

Read about the
HI NYC hostel
inside



Excerpt From

Tourism for Development

Volume II: Success Stories



UNWTO
World Tourism Organization

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Introduction

The present volume is the second of the *Tourism for Development* report and compiles success stories from across the globe that highlight tourism's contribution to sustainable development. It aims at inspiring action among all tourism stakeholders to build on the opportunities that tourism offers as a driver of sustainable development. The first volume of the report discusses the issues regarding tourism as a tool for development – both in terms of opportunities and challenges, as well as priorities for action – through the prism of the five pillars of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (IY2017):

- 1) Sustainable economic growth;
- 2) Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction;
- 3) Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change;
- 4) Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and
- 5) Mutual understanding, peace and security.

In 2017, a global consultation was conducted to collect country practices and practical case studies from developed and developing economies that demonstrate how sustainable tourism has been a factor for development. A total of 23 case studies were selected as exemplary practices from all regions of the world and represent initiatives from the public and private sectors, as well as from local communities.

The present compilation contains rich details on methodologies and approaches applied successfully by a broad spectrum of tourism stakeholders. Case studies are ranging from projects to strengthen the peace process in Colombia to initiatives in the Maasai Mara region in Kenya, addressing climate change in Samoa or providing insight into management and sustainability systems in the United Arab Emirates or in the Philippines. They provide a valuable well of information that can serve for generating new insights and adapting sustainable tourism practices to the specific local conditions elsewhere in the world.

In terms of the report's structure, the following section first sets out the links between tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The subsequent case studies are ordered according to the pillars discussed in detail in the first volume of the report (*Volume I: Key Areas for Action*) where short descriptions of the cases can be found. Each case study presents a description of the project and shows how it is aligned with the SDGs, highlights the contribution to the key areas of the IY2017, and discusses results achieved and lessons learned from the project. The report concludes with an overview of the case studies, including a summary of each case.

Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Tourism provides income through job creation at local and community levels. It can be linked with national poverty reduction strategies and entrepreneurship. Low skills requirement and local recruitment can empower less favoured groups, particularly youth and women.



SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture

Tourism can spur sustainable agricultural by promoting the production and supplies to hotels, and sales of local products to tourists. Agro-tourism can generate additional income while enhancing the value of the tourism experience.



SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Tax income generated from tourism can be reinvested in health care and services, improving maternal health, reduce child mortality and preventing diseases. Visitors fees collected in protected areas can as well contribute to health services.



SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all

Tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness. A skilful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The tourism sector provides opportunities for direct and indirect jobs for youth, women, and those with special needs, who should benefit through educational means.



SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Tourism can empower women, particularly through the provision of direct jobs and income-generation from MMEs in tourism and hospitality related enterprises. Tourism can be a tool for women to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society.



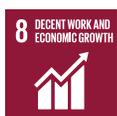
SDG 6 – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Tourism investment requirement for providing utilities can play a critical role in achieving water access and security, as well as hygiene and sanitation for all. The efficient use of water in tourism, pollution control and technology efficiency can be key to safeguarding our most precious resource.



SDG 7 – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

As a sector, which is energy intensive, tourism can accelerate the shift towards increased renewable energy shares in the global energy mix. By promoting investments in clean energy sources, tourism can help to reduce green house gases, mitigate climate change and contribute to access of energy for all.



SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism positive socio-economic impacts.



SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Tourism development relies on good public and private infrastructure. The sector can influence public policy for infrastructure upgrade and retrofit, making them more sustainable, innovative and resource-efficient and moving towards low carbon growth, thus attracting tourists and other sources of foreign investment.



SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries

Tourism can be a powerful tool for reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development by giving people the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Tourism is an effective means for economic integration and diversification.



SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists.



SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.



SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. Tourism stakeholders should play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By reducing its carbon footprint, in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can benefit from low carbon growth and help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.



SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Coastal and maritime tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.



SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss

Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Tourism can play a major role if sustainably managed in fragile zones, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in generating revenue as an alternative livelihood to local communities.



SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build inclusive institutions

As tourism revolves around billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, the sector can foster multicultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. Tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also consolidate peace in post-conflict societies.



SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Due to its cross-sectoral nature, tourism has the ability to strengthen private/public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Public policy and innovative financing are at the core for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Case study 19

Hostelling International, United States of America



Hostelling International (HI) USA's New York Hostel promotes intercultural understanding and global citizenship through strategically designed experiential learning programmes for travellers and community members.

Description

HI USA, a national non-profit organization that operates 33 hostels across the United States of America, offers carefully designed immersive environments that promote interaction and understanding among people of diverse backgrounds. Its targeted experiential learning programmes foster cultural competence and challenge the traditional tourism experience – one characterized by spectatorship and consumption as opposed to engagement and creation. HI USA's education and engagement programmes are offered to guests and community members to strengthen intercultural understanding and global citizenship. Between April 2016 and March 2017, over 122,000 people participated in HI USA's intercultural experiential learning programmes – 5,100 programmes were offered to travellers and 760 to community members. 56% of all programmes were led by community volunteers.

Over the same period, HI USA's New York Hostel (HI NYC) offered 930 experiential learning programmes to travellers and 57 to community members. Led by locals interested in engaging visitors and learning about them, HI NYC's programmes offer a deeper opportunity to think about travellers' impact on the lived experience of the places they visit, and reflect on their own culture's similarities or differences. Community-led discussions, events and service opportunities help visitors develop a more complex perspective of a place, how it shapes the people who live and work there, and the challenges that local communities face. This impacts what tourists think about others, themselves, and the actions they take. The good practice lessons learned from these programmes have direct impacts on intercultural understanding.

HI NYC collaborates closely with a number of community groups, non-profit organizations, schools, businesses and government entities to promote its intercultural programmes and benefit the local community.

Contribution to the key areas of the IY2017



Pillar 1: Sustainable economic growth

HI USA is committed to providing affordable accommodation and experiences for a diverse community of travellers, as well as tourism and educational programming to the communities in which they are based. With some 200,000 overnights annually, the HI NYC hostel brings over USD 70 million in tourism earnings into the local neighbourhood and the city of New York each year.



Pillar 2: Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction

HI NYC employs 72 local community members. It also offers an annual travel scholarship to 25 young New Yorkers with demonstrated financial need. Intercultural tourism experiences increase both salaries and job opportunities. The organization's free e-book for novice travellers provides advice on budgeting, itinerary planning and cultural sensitivity to make sure that inaugural trips are a positive and encouraging experience.



Pillar 3: Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change

HI NYC offers collective accommodation and common areas that are far less resource intensive than typical lodging. The hostel measures to conserve energy and water include variable-speed-drives, LED lighting, in-room occupancy controls, ozone laundry and shower-timers. Renewable energy credits are purchased annually to match 100% of the electricity, totalling 1,260,000 kWh of wind power annually. HI NYC achieved Green Globe certification in 2017, a pioneering global form of certification for sustainable tourism.



Pillar 4: Cultural values, diversity and heritage

Effective programme design, detailed reporting and strong partnerships result in experiential learning programmes that transform HI USA hostels into community institutions which foster change in thousands of tourists and community members each year. This work supports the diversity of local and international cultures and aims to change attitudes and perspectives, in order to lead to greater understanding and global stewardship.



Pillar 5: Mutual understanding, peace and security

Intercultural understanding and mutual respect are vital components of a sustainable world, and tourism can be responsible for promoting and advocating such ideals. Results demonstrate that HI USA's and HI NYC's programmes play a key role in promoting socially responsible tourism that breaks down cultural barriers, encouraging progress towards achieving SDGs.

Results achieved



HI NYC's learning programmes have produced meaningful results in terms of the scale and depth of their impact. Of the 30,000 individuals who participated in HI NYC programmes between April 2016 and March 2017, 95% achieved learning outcomes in intercultural understanding and global citizenship. During this time, HI NYC established ten strong new working relationships with community organizations and led 37 community-oriented programmes. HI NYC has been featured as a community institution in local press and television news. At every community class held this year, a quarter of new participants signed up to become HI NYC volunteers.

HI USA demonstrates that, beyond accommodation, hostels can offer thoughtful, targeted experiential learning programmes that can impact travellers in ways that deepen their understanding of cultural and environmental sustainability, while promoting global citizenship. HI USA also shows that hostels can serve as a valuable sustainable resource for local community members and organizations, and can provide access to tourism experiences for local community members with limited means. It further reflects the fact that simple, targeted data collection can validate positive impacts on tourists and communities.

HI USA's ongoing programmes, particularly its New York City hostel, reveal that practical, accessible techniques can be used to effectively curate intercultural encounters in ways that build understanding and solidarity among diverse people. Its experiences illustrate how this can benefit both local communities and visitors. Now more than ever, these are lessons that can and should be applied by a greater range of organizations around the world.

Lessons learned

Engaging the local community is essential – such engagement was the main challenge faced by HI USA's learning programmes. Since HI NYC hosts international travellers, many community groups did not realize it also serves locals. Therefore, HI NYC networked and connected with local elected officials and the media to spread the word. It sought out programme participants in local community colleges, with a large sampling of native New Yorkers who frequently do not leave their city. HI NYC worked to integrate the interests and motivations of young adults in its volunteer opportunities, while offering them credit hours to travel to other HI USA hostels for free so that participating with HI USA incentivizes them to travel.

HI NYC's approach encompasses successful modes of impacting the understanding and behaviour of guests in ways that align with the goals of culturally and environmentally sustainable tourism. Successes in inspiring community members to travel are grounded on the fact that the organization responds to the differing needs of novice travellers. Spending quality time engaging the community builds trust and understanding which, in turn, help to build an effective network.

The organization's experience suggests that local audiences cannot be reached by relying on the media or stories aimed at tourists or international audiences, since marketing to the local community utilizes different channels and stories. HI NYC learned a great deal from their first cohort of scholarship winners and employed these lessons in their service to the community. Equally essentially, HI NYC recognizes the local community as a separate, equal stakeholder in the hostel. As such, the organization followed their lead to build communication, trust and effective partnerships.

This is an excerpt from the UNWTO publication "Tourism for Development, Volume II: Success Stories". Read the complete publication on the UNWTO Web site at www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419746

How can tourism effectively contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

This flagship report addresses the changes needed in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour. Showcased along 23 case studies from around the world, this two-volume report examines the role of tourism in each of the five pillars of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017:

1. Sustainable economic growth;
2. Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction;
3. Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change;
4. Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and
5. Mutual understanding, peace and security.



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
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The **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 158 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.



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