how their culture is presented, and as they own the majority of the businesses that are related to Maori culture, they also are the ones that benefit economically from tourists visits.

Case: The Accor hotel group: Accor has signed an International Framework Agreement with IUF in 1996. With this agreement Accor committed to safeguarding its employees rights (see attachment). It was the first agreement of its kind a private company ever signed with IUF. In recent years other companies such as Danone, Melia Hotels also signed such agreements.

According to IUF, the Accor agreement was very vague, not saying anything about monitoring/reporting of activities. After IUF became aware of what Accor were doing in Canada and Benin (i.e. unions were struggling to be recognised by the regional Accor managements) they brought up the complaint to the French National Contact Point for the OECD guidelines. According to the French NCP Accor was not complying with the guidelines. As a result, Accor came back to IUF asking for advice for improvements.

Good practice example - Melia Hotels International: A good practice example for hotel chains is the agreement between Melia Hotels International S.A. including its subsidiaries and franchisers and the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF). It contains the definition of minimum rights of workers and commitments to respect fundamental human rights. The agreement is based on principles such as freedom of association, collective bargaining, equal treatment of men and women, no discrimination based on sex, language, ethic origin, age, political opinion, religion, sexual orientation. It further states a prohibition of child labour. Annual meetings and ongoing communication between Melia and IUF aim at reviewing implementation and identifying steps forward.

Good practice example - Kuoni: Based on Kuoni's Statement of Commitment on Human Rights (2012) the tour operator implemented a systematic approach to assessing human rights risks and impacts that arise from its operations and business relationships. The intended aim of the assessment was a systematic integration of CSR activities into the core business strategy. The key business partner of the project was Kuoni's local destination management company in Kenya, external advisors from NGOs, academic institutions and UN institutions were also consulted.

The study has identified a range of social and human rights issues occurring at various stages of their operations. Based on those findings, the company decided to undertake a range of follow-up actions to address the identified issues.

The company has committed itself to addressing its direct staff issues by incorporating the findings of the study in the development of the news PSL Human resources manual, which is to include a new grievance mechanism. The organisation has also committed itself to conducting a living wage assessment and establishing benchmark salaries. The organisation has also decided to reinforce an open door policy of management. In addition to that, the company has committed itself to addressing labour issues at its key accommodation by organising a capacity-building workshop for hotels in Kenya on "improving business performance through respect for labour conditions and social rights" and continuing to promote the Travelife management system at the destination.

The organisation has proposed that the issue of unequal access to economic benefits brought about by tourism be addressed, by establishing a participative, gender sensitive project to measure local economic benefit. As part of this project, the company has proposed the organisation of a workshop for local stakeholders as well as identify actions to increase the economic empowerment and involvement of local communities. The company has also committed itself to sharing the outcomes of this project and the resulting improvement actions throughout the tourism industry in Kenya.

Kuoni has futhermore committed to continue lobbying for the global establishment of The Code of Conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism networks. Kuoni supports the establishment, training and capacity building of a local Code representative in Kenya.

Good practice example - Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism: In 2012 German and Austrian NGOs, together with some tour operators founded a multi-stakeholder initiative, the 'Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism'. The roundtable considers itself an open platform to advance human rights in tourism. It provides incentives for enterprises, organisations and institutions that are campaigning for the respect of human rights in tourism. Participation is open to all institutionalised actors who identify with the principles of the roundtable, based on a concrete commitment that is signed by the members.

The roundtable published - amongst other activities - a management guideline that addresses tour operators, assisting them in systematically implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The implementation process is divided into the five key fields of action: Strategy – Survey – Integration – Remedy – Reporting.

Furthermore an online training course for counter staff and other employees disseminates the engagement through the personnel and creates awareness and communication skills towards customers.

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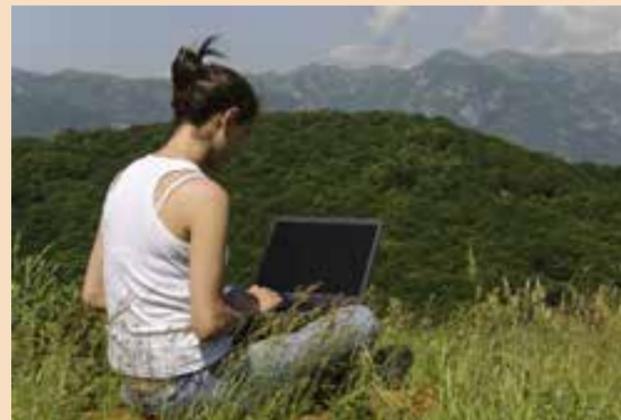
SOCIAL MEDIA & TOURISM

María Gracia Benítez Jaramillo, FUNDECYT PCTEX (Spain)

Nowadays, nobody doubts that the evolution affecting the ICTs and the Internet is deeply changing all aspects our lives: the way individuals communicate and collaborate, the way entrepreneurs and corporations do business and the way governments develop policy and interact with their citizens. This impact has affected also, of course the tourism industry. The evolution of Web 2.0 has dramatically changed the market conditions for tourism organizations (a fact to reflect upon: according to ITB World travel trends report, the internet has by now clearly established itself as the main place to buy travel with 54% of bookings, well ahead of travel agencies which have slipped to 24%).

THE TOURISM SECTOR IN EUROPE

- Generates, directly more than 5% of GDP in the EU and represents about 12 million jobs
- Taking related industries into account, the contribution of tourism to GDP creation is estimated to generate about 11% of EU GDP and represents approximately 12% of the workforce.

Thanks to Web 2.0, consumers have become powerful as they can compare the information offered by different companies (hotels, travel agencies, etc.), agencies (offices, tourist associations, etc.). They also have access to knowledge and the collective experiences shared by other consumers. In this sense, a new term has been created to refer to the new emerging consumer of Web 2.0 services as a buyer and adviser, actively participating in the promotion of a service or product without any affiliation: the "Adprosumer" derived from Advertising + Producer + Consumer.

For this reason, it is really important for tourism companies to have a strong communication and marketing strategy, including social media strategy, taking full advantage of all that these kind of tools can offer, such as talking with users and finding out their opinion without intermediaries, which offers a valuable source of firsthand and updated information. Products can be offered directly to a global market generating new paths to innovation and collaboration. As most of these tools are free or have a very low cost , costs can be saved in communication and marketing.

At FUNDECYT PCTEX, we are promoting the use of ICT in the tourism sector in different initiatives:

ROUTE 2.0 project: http://www.route-20.eu/ aimed to promote the use of Social Media by tourism sector, offering an on-line complete training system.

DANTE: http://www.danteproject.eu/ aimed to promote a new regional policy in the area of innovation by enhancing the role of ICT in tourism industry in rural.

Call for Papers and Participation

3rd International Student Conference in Tourism Research

(ISCONTOUR 2015)

www.tourism-student-conference.com

18 – 19 May 2015

Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Austria

Tourism is one of the most important industries, contributing an estimated 5% to the worldwide gross domestic product (GDP) and creating thousands of jobs in the service industries associated with tourism. Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences play a major role in both tourism education as well as knowledge transfer between academia and practitioners from the industry.

The aim of the **International Student Conference in Tourism Research** is to offer students a unique platform to present their outstanding research and to establish a mutual knowledge transfer forum for attendees from academia, industry, government and other organisations.

Approximately 200 delegates from 18 different nations attended the last International Student Conference in Tourism Research which took place in May 2014 at the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, Austria.

The annual conference is jointly organised by **the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems** and the **Salzburg University of Applied Sciences**, and takes place alternately at the venues Salzburg and Krems. The conference chairs are **Prof. (FH) Dr. Roman Egger** (Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Austria) and **Prof. (FH) Mag. Christian Maurer** (University of Applied Sciences Krems, Austria).

The target audiences include international students, graduates, teachers and lecturers from the field of tourism marketing and management as well as practitioners from the tourism industry.

Research papers are presented from the widest spectrum of the following areas within a tourism context:

- Marketing & Management
- Tourism Product Development & Sustainability
- Information and Communication Technologies

The conference brings together the research community with industry and it consists of three parallel research tracks.

For more information regarding the submission guidelines, programme and the registration please visit www.tourism-student-conference.com !