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RURAL RESILIENCE AND RURAL TOURISM TRAINING PATHS

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RURAL TOURISM BUSINESS GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT AIMS

Our project aims are to improve the competitiveness of SMEs active in tourism and agriculture, by developing a training program to design tour packages to implement tourism in rural areas to attract new targets of tourists.

Our vision is to encourage this type of tourism helping tourists, to discover the local intangible cultural heritage (handicrafts, cuisine, music, stories, customs), creating connections among local communities according to the Experiential tourism app.



CHAPTER I

STATE OF THE ART ABOUT RURAL TOURISM IN EACH PARTNER COUNTRY

TOURURAL DESK ANALYSIS - SLOVAKIA



Rural Tourism Development in Slovakia– Analysis & Case Study

Rural tourism represents a form of tourism associated with a stay in a rural environment. According to the specification of rural tourism and agrotourism in the European context and in Slovakia, rural tourism is characterized as a set of recreational activities or leisure activities linked to the environment of rural settlements and are different from civilized recreational activities. They mean a return to nature, to activities that directly provide the basic needs for living. Stay in the countryside in general, but also in new facilities with comfortable equipment and services or stay in an original rural environment (including a temporary rural way of life), performing agricultural, craft and other work. Abroad is a relatively widely used form of tourism, which gives new opportunities to local entrepreneurs, service providers and craftsmen. Rural tourism represents a form of tourism associated with a stay in a rural environment.

Slovakia has perfect conditions for the development of tourism, i.e. also for its components – agrotourism and rural tourism. In addition to natural features such as mountains, caves, water areas, healing and mineral springs, and various flora and fauna, offers valuable historical buildings and complexes, cultural monuments, mansions, castles, objects of folk architecture, folklore performances, traditional crafts, etc. These are usually activities associated with returning to nature, with the possibility of accommodation in country houses and accommodation facilities in the countryside, where part of the offer is also the possibility of eating, or preparing your own food and carrying out various activities associated with a stay in the countryside.

SOME NUMBERS

Number of regions in Slovakia 8

Number of inhabitants of Slovakia: 5.44 mil

Inhabitants in cities á 54% in the countryside 46%

Schools participating in the project (Joined school Rakovice – Trnava region, Secondary vocational school of wine and fruit production Modra – Bratislava region. Secondary vocational school in Pruske – Trenčín region) and other regional organizations from mentioned regions.

The most common activities include easy hikes, walks along the slopes and valleys, cycling, visiting cultural monuments and events, winter sports, golf and other sports activities. In the agrotourism facilities, it is possible to go horse riding, fishing, picking forest fruits, baking bread in a stone oven in the garden, participating in handicrafts, working in the field and farmyard, feeding animals, milking, making cheese and butter, mowing meadows and drying hay, harvesting work, collection and processing of fruits, vegetables, forest fruits, etc. Agritourism is characterized by the participation of visitors in farm work and the consumption of food prepared from home products. Rural tourism is represented by ranches, chalets, farm guesthouses, farms, farmyards and eco facilities that create a homely atmosphere in clean air, without noise, with active rest in nature. According to the specification of rural tourism and agrotourism in the European context and in Slovakia, rural tourism is characterized as a set of recreational activities or leisure activities that are linked to the environment of rural settlements and are different from civilized recreational activities. They mean a certain return to nature, to activities that directly procure the basic needs for living. Currently, the term "rural tourism, tourism in a rural environment" has several interpretations – from ensuring a stay in the countryside in general (including in new facilities with comfortable equipment and services of the character of a built resort) to staying in the original in an original rural environment, including a temporary rural way of life, performing agricultural, craft and other works.

Examples of good practice in the subject area:

Bratislava region: to be delivered

1. ELESKO a.s. | ELESKO Wine Park
Partizánska 2275 | 900 01 Blue
reception: +421 2 20 92 2 909
fax: +421 2 20 92 26 50
e-mail: odbyt@elesko.sk
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/elesko.sk/>

Trenčín region:

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IČ DPH: SK1020509248
Telefón/Fax: +421 42/439 33 77
+421 42/439 33 38
Mobil: +421 905 749 85
<http://penziongrunt.sk/>

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O18 13 Papradno
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RANČ LHOTA, A.S.
Prejta 487
O18 41 Dubnica nad Váhom
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E – mail: mariahudecova@ranclhota.sk
www.ranclhota.sk

Trnava region: TBD

Proposals for rural tourism innovations:

- restoration of historical and cultural traditions
- return to a healthy lifestyle
- creating a better relationship with nature
- creation of new attractions in the countryside

REFERENCES

- <https://slovakregion.sk/region-bratislava>
- <https://slovakia.travel/en/little-carpathian-wine-route>
- <https://hradcervenykamen.sk/>
- <https://elesko.sk/o-nas/>
- <https://www.pavelkavino.sk/napisali-o-nas/>
- <https://www.bratislava-rusovce.sk/pamiatky>
<https://www.regiontrnava.sk/stranka/o-nas>

TOURURAL DESK ANALYSIS - AUSTRIA



More than 80% of Austrian national tourism is rural tourism. In a comparison of overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments, Austria ranks 6th in the EU in absolute terms and despite its rather small size, with 86.0 million overnight stays by foreigners in 2017, placing it behind Spain, Great Britain, Italy, France and Greece and ahead of Germany, Croatia, Portugal and the Netherlands.

Since Austria is also a popular tourist destination for nationals, the number of tourist overnight stays of these is also interesting. In 2017, there were 35.1 million tourist overnight stays by nationals. The total number of tourist overnight stays in Austria in 2017 thus amounted to 121.1 million.

Tourism can act as a central factor for regional development in rural areas by contributing to balancing regional disparities and creating equal living conditions through positive economic and social effects.

For example, tourism can create jobs, generate additional revenue and income, or contribute to securing and maintaining infrastructure, which ultimately benefits the local population.

Furthermore, it is possible that tourism has a positive influence on the image of the region, which in turn has a positive impact on other economic location factors.

The development, maintenance and expansion of tourism structures are therefore, in addition to traditional approaches to regional development, such as infrastructure expansion or the cost-effective provision of building land, now often a fixed component of regional development strategies. Tourism, therefore, appears to be an important economic and regional development factor, also and especially in rural Austria.

Despite the manifold and extensive potentials that tourism also holds for rural development, central challenges of tourism development for rural areas are also repeatedly discussed in research.

These include, among others, the sometimes difficult accessibility of tourism regions from the tourism source areas by public transport and the local mobility services that need to be expanded.

Furthermore, social impacts of tourism are addressed, which include, for example, the change of lifestyles, the commercialization of customs, or the creation of social disharmony due to increasing income disparities and conflicts between tourism businesses.

Researchers also cite the potential effects of tourism development on the natural landscape and wildlife, traffic-related emissions, and increased energy and water consumption.

However, all of these challenges depend to a not inconsiderable extent on the intensity and specific design of tourism activities. It should also be emphasised that these challenges do not apply to all rural areas and, moreover, do not necessarily occur simultaneously.

Examples of Rural Tourism in Austria:

<https://www.wagrain-kleinarl.at/> in Salzburg, Austria.

<https://www.bauernhofurlaub-oesterreich.at/anfrage.html>

Here you can browse through the venues available for sustainable, rural tourism.

<https://bookitgreen.com/blog/bio-und-natur-urlaub-in-oesterreich/>

This is another example of options available in Austria for sustainable, rural tourism.

TOURURAL DESK ANALYSIS - ITALY



Italy is a leader in rural tourism with more than 24,000 structures located throughout the peninsula positioned away from traditional stops, such as cities of art, national monuments, and popular areas.

In 2019, rural tourism attracted around 14 million individual visits. In 2020 the outbreak of COVID and travel restrictions stopped its growth, but with more than 25,000 beds and more than 440,000 seats spread across several restaurants, it will come back strong once the global economy starts to pick up.

Many authors use the terms “Rural Tourism”, “Agritourism”, and “Ecotourism” as synonyms, however, all these terms encompass a series of different realities that give rise to different concepts. Rural tourism has had a good reception among tourists since its offer is very wide. Its products can range from the simplest to the most elaborate in tourist services, while the contextual conditions of each of its expressions are the secret of their charm since they always differ radically from each other.

In most communities, residents have authority, and community participation is encouraged, striving to achieve sustainable development. Rural tourism is a complementary economic activity to agriculture, which allows small producers or production units to diversify and expand their source of income, thus reducing their dependence on monoculture. For the development of this tourism to take place, it is essential to train and organize communities to create permanent jobs and self-employment.

- Rural tourism is characterized by the conscious practice of using the natural and cultural resources of an area, as well as by respect for the heritage of the area in which it develops, it is a product with low environmental and socio-cultural impact, which aims to carry out coexistence and interaction with a rural community.
- Rural tourism is characterized by being a tourism wanted and controlled by the local populations who develop it, it is a meeting place where the life experiences of the community are shared, and therefore it is a tourism that promotes:
- Local initiative, which is based on the rural inhabitant's ability to publicize their cultural and customs aspects.
- Local management, where companies of small agricultural producers can develop interesting management strategies for rural tourism initiatives since it is a matter of small or medium-sized enterprise tourism, where the central and essential element is the man himself.
- Diversification and increase in the income of small agricultural producers and their families, as well as generating new employment alternatives, especially for young people and rural women.

- The enhancement of local culture strengthens ties with tourists who seek to get to know different ways of life or customs. The interest shown by tourists causes a sense of pride in the resident population and a desire to preserve traditional cultures that they risk being absorbed or replaced by practices borrowed from other cultures.
- Definition of local landscapes, natural and socio-cultural resources such as large spaces of tranquillity and rest, attractive landscape, important architectural and urban heritage, etc ...

The strength of rural tourism lies largely in the aspects related to the rural inhabitant's ability to interact with tourists, i.e. the ability to communicate with the visitor, through words, attitudes, the environment and one's own activities.

Some examples of good practices of rural tourism development in the Basilicata region

[https://visitcastelsaraceno.info/?](https://visitcastelsaraceno.info/?gclid=CjwKCAiAzp6eBhByEiwA_gGq5ldmKYh6BCpeSebltnmbavJ8MDk40kMms5fA3Ucg1XPn47a7KVmShoCrhsQAvD_BwE)

[gclid=CjwKCAiAzp6eBhByEiwA_gGq5ldmKYh6BCpeSebltnmbavJ8MDk40kMms5fA3Ucg1XPn47a7KVmShoCrhsQAvD_BwE](https://www.galpercorsi.it/)

<https://www.galpercorsi.it/>

<https://www.ivytour.it/>

<https://www.verdegusto.it/>

TOURAL DESK ANALYSIS - POLAND



Number of regions (voivodships) in Poland 16

Number of inhabitants of Poland: 37 996 – September 2022

Inhabitants in cities á 60 % in the countryside 40%.

Schools and organizations participating in the project:

1. Zespół Szkół Licealnych i Agrotechnicznych im. L. Janty – Potczyńskiego in Tuchola is a school with 467 students.

Currently, there are 41 teachers working in the school, teaching in various, traditional and modern, directions:

- tourism organization technician,
- agribusiness technician,
- techniques economist,
- landscape architecture technician ,
- basic vocational school – multi-professional.

2. Integracyjne Centrum Opieki Wychowania Terapii KKWR, Wyzwolenia 31, 05 -140 Serock

<https://www.integracjaserock.pl/>

They organize: green schools, preventive and educational stays, weekend and trip stays, workshops promoting a healthy lifestyle, summer camps, winter camps, camping sites, sports tournaments, meetings and integration games for children, methodical activity of training for educators working in bonfires.

Sources:

<https://czasopisma.bg.ug.edu.pl/index.php/JGPS/article/view/7419/6611>

<https://odpoczywajnawsi.pl/>

Rest in the countryside

The "Rest in the countryside" campaign is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Its aim is to create the image of rural areas as a tourist market offering diverse and year-round attractions. The Polish Federation of Rural Tourism "Gospodarstwa Gościnne" is responsible for the substantive service of the Campaign.

<https://pftw.pl/o-nas/> The Polish Federation of Rural Tourism "Gospodarstwa Gościnne" was established in 1996. It is a nationwide organisation with associations that include owners of rural tourism facilities. Its aim is to carry out comprehensive activities for the promotion and development of Polish rural tourism.

Rural tourism/agritourism/tourism in rural areas in Poland

Tourism in rural areas has a long tradition, and in Poland the development of tourism in rural areas underwent the same processes as in Western European countries before World War I, but the changes came a few years or several decades later, mainly due to the lack of statehood.

Due to the political situation (politics of the practitioners'), Polish society neglected and did not promote the economic role of tourism. This could only happen after Poland regained its independence, i.e. after 1918.

The process of shaping the organisational structures of tourism in the country began in 1919 with the establishment of the Office of Tourism at the Ministry of Public Works.

The development of tourism in rural areas in the interwar period resulted in the concept of summer tourism, according to which villagers were prepared to receive tourists, provide them with accommodation and food, and encouraged to build houses for rent. As a result of this activity, summer tourism developed steadily, with summer resorts usually located around large towns and in tourist areas some distance away, i.e. in the mountains and by the sea.

The change of the state regime to socialism after the Second World War meant that tourism was treated as a social, non-productive field and a tool subsidised by the state, playing a very important role in shaping the attitudes of the citizens of a socialist country. The pre-war tradition of welcoming summer visitors was part of a private economic activity – contrary to the prevailing ideology. In the early years of the socialist period, the number of trips to the countryside was reduced and the recreational function in some localities even disappeared.

The explosion of this form of recreation in rural areas in Poland occurred in the 1970s and caused spatial, physiognomic and functional changes in many villages, which became the object of research as 'tourism in the countryside' or 'tourism in rural areas'.

Rural tourism, on the other hand, has developed in Western European countries mainly as a result of activities undertaken by the governments of individual countries, and later under the programmes of the European Economic Community, later the European Union, and other international organisations such as the OECD. Rural tourism, especially agritourism, became a highly organised activity carried out by active people.

After 1989, Poland entered another phase of economic and social change. The adoption of the principles of a market economy resulted in some changes in the ownership, management and development plans of many recreational facilities. At the same time, new opportunities arose to use foreign aid funds (e.g. PHARE) to activate rural areas through tourism in various ways. The style of recreation has changed among tourists looking for opportunities for more personalised, active and exploratory leisure activities.

Rural tourism – agritourism – tourism in rural areas?

In the early years, the form used was agrotourism. The Polish version of this term (agrotourism) was introduced later. After 1990, another term, 'rural tourism', was introduced and terms from other languages, such as 'agrotourism' and 'agroecotourism', began to be adapted.

AGROTURISM is a form of rural tourism that is a specific tourist enterprise on a functioning farm, organised by the farmer's family on the basis of the resources of their own farm and the tourist values of the area, and in cooperation with the local community, for the benefit of tourists seeking peace and quiet, interested in the life and customs of the country.

RURAL TOURISM encompasses forms of tourism practised in the countryside, linked to agriculture, forestry, horticulture or fishing, and based on natural or cultural attractions as well as the daily life of the local people. These forms of tourism are organised by entities not necessarily socially or economically linked to these areas.

Agrotourism was introduced to the Polish countryside in 1991 by state institutions, mainly agricultural advisory centres, which started to cooperate with similar units abroad. Agrotourism meant actual activities (e.g. running courses for farmers), organisational activities (e.g. providing advisory services) and legislative activities (sanctioning farmers' exemption from income tax when renting up to five rooms to tourists).

What was new, however, was the name of this form of leisure, as well as the way in which tourism was generated, based on the experience of Western European countries.

It was not until the mid-1990s that the semantic scope of 'agrotourism' and 'rural tourism' was clearly distinguished and a different term, i.e. 'tourism in rural areas', began to be used more and more frequently, which was then used interchangeably with the term 'rural tourism'. Definitions of the Polish term 'tourism in rural areas' did not appear until after 2000 and denotes all attractions and activities related to life in the countryside, its culture, events important for the local community, and on the agricultural environment (animals, agricultural products, forest, lakes, nature).

In Poland, agrotourism has proved to be a new form of tourism, both for its participants and organisers, introduced through institutions, based on the experience of other countries.

In Western European countries, governments, local authorities and international organisations (e.g. OECD, EU) have patronised the development of agrotourism (e.g. PHARE, LEADER I, LEADER II) with the aim of making agrotourism and rural tourism tools of rural development policy.

In Poland, the challenge for the further development of agritourism and rural tourism is to strive for a new identity, based on endogenous factors, in which entrepreneurship and business are prioritised.

Cases:

Agrotouristic and educational farm „Olej Liniany” – Winniki 18, 05 – 190 Nasielsk background and strategy.

„Our educational activities are of great interest because they are held in the open area, friendly atmosphere, safe large playground and really large fields”

Situated at the triangle of three municipalities, in the picturesque village of Winniki, Hanna and Krzysztof Kowalski's farms produce traditional linseed and rapeseed oil.

On the farm is also breeding of white goldfish pigs under strict control of the University of Agriculture in Poznań.

In Winniki, Hanna & Krzysztof Kowalscy runs their farm, including the production of linseed oil, educational programs for children and young people, develop agritourism. The main part of their activities is promotion of traditional food, healthy recipes based on oil and other eco-ingredients.

Hanna and Krzysztof Kowalski together with their daughters run a 103-ha farm with diversified activities. Their farm is an example of impressive development with very good production achievements.

The farm cultivates the tradition of the cold pressing of oil and undertakes pig breeding. Linseed and rapeseed oils are produced from the farm's own crops and pressed according to old recipes in their oil mill alongside their home.

The farm belongs to the Nationwide Educational Homestead Net – work and hosts demonstrations, training sessions, and activities for children and seniors, as well as internships for students. Tours from Poland and abroad visit the farm.

The farm is also a member of the Mazovia Culinary Heritage Network. For its products entered into the national list of regional products, the Kowalski family received many awards and distinctions. Noteworthy is the fact of their cooperation with many companies and scientific entities in the field of conducting experiments and introducing new technologies.

TOURAL DESK ANALYSIS - IRELAND



Rural tourism has numerous benefits. Not least since agriculture is becoming more industrialised and offers less opportunities today in rural Ireland, rural tourism offers an opportunity for alternative income streams, the development of heritage farming and the resurrection of traditional folk art and artisanal crafts. Rural touristic development can improve the social wellbeing in rural areas not only for the local community but also visitors to the countryside.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected tourism globally. It also affected the wellbeing and resilience of many, especially younger people who were restricted in their social and employment activities and may not have had the life experience to overcome the emotional burden of a lockdown. In the forward to Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 Micheál Martin the Irish Taoiseach explains that Brexit and the COVID-19 provides an opportunity for rural Ireland. The upshot of this upbeat message sees rural Ireland as an integral component of Ireland's economy and the country's socio-cultural and environmental development that will lead to an enhancement of rural Ireland's wellbeing and quality of life for rural communities building resilience and sustainability into rural communities to meet local needs.

Rural tourism is any tourism or touristic activity that occurs in rural environs and is based around activities related to the natural world, local agriculture and forestry, lifestyles and culture in the countryside, including angling and hunting. UNWTO (The World Tourism Organisation) also supports the feeling of Taoiseach Micheál Martin that rural tourism can contribute greatly to the economy and development in the countryside. Arguably, tourism is market driven. It is about extracting fiscal benefits from tourists for the benefit of the tourist industry.

In Ireland, agriculture was central to rural life; today it offers a solution to the changing nature of our relationship with nature and the country side. The countryside in Ireland offers so much for the tourist. Rural Ireland has a uniqueness in terms of geography, climate and culture that attracts millions of visitors from the UK, continental Europe and North America, yearly (Central Statistic's Office (CSO), 2014)

There are many potential income opportunities in Ireland. According to Teagasc - The Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland (2016) "Rural tourism in Ireland was initiated in the 1960s with the foundation of 'The Irish Farmhouse Association's national organisation for B&Bs on farms."

And has grown into a multibillion Euro industry in Ireland and according to Teagasc tourists spend approximately 31 percent of their tourist Euro on accommodation, 34 percent on food, 14 percent on shopping, 11 percent on travel and just 7 percent on activities.

The relatively low expenditure on activities is surprising as activities encourage visitors to stay longer and as Teagasc says "Activities and Attractions have a twofold function. They allow visitors to access the landscape which is why tourists come here in the first instance and they provide the vital component of the holiday experience which is 'something to do'. It continues to say that " linkage to the community is essential."

"What tourists do in Ireland? 72% explore; 72% enjoy the landscape; 70% spend time with family; 65% have fun and laughter; 60% soak up atmosphere; 60% spontaneity; 60% want peace and quiet; 45% want to experience activity; 41% visit a craft fair; 42% attend a cultural event"

"In what activities do tourists partake while in Ireland? 1.2 million Walking; 290,000 Cycling; 176,000 Golfing; 168,000 Angling; 86,000 Watersports; 82,000 Equestrian"

The Teagasc publication highlights the opportunities in tourism development including, but not limited to, activities such as canoeing, archery, angling, cycling, horse riding, craft/cookery schools, nature trails, local events and festivals and open farms. Given these statistics, there is ample opportunity for individuals and organisations to develop these opportunities in the experiential tourist industry that underpins efforts to provide resilience development to rural and urban youth.

In the Rialtas Na hÉireann (Government of Ireland) document Our Rural Future Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 acknowledges that, " outdoor activity tourism is a key growth sector worldwide and Ireland is well placed to capitalise on this trend. The development and promotion of this sector provides opportunities for employment growth in rural areas in particular, through local businesses

and entrepreneurs using the tourism assets in their area in a sustainable way to support recreational activities such as walking, cycling, canoeing and angling. There has been significant Exchequer investment in recent years in supporting the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure, including through funding for walking trails, greenways, blue ways and angling infrastructure.

These will be important attractions for domestic and overseas visitors in the post-COVID recovery. This Strategy, will provide a framework for the development of the sector across Government and will, amongst other issues, look at opportunities to develop rural enterprises based on outdoor recreation activity."

Rural tourism and resilience Resilience is important. The social structures of the past of family, friends and community have loosened. New realities of the internet, disinformation in mainstream and social media, Covid restrictions and large-scale societal change have removed the certainties of the past.

In addition, family violence, the media-driven highlighting of global environmental collapse, conflict, to name a few, can make younger people feel unsafe. Thus, it is crucial to encourage, develop and build life skills and resilience in young people to combat these issues.

Developing opportunities in the tourist industry provides the opportunity to underpin and support youth resilience by moving the focus from the things that cause nervousness and distress in young people to positive life-building skills activities such as work, business or entrepreneurship and exploiting the rural environment in which the live, work or visit.

In the Rialtas Na hÉireann (Government of Ireland) document Our Rural Future Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 states that, "in 2016, more than one-third of all persons aged under 25 years in Ireland lived in a rural area." It further stated that, "issues which impact on people living in rural areas generally are more pronounced for young people." According to the document, these included access reliable public transport services and mental health and addiction supports and age-appropriate facilities, lack of quality employment. The policy document also suggests that focus should be on supporting rural youth in order to encourage them to build leadership capabilities and to provide input to the rural development of Ireland.

To help young people cope with this situation, resilience is developing strategies to manage situations that are stressful and challenging. How we respond to a situation dictates how well we can deal with it. Essentially resilience is coping with and recovering from situations and experiences we find worrying, stressful or traumatic. Restorative approaches help young people to build resilience to the challenges of the modern world through an understanding of their position within their world and contemporary life with regards to relationships, personal choices and how they relate to the world they live in.

Resilience theory argues that it is how we approach and deal with misfortune and not the type of adversity that is crucial. Essentially, in a survival situation it is not the equipment you have but rather the knowledge and training one possesses that allow one to service. Resilience helps us cope with an adverse experience. It helps us to stop, evaluate, service and thrive. These are basic elements in a survival situation.

RuResilience programmes are nonclinical, psycho-educational and psycho-social intervention methodologies focusing on developing coping and resilience skills in young people.

It allows them to build pathways to resilience by helping them take personal responsibility for the choices they make and develop the skills to mitigate and repair harm through building behavioural and emotional resilience.

People who participate in survival courses are taught to pull through in adverse situations. They are also taught that a positive mental attitude and task building are important elements in resilience against adversity; very few of us have these skills from birth. These skills are something that one needs to cultivate.

They develop throughout our lives through the experiences we have and the interactions we have with those around us and the environments we inhabit. For example, people who live in a large city have developed ways to cope with the vagaries of city life, but may not be accustomed to rural life.

Experiential tourism lends itself to resilience in cultivating it both in local youth and young visitors to rural Ireland.

Experiential tourism in rural areas itineraries: an opportunity for young resilience

Experiential tourism in rural areas in Ireland offers an opportunity for young resilience in two ways: for youth in rural areas and youth visiting rural areas around the island of Ireland. For youth in the countryside, it can offer employment and career opportunities and for urban youth visiting the countryside Experiential tourism is also sometimes known as adventure tourism, immersion tourism or ecotourism. It is a tourist experience that doesn't focus on a beach or a famous landmark. It is a form of tourism where the focus is on experiencing a destination by engaging with the culture, history, people, food and cuisine and the environment of the place you are visiting. It is a philosophy that promotes a transformative experience through education, discovery, new insights and inspiration. Ireland has a wealth of destinations where visitors both Irish and International can participate in an experiential tourist experience. In terms of opportunities, rural Ireland has many ranging from farming, culinary adventurism or walking the greenways of Ireland.

According to Fáilte Ireland in Experiences: "A tourism experience is multi-faceted and is what visitors gain from a place; its attractions, activities, the people they meet and the stories they share. It is a personal experience that engages the senses, making connections on many levels: emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual or social level and creates a lasting memory. Creating experiences is all about combining natural landscape assets, tourism products, customer service, stories (and the telling of them) to create compelling consumer offerings or 'experiences'.

Memorable tourism experience therefore comprises four core components: product, service, story and narration. The combination of the unique story of your place, the various means through which that story is narrated for visitors, including online and the service a customer experiences when they are with you, is what will best ensure your visitor has an opportunity to immerse themselves in the experience you offer and take away some great memories.”

Fáilte has also developed an Experience Developmental Framework using a pyramid diagram that summarises the core components of the Experience Developmental framework showing how the components relate to each other. At the top of the pyramid is:

- Brand Ireland – Ireland’s tourism identity providing engaging touristic experiences.
- Key Propositions – essentially these are unique selling points. These include The Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin and East and South.
- Stories and themes – that bring the key propositions to life.
- Signature Experiences – Deliver on the brand proposition and serve as a motivator for tourist visitors comprising a combination of story-based, thematic or geographical experiences.
- Supporting experiences – are products such as activities, attractions and culinary experiences that are aligned to the brand Ireland.
- Ancillary Experience Mix – The wider tourism offering that must also deliver a memorable and pleasurable experience.

Fáilte also offers The Experience Wheel that develops the Components of a Memorable Tourism Experience

1. The inner layer of the wheel comprises the four components of a memorable tourism experience: the Product which includes attractions, activities, accommodation, restaurants, tourist sites and sites of special interest for tourists.
2. Service which provides for the customer’s needs.
3. Story chronicling the place and its people.
4. Narration is the way the story is told.

The next layer of the Experience Wheel captures how expectations can be delivered for each component.

For example:

1. Product: immersive.
2. Service: meeting and interacting with passionate and hospitable people.
3. Story: interesting narratives of people and places.
4. Narration: communication that is interesting, motivates and informs.

The outer layer provides a summary of the type of emotions that are elicited when experiences are positive.

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CHAPTER 2

RURAL TOURISM AND RESILIENCE

1. Rural Resilience as approach in strategies of Rural Development

Rural areas cover more than 80% of the EU's total land area and their inhabitants account for 30% of the EU population. Rural areas are becoming active participants in environmental and digital transformation. They play a key role in the implementation of the EU's Green Deal goals, the Farm-to-Table strategy and many others. In this light rural areas need innovative businesses, the promotion of new, flexible skills to create the conditions for the development of infrastructure and services and an increased role for sustainable agriculture, as well as diversified economic activities beyond agriculture, livestock and forestry.

In the Long-term Vision for Rural Areas to 2040, the key document is the Rural Pact announced in VI 2021 by the EC. The rural areas have been and will continue to be vulnerable to all kinds of economic, social and environmental impacts. And of course the COVID-19 pandemic pointed some specific vulnerabilities and risk factors, but also has revealed the needs of building resilience in all areas more generally. This applies to the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, which are less resilient to the medium- to long-term effects of such a large-scale external shock. In order to build a more resilient rural future, many factors need to be taken into account.

Tourism and small rural businesses have faced a number of challenges in recent decades: pandemic, global climate change, terrorism, wars, economic crisis, poverty etc. All have had a devastating impact, but in the long term, this need to change and adapt to new circumstances should trigger a positive transformation, creating green and sustainable forms of travel with increasing rural participation. Tourism development is helping to strengthen the resilience of these areas, often socially, economically and geographically marginalised.

"After this crisis, I believe that people will want to know more when choosing their travel options. They will want to know not only which is the best offer, but also which travel option is more sustainable" – Mounier said secretary general of EU travel tech.

Tourism stimulates territorial development and is an important issue in regional policy. The negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector was very strong, but it caused rethinking and modification of ways to support tourism, according to the report of the European Regional Policy Research Consortium (EoRPA) 'The role of regional policy in rebuilding a sustainable and resilient tourism sector'.

The report 'Building a sustainable and resilient tourism economy: the role of regional policy', authored by Viktoriya Dozhdeva of the European Policy Research Institute (EPRC) at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, shows that the pandemic highlighted the challenges facing the tourism sector and pointed to the unsustainable nature of its development.

The pandemic caused a never seen before crisis in the tourism economy, leading to a sharp decline in turnover and revenue, business and job losses. In 2019 travel and tourism accounted for 9.2% of the European economy, and in 2020 year global tourist numbers declined by 74 %, with an average decline of 70 % across Europe and a range of 46 to 84 % in individual countries.

There are crucial examples of EU regional policy supports sustainable tourism in Europe in these mentioned above documents. It is important that vulnerable tourist regions receive support in making the tourism sector resilient. This is to protect travel service providers in crisis situations. Programs undertaken by EU Member States include, for example, support for sustainable tourism, diversification of value chains; development of local infrastructure and human resources, development of digitization, promotion of rural tourism. The EC emphasizes that sustainable, crisis-proof tourism supports sectors such as transport, food production, etc.

2. Examples of strategies, actions and support for rural tourism as a reinforcement of the residency of these areas in different European countries:

In Germany, tourism has become a stimulus for other economic sectors and a driver for the expansion of regional infrastructure.

In Finland, it creates higher quality services for the local population and infrastructure that facilitates other economic activities.

Portugal's tourism strategy, on the other hand, emphasises the 'tourism multiplier' effect through which tourism is an engine for local socio-economic development.

Local authorities play an important role in tourism development and management. In Germany, the Länder are responsible for implementing tourism policy. In Norway, provincial and local authorities set the conditions that are crucial for tourism, e.g. through decisions on planning, infrastructure, national parks or local attractions. In the Netherlands, provinces and municipalities are seen as more influential tourism policy actors than the national government.

In Portugal, regional policy measures for low-density internal areas include a specific sub-programme aimed at tourism development. Also in Sweden, priority is given to using tourism to develop sparsely populated and rural areas in order to increase their potential to attract population and tax revenue.

In England, coastal areas have become the focus of regional policy and have received support through: Welcome Back Fund and Kick-starting Tourism Package, as well as +Coastal Communities+ and Coastal Revival Funds.

Regional policy is also responding to the crisis by supporting the development of tourism and communications infrastructure. In Scotland, for example, the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund supports rural and remote areas that are facing infrastructural pressures due to increased visitor numbers.

The response to the crisis has also sought to increase the effectiveness of support by building a coherent regional policy and tourism sector response. To this end, initiatives have been developed to establish specific coordination mechanisms.

In Switzerland, the Tourism Forum has been established as a platform for cooperation, with representatives from the private sector, cantons, municipalities, the federal government and tourism associations at both national and regional level.

Individual countries are also exploring opportunities to strengthen cooperation between the areas of tourism and regional policy: Austria runs a pilot project to identify synergy potentials and how these can be supported by the federal level.

In Poland, sustainable tourism in combination with local economic development is supported through digital technologies. Attention is drawn to the need for a two-pronged transformation, green and digital, to enhance rural resilience as it will help SMEs to develop and reuse local resources, create green jobs and enable other farmers to diversify their income. Tourism as an opportunity to enhance rural resilience. Tourism plays an increasingly important role in rural development. It supports the local economy, enables the promotion of monuments, the development of culture and the natural environment. Polish villages are becoming more and more attractive. There is a chance for promotion, and the activities are part of increasing the resilience of rural areas. A competition called "The Best Tourism Villages" is announced for all tourism projects across of Europe.

The struggle of rural areas with globalisation, changes in leisure styles, online working, unemployment and the economic crisis are just some of the reasons why farmers, SMEs in Europe are attempting to convert their farms to tourism infrastructure, relying only on their own experience and potential. Undeniably, tourism in rural areas generates jobs and opens up business opportunities where other solutions may be limited, in addition to maintaining and protecting existing jobs, micro-enterprises and self-employed people in rural areas. Businesses operating in tourist areas benefit from the tourism potential that exists there, while those emerging in agricultural or peripheral areas face many obstacles. The development of the tourism sector shapes local economic growth and employment, hinders the exodus of young people, and maintains resilience in these areas.

As stated during the opening sessions of Rural Vision Week 2021, rural areas face long-standing problems such as depopulation, internal migration, an ageing population and limited access to services and infrastructure. As a result, they are particularly vulnerable to rapid change or natural disasters of any kind. Because they have long faced long-standing and persistent adversity due to peripherally, shocks such as natural hazards or economic recessions can irreversibly change the direction of their development. "Chronic" disruptions are actually detrimental to a place's ability to adapt, although a COVID-19 emergency can be an opportunity for rural areas that become attractive places to relocate, temporarily or even permanently. They are less populated, offer space, proximity to nature. Until now, these characteristics may have pushed these places to the margins of economic development, now potentially opening up new perspectives in a strategy to strengthen rural resilience. There is an opportunity here to develop local tourism, and some small villages have developed place marketing strategies aimed at exploiting opportunities arising from a more or less voluntary shift in consumer preferences in the areas of tourism and work. (Smart village Santa Fiora, Tuscany).

Response of rural areas

On 15 and 16 June 2022, a conference on the Rural Resilience Pact was held at the initiative of the European Commission in cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Parliament, the Presidency of the European Council and the European Rural Parliament.

An insightful reflection from the Rural Vision Week is that rural resilience and place-based strategies require diversity in terms of: people, economic activities or opinions

The Rural Pact is one of the elements that feed into the Long Term Vision for Rural Areas to 2040, developed in June last year. The Long Term Vision for Rural Areas identifies four key actions through which its objectives will be realised:

Stronger rural areas (social innovation, access to services, empowered communities).

Connected rural areas (digital connectivity, transport links and new mobility solutions).

Resilient rural areas (climate resilience, environmental resilience, social resilience).

Prosperous rural areas (diversification of economic activities, sustainable food production).

During the meeting, the following issues were addressed in side sessions:

"Rural Proofing" – a foresight framework for rural areas that can help stimulate their revitalisation by ensuring that relevant EU policies, including those not directly related to rural areas, are aligned with their needs. The mechanism is one element of the Long Term Vision for Rural Areas. Regional and local authorities are encouraged to use it. The European Committee of the Regions will monitor the impact of the new legislation on rural communities by promoting coordination on key policies (CAP, Reconstruction and Resilience Instrument, Cohesion Policy) and other actions and investments derived from EU legislation.

The work of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Smart Villages for Rural Communities (active from 2019). The need to engage the business sector for smart villages was highlighted, with actions taken to support decision-making primarily at local rather than central level. The European Commission calls on Member States and regional authorities to adopt the LEADER method and the concept of Smart Villages, what could be pillars for the development of rural tourism and one of the pillars of resilience rural areas.

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CHAPTER 3

RURAL TOURISM: CONCEPT AND DIFFERENT ASPECTS

Rural tourism: concept and different aspects

Rural tourism has become an increasingly popular form of tourism in recent years. It is a type of tourism that is centered around the rural regions, offering visitors the opportunity to experience the unique natural and cultural heritage of rural areas. It is often defined as "a type of tourism that involves staying in rural areas, participating in rural activities, and experiencing rural lifestyles". (Sharpley, 2014)

This section of document deals with concept and different aspects of general rural tourism, with later focus on Slovak republic and specific.

General rural tourism concept

Rural tourism involves visiting areas with rich local culture, traditions, and often unique way of life. It offers a unique travel experience that is different from traditional tourist destinations such as cities, beaches, or theme parks.

Rural tourism is often associated with ecotourism and sustainable tourism. It focuses on promoting and preserving the natural and cultural resources of rural areas, while providing economic benefits to the local communities. Rural tourism can be an important source of income for rural communities, which can help to sustain local economies and create employment opportunities.

One of the main attractions of rural tourism is the opportunity to experience the natural beauty of rural areas. Rural areas are often characterized by scenic landscapes, wildlife, and unique biodiversity. Visitors can enjoy activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, and wildlife watching, which allow them to explore the natural environment and appreciate its beauty. Another important aspect of rural tourism is the cultural heritage of rural areas. Rural regions often have a rich history and cultural traditions that can be experienced through activities such as visiting museums, attending cultural festivals, and participating in traditional crafts and activities. Rural tourism also provides an opportunity to learn about the local food, wine, and culinary traditions, which are an important part of the cultural heritage of many rural regions. Rural tourism offers a more relaxed and peaceful travel experience than traditional tourist destinations. Visitors can stay in traditional farmhouses, cottages, or eco-lodges, and experience the daily life of rural communities. This provides a unique and authentic travel experience that allows visitors to connect with the places they visit and the people who live there.

It can be an important source of income for rural communities, which can help to sustain local economies and create employment opportunities. With its focus on sustainability and preserving natural and cultural resources, rural tourism is an important part of the broader sustainable tourism movement.

General different aspects of rural tourism

Rural tourism is a multifaceted form of tourism that encompasses a variety of activities and experiences. It offers visitors the opportunity to explore the natural beauty and cultural heritage of rural areas while providing economic benefits to local communities. The following are some of the different aspects of rural tourism:

1. Nature-based activities: One of the main attractions of rural tourism is the opportunity to engage in nature-based activities. Visitors can enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, bird watching, and other outdoor activities that allow them to explore the natural environment and appreciate its beauty.

2.Cultural heritage: Rural areas often have a rich cultural heritage that can be experienced through activities such as visiting museums, attending cultural festivals, and participating in traditional crafts and activities. Rural tourism provides an opportunity to learn about the local customs, traditions, and way of life of rural communities.

3.Culinary experiences: Many rural areas are known for their local cuisine, which is often based on fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Visitors can participate in cooking classes, wine tastings, and other culinary experiences that allow them to explore the local food and beverage culture.

4.Agritourism: Agritourism is a type of rural tourism that involves visiting farms, vineyards, and other agricultural operations. Visitors can participate in activities such as picking fruits and vegetables, feeding farm animals, and learning about sustainable farming practices.

5.Eco-tourism: Eco-tourism is a type of tourism that focuses on promoting conservation and responsible travel. Rural areas often have unique ecosystems and wildlife that can be explored through eco-tourism activities such as wildlife watching, nature walks, and conservation projects.

6.Rural accommodation: Rural tourism often involves staying in traditional farmhouses, cottages, or eco-lodges, which provide a unique and authentic travel experience. Visitors can immerse themselves in the local culture and way of life by staying in rural accommodations. Whether it's engaging in nature-based activities, experiencing the local cuisine, or staying in traditional accommodations, rural tourism provides a unique and authentic travel experience that is different from traditional tourist destinations.

Rural tourism in Slovak republic

Slovakia, a country located in the heart of Europe, has a lot to offer to tourists interested in exploring rural areas. It has a population of approximately 5.5 million people, with 54% living in cities, while 46% in the countryside. Slovakia has an area of 49,037 square kilometers and is divided into 8 regions. Each region boasts a rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and a variety of outdoor activities that make it an ideal destination for rural tourism.

One of the main attractions of rural tourism in Slovakia are places with the opportunity to experience the local culture and way of life. Rural areas in Slovakia are often characterized by small, traditional villages that have preserved their customs and traditions. Visitors can participate in activities such as folk festivals, traditional crafts, and local cuisine to learn about the unique cultural heritage of rural Slovakia.

Another important aspect of rural tourism in Slovakia is the opportunity to explore the country's diverse landscapes. Slovakia is home to the Tatra Mountains, which offer world-class hiking and skiing opportunities. The country also has numerous national parks, such as the Slovak Paradise and the Low Tatras, which are perfect for nature-based activities such as hiking, cycling, and wildlife watching.

Slovakia is also known for its spa towns, such as Piešťany and Bardejov, which have a long tradition of wellness and healing. Visitors can enjoy thermal baths, saunas, and other spa treatments while surrounded by the beautiful scenery of rural Slovakia.

Agritourism is another important aspect of rural tourism in Slovakia. Visitors can explore traditional Slovak farms and learn about sustainable farming practices. They can participate in activities such as picking fruits and vegetables, milking cows, and making cheese.

Rural tourism in Slovakia offers a unique and authentic travel experience. Visitors can stay in traditional cottages, farmhouses, or eco-lodges, and experience the daily life of rural communities. This provides a unique opportunity to connect with the places they visit and the people who live there.

The country has a long history of winemaking, dating back to Roman times, and today there are over 20,000 hectares of vineyards in Slovakia.

The country's wine regions are concentrated in the southern part of the country, with the Small Carpathian region being the most well-known. This region is characterized by its hilly terrain, which provides ideal conditions for growing grapes. The region is home to over 100 wineries, producing a variety of red, white, and rose wines.

Bratislava Region

Although general tourism in Bratislava region focuses on Bratislava as country's capital city, in years before COVID 19 pandemic there was a growing interest in rural tourism in the region. With pandemic over, this trend appears to continue.

The rural areas of Bratislava are home to many farms, agricultural businesses but also wellness establishments suitable for rural tourism. The major attraction for tourists outside of capital though is wine tourism.

It is possible to find many small and medium sized businesses alongside what is often referred to as Small Carpathian Wine Route. It runs along the sunny slopes of the Small Carpathian Mountains and is lined with fertile vineyards (almost four thousand hectares) and wine cellars.

The tradition of viticulture and winemaking, the ancient history richly represented by ancient monuments, the preserved folklore and character of the vineyard houses, culinary specialties, interesting flora and fauna, coupled with the opportunity to relax in it, are an attractive article for a wide range of interested people, and an attractive entertainment and education.

The Small Carpathian Wine Route leads through the former royal towns of Bratislava, Svätý Jur, Pezinok and Modra and the adjacent Subcarpathian municipalities of the Bratislava, Pezinok and Trnava districts.

Rural tourism opportunities

In every village or royal town, something different and remarkable welcomes tourists.

Vajnory, as the most beautiful part of Bratislava, attracts visitors with its folklore and the Memorial House with the exposition of the Vajnor peasant and vineyard owner.

In Svätý Jur there is the state nature reserve Šúr with lake sediments, floodplain forests with unique flora and fauna.

Among the attractions of the Carpathian Wine Route is also a visit to the Carpathian Wine Museum in Pezinok or the School Estate in Modra, which is associated with a tasting of quality wines of the area and encourages business contacts and the exchange of experiences of winegrowers.

In the vast old park of Peza there is also a rebuilt Baroque castle, whose premises are currently used as a representative hospitality facility where you can taste wines from Peza. In addition to viticulture, Modra is also known as the final resting place of the Slovak nationalist Ľudovít Štúr, whose memorial room and museum are a particularly eye-catching attraction, especially for the local visitor.

Slovenský and Chorvátsky Grob have preserved the traditional art of embroidery and lace-making, as well as the ornamental painting of fireplaces. The walls of the houses are decorated with painted

ornaments and the cemetery has preserved ancient wooden crosses. The gastronomic offer, typical of the area, is also a special feature, highlighted by the taste of the local wines.

The town of Modra offers town fortifications from the 17th century, the preserved Upper Gate, the bastion and the town conservation area. In Pezinok there are preserved city fortifications and a castle with a park from the 17th century.

In all towns and villages of the region there are beautiful churches, many from the 13th–14th centuries (Rača, Doľany, Dolné Orešany, Modra, Svätý Jur, Šenkvice), chapels, monasteries (Pezinok, Svätý Jur), bell towers (Svätý Jur, Viničné) and other historical buildings.

Notable businesses

There are numerous businesses in Bratislava offering rural tourism experience in areas of horseback riding tours, wine tours, farm stays, local food experience, or eco-tourism. Here are few examples:

Pivnica u Zlatej Husi

This restaurant excels in preparation of goose feasts and other goose specialties (e.g. goose liver), which are appreciated by a number of statesmen, politicians, diplomats and other international celebrities, who visit Slovakia. Its owner, Mrs. Anna Jajcayova prepares goose dishes according to traditional recipes inherited in her family over generations. She received a number of awards and recognition for her culinary skills. Mrs. Jajcayova regularly represents Slovak cuisine at international food festivals and competitions.

Penzión pri kaštieli Rusovce

Penzión pri kaštieli is located in village called Rusovce that is known for its chateau and a one-of-a-kind country park, very close to both Austria and Hungary. Rusovce served as a military camp since the Ancient Roman settlement of the area (2nd Century BCE), as a part of Limes Romanus – the border of the Roman empire. Remains of the camp are still found here today and the artefacts found can be seen in the museum Antická Gerulata Rusovce. The pension is ideal for recreation, offering bicycle and rollerblade rentals which allows tourist to actively explore trails leading to Rusovce and Cunovo Lakes. The nearby Danube River offers plenty of water sports to try, such as jet skiing or canoeing.

VPS – Vinohradníctvo PAVELKA A SYN, s.r.o

Wine Pavelka is a guarantee of first-class quality and gives a chance to get to know the terroir of the best of the Small Carpathians. PAVELKA A SYN, s.r.o. today manages 50 hectares of its own vineyards in the heart of the Small Carpathian wine-growing region in Pezinok, 5 hectares of which it renews and improves every year. In the vineyards of PAVELKA A SYN, s.r.o. are mainly grown white varieties of Müller Thurgau, Veltliner Green, Riesling, Riesling Riesling, Sauvignon, Pinot gris, Pinot blanc, Chardonnay, Pálava and Tramín red. Of the blue varieties, our family vineyards grow Pinot Noir, Frankovka Blue, Neronet, Alibernet, Cabernet Sauvignon and New Schlacht Danube

ELESKO Winery

ELESKO is one of the most modern wine parks in Central Europe. It is characterized by quality, which is behind the production of wine based on the processing of healthy and ripe grapes grown in its own vineyards, but also by the exceptional taste of traditional Slovak gastronomy. The concept of combining wine, food and experience is complemented by the spectacular contemporary art gallery ZOYA MUSEUM.

Červený Kameň Castle

A castle is located in the village of Častá, and offers guided tours of the castle's interior, which includes impressive halls and rooms decorated with original furniture, artwork, and weapons. Visitors can also explore the castle's beautiful gardens, which feature rare and exotic plants, and enjoy views of the surrounding countryside.

Horáreň Katarína

A guesthouse in the village of Modra offers a unique opportunity to stay in a traditional Slovak cottage. Visitors can enjoy traditional Slovak cuisine, as well as outdoor activities such as hiking and cycling in the surrounding countryside.

Trnava Region

The Trnava region, located in western Slovakia, is known for its picturesque countryside, rich history, and cultural heritage. With a focus on winemaking (Carpathian Wine Route starts in Trnava region), traditional agriculture, and equestrian experiences, visitors can immerse themselves in the region's rich history and traditions. Additionally, the region's charming towns and villages, historic sites, and local food festivals provide a window into the cultural life of the region, making Trnava rural tourism a truly special experience.

Trnava is home to many charming towns and villages, each with its own unique history and culture. Visitors can explore the historic center of Trnava, with its beautiful baroque architecture and numerous cultural sites, or attend the Trnava Local Food Festival to sample traditional Slovak cuisine made from locally grown ingredients.

Beside vineyards, Trnava rural areas are well known for its orchards, and fields of wheat and corn, as well as their commitment to organic farming practices and preservation of local ecosystems. Visitors can often explore the region on foot, by bike, or on horseback, taking in the scenery and immersing themselves in the tranquility of the countryside.

In Trnava region a Smolenice Castle is located. The 14th-century castle located in the village of Smolenice, was originally built in Gothic style, and later rebuilt in Renaissance and Baroque styles, giving it a unique and eclectic appearance. The castle sits atop a hill, surrounded by beautiful gardens and forests, and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside. Visitors can take a guided tour of the castle's interior, which includes impressive halls and rooms decorated with original furniture, artwork, and armor. The castle also hosts cultural events and exhibitions throughout the year, such as concerts, theater performances, and art exhibitions, making it a popular destination for both locals and tourists.

Rural tourism opportunities

Trnava is a historic city with a beautiful baroque center, numerous cultural sites, and a vibrant food and wine scene.

Smolenice is a small town with a medieval castle and beautiful parkland, offering opportunities for hiking and outdoor recreation.

Šenkvice village offers an opportunity to visit a historic church and traditional wooden houses, surrounded by vineyards and orchards.

Dolné Orešany has a restored watermill and traditional Slovak architecture, offering a glimpse into rural life in the region.

Madunice has a preserved historical manor house and a traditional Slovak tavern, where visitors can sample local cuisine and beer.

Veľký Biel is a village with an equestrian club that offers guided horseback tours of the surrounding countryside.

Notable businesses

Despite being hit hard by the COVID 19 pandemic, there are many local businesses offering their services in the area of rural tourism. Their focus is mostly on showcasing the traditional agricultural practices and natural beauty of the region. This includes wineries that offer tastings of local wines, farms that specialize in organic produce, and equestrian clubs that offer guided tours of the countryside.

Radošina Estate

A family-run winery, located in the village of Radošina, produces high-quality wines using traditional methods and local grape varieties. Visitors can tour the vineyards and winery, taste a variety of wines, and learn about the region's winemaking history and traditions.

Velky Biel Equestrian Club

This equestrian club, located in the village of Velky Biel, offers guided horseback riding tours through the surrounding countryside, including the nearby mountains and forests. Riders of all levels of experience are welcome.

Kamenný Mlyn

Restored 18th-century watermill, located in the village of Veľké Leváre, offers a unique glimpse into the region's agricultural heritage. Visitors can tour the mill, learn about traditional milling techniques, and sample freshly ground flour.

Farma Krasňany

An organic farm in the village of Krasňany specializes in sustainable agriculture and offers tours of the farm, as well as the opportunity to purchase organic produce such as vegetables, fruit, and honey. Visitors can also learn about the farm's commitment to eco-friendly practices and conservation.

Penzión Kastiel Mojmírovce

A historic castle in the village of Mojmírovce has been converted into a guesthouse that offers a unique opportunity to stay in a medieval castle. Visitors can explore the castle's historic rooms and gardens, and enjoy a traditional Slovak breakfast each morning.

CHAPTER 4

EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS ITINERARIES: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG RESILIENCE

Experiential tourism in rural areas itineraries: an opportunity for young resilience

This chapter will focus on Experiential Tourism in Rural Areas Itineraries: An Opportunity for Young Resilience. It will discuss ways that local entities, groups and individuals can exploit their community for experiential tourism not only by providing opportunities for youth resilience in their local communities, but also providing valuable immersive learning experiences for young tourist visitors to rural Ireland and young people in those rural communities thereby bridging the rural-urban divide and overcoming social problems in the countryside communities. It will briefly look at the link of rural tourism to youth resilience before suggesting ways in which youth resilience opportunities could be exploited in the local community.

The experiences that a young person encounters through experiential tourism will be with them for their entire lives: the people they meet, the things they do and learn and the social activities they participate in will provide a valuable and worthwhile learning experience that can cushion them against challenging times and help a young person throughout their lives.

There is a trend away from youth tourism for purely pleasure to one that is becoming purpose-driven. These purpose-driven touristic opportunities include work, study, volunteering and language learning that support personal development (1).

Traditionally, tourism has only been equated with the economic benefits to a community and not socio-cultural developments. Here we hope to extent the scope of tourism to include not only the economic aspect, but also the socio-cultural and youth well-being and resilience.

Firstly, lets remind ourselves of youth resilience in relation to experiential tourism. Experiential tourism as the name implies is about experiencing whilst a tourist. It can include activities and experiences that do not adhere to the 'traditional' touristic experience such as hotels, beaches, sunbathing, museums, and sightseeing to monuments where the interaction with local people who are not employed by the tourism industry. In reality it can mean different things to different people, but the tourist is usually looking for something different to the highly commercialised tourist experience.

With regard to rural Ireland this could mean rewilding a field with native Irish flora, learning about traditional bread making techniques, education and training or walking the local footpaths, maintaining them and learning about local myths, folklore and urban legends including animal and environmental care and stewardship, gardening, animal permaculture, orienteering or building a fire. Essentially it becomes a very personal experience. From the rural youth perspective, it can contribute to learning and developing new skills and creating a sustainable economic activity around this. These potentialities need to be merged with resilience.

As businesses, organisations and community groups, it is important you plan itineraries for this demographic and it should be an integral part of your overall business plan. According to data from Teagasc (2), tourists to Ireland spend 65% percent of their tourist Euros on accommodation, food and snacks, whilst only 7 percent is spent on activities. With so little of the tourist income spent on activities, it is worth considering how more of that income can be diverted into activities for youth resilience. Even young budget travellers spend the bulk of their income on accommodation and food (3).

So maybe, it is worth considering providing all three by cross-selling within your community should you be unable to provide accommodation yourselves. Remember, most young travellers are not seeking a luxury travel experience, and it needs some out-of-the-box creative thinking to when planning itineraries.

Hands-on activities provide an excellent way to participate in experiential tourism acting as an incubator for skills and abilities they may not have otherwise found elsewhere. Galleries, museums, community museums, tourist organisations, farms, and small local entrepreneurial tourism operators can all provide these experiences in some way. You don't need a massive infrastructure.

Your organisation or small business big or small needs to consider what you have to offer and how this could be applied to experiential tourism and encourage youth resilience by calling forth and developing a young person's innate inner strength to meet the challenges of today's complicated world, manage adverse situations, heal the effects of trauma and thrive given their unique characteristics, goals and circumstances. With mental health services increasingly difficult to access for the younger generation, resilience tourism is in a position to offset some of the challenges faced by young people.

Youth resilience is, as mentioned previously in this guide, a way to develop a young person's resilience to change and adapt to the challenges of the future personally, socio-economically, culturally and professionally. These challenges could be, according to the EU Resilience framework, resilience to climatic hazards and threats; resilience to the consequences of a hazard; the ability to anticipate and reduce adverse impacts; the ability to cope and bear with challenging situations; the ability for rapid recovery easily and efficiently. Thus, resilience is a way in which the pressures of modern youth culture; the pressures of family and domestic life; the nefarious effects of the social media culture; the rapid introduction of diverse cultures; the shifting sands of social mores; and the lack of accessible services in the local community for young people can be mitigated.

Specifically, it can accommodate young people in rural Ireland or young people visiting rural Ireland as tourists with the skills, knowledge and mindset to take advantage of the opportunities rural tourism offers to provide young people with the skills and knowledge to negotiate adversity. Furthermore, it can also be a vehicle for challenging the social issues such as coercion, aggression, violence and bullying; emotional, physical and sexual abuse; lack of motivation and substances abuse and addiction of one kind or another. It is also about encouraging and developing confidence in themselves and their abilities facilitating the development of professional skills and creating opportunities for personal growth.

So how can rural tourism be used as a conduit for developing and supporting youth resilience in accordance with the EU and UN Youth resilience strategies?

Suggestions

Think about the infrastructure and natural resources in your local area. Consider the human resources available in your communities; the combined skills, knowledge and abilities that constitute the intellectual and physical human resources. Think about how they can provide or be used in the field of experiential tourism for youth resilience. The countryside has a history: a history that can be cultural, environmental, or geological. The countryside has myths and legends. It has infrastructure. So, consider not only what is available in the local area, but also what can be exploited walking distance and cycling distance. It also has communities of people possessing skills, abilities and knowledge. How can these features be exploited for experiential tourism in rural areas itineraries: an opportunity for young resilience?

Drawing on what experiential tourism is and what is expected for youth resilience, the following suggestions have been made. In line with the spirit of experiential tourism for youth resilience, the programmes should include:

- Life skills: cooking, riding a horse, driving a car, using a computer, washing clothes;
- Soft skills: communication skills, listening skills, time management, problem-solving, critical thinking;
- Vocational skills: artisanal trades, carpentry, masonry and other local trades and crafts.

A holistic approach needs to be engendered that can serve young people for their entire lives by increasing skills, competences and outlook. When planning and implementing resilience-based training for young people it is crucial that these goals are first and foremost when providing workshops and activities.

Clinical psychologist Dr Norman Garmezy is noted for being the founder into resilience research. Garmezy believed that "... resilience is designed to reflect the capacity for recovery and maintained adaptive behaviour that may follow initial retreat or incapacity upon initiating a stressful event" (4). Garmezy said that to be resilient to stresses and challenges a person needs to demonstrate, what he called "functional adequacy" which basically means maintaining a functional state whilst confronting and traversing challenging events.

Garmezy considered that certain protective factors at three levels: individual, familial and external influence resilience.

- Individual included temperament, responsiveness to those around them and cognition.
- Familial included family cohesion, love and support and parental concern.
- Support external to the family such as supportive friends, teachers, colleagues and teammates; positive maternal substitutes and spiritual organisations and sports and social clubs.

It is the support factor that is especially relevant to experiential tourism for youth itineraries as it provides the foundational underpinning for it.

With Garnezy's theory in mind, these itineraries, thematic workshops, learning opportunities and activities should include:

opportunities for robust personal, interpersonal and social skills in order to negotiate challenging situations;

ways to develop and support a young person's self-esteem through activities in museums, galleries, etc.;

activities to help young people resume their normal life and routines;

Ways to help young people make informed choices regarding their personal, social and professional sphere of their lives;

An emphasis on promoting the idea that young people should seek help from other people should they need assistance;

tasks and activities to develop and appreciation of rural areas of Ireland;

tasks and activities to develop and nurture soft skills for work and business;

tasks and activities to develop a critically-discerning attitude to their interaction with social media.

You should also be mindful of implementing strong personal, professional and ethical values in the application of itineraries as you will be involved with instructing young and potentially vulnerable young people.

It is also crucial to establish that participants will experience life of the countryside but also the purpose-driven aspect in experiences for personal growth which would not necessarily be available in the urban conurbations or on traditional pleasure-seeking holidays.

What follows is a suggestion as to how you as training centres, museums and organisation can support experiential tourism for youth.

Life-skills workshops and training

Think about how your organisation could involve itself in youth-centric experiential tourism. What skills could you provide tourists participating in this activity. Remember that youth tourism is becoming purpose-driven and has been for some time and this includes work, study, volunteering and language learning that support personal development. Think about young people travelling to Australia on work visas or volunteering in to build or repair a rural school in Africa or Central America. Consider what your business could offer in the way of purpose-driven experiential activities for young people from Ireland, Europe, the UK and North America. What follows are some suggestions.

Local newspaper

A local newspaper could run workshops on media bias and the effects of social media whilst running short journalism writing courses aimed at reflecting life in rural parts. It could include modules on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and formatting and people and interpersonal skills.

Local bakery

A local bakery could provide the opportunity for young people to learn about traditional and modern baking methods and small business entrepreneurship. It could also provide participants with the soft skills related to work and employment and hard skills of baking, cleaning and basic care of equipment.

Working and Historic Farm

Working can be a great learning experience providing young people with an interest in cultivation and animal husbandry, crop cultivation, farm and machine maintenance as well as the business end of farm life. Historic farms also provide a window to farming of the past, experience of current farming methods and land management and a view of the future of farming. Skills learnt here could be driving, animal handling and farm maintenance.

Museums and Galleries

Museums and galleries are often considered dull, but you could rethink the way history and artifacts are presented and bring it alive creating an entertaining and informative narrative, and making it more accessible in terms of understanding. Too often history is presented detached from today. However, allowing people to actually come into contact, literally touch history and presenting it in such a way in which participant can make connection with the present and themselves. One way to achieve this is for them to create or make something resembling the curated artifacts on display. For example, they could translate old Irish text, make a piece of clothing or retell a narrative from the point of view of someone from that period. And since history is all around us, present our contemporary times as history in a presentation to visitors.

Art's clubs

Musicians, artists, writers and rural artisans have a great deal to contribute to rural tourism by being teachers and exponents of local artistic culture and values, this includes skills such as calligraphy, sewing, needlework and cooking. Open houses can be run between groups of individuals or a community group providing an insightful experience for youth tourists into the unique characteristics of your community and address some of the misunderstandings surrounding people's perception of native Irish rural culture. It is also a valuable opportunity for intergenerational and intercultural learning.

Hotel, Camping and Glamping

Turn a holiday visit into a working visit where young people can experience the world of work. Tourism is about experiences where guests can be responsible for their own care. If you are a hotel, consider how you could build experiential tourism for youth reliance into your business model offering a number of work places whilst visitors work gaining soft and hard work skills whilst getting to know the local community. You could also run a training session on Green hospitality having volunteers create a kitchen garden for your business; they could help clean rooms and maintain the hotel's grounds or understand the important nature of menial work in the running of a business.

Well-being Practitioners

Qualified well-being practitioners could run workshops such as social media safety programmes; pharmaceutical and narcotic drug awareness programmes; mental health outreach workshops; domestic violence workshop; internet grooming awareness course; pet care; sleep training courses for digital technology discipline; intergenerational and intercultural project work; young carers and sibling resilience project; wellbeing at work and university. These are some short awareness courses that can be easily integrated into most aspects of rural tourism.

Languages

Ireland has a great linguistic tradition speaking Gaelic and English which provides an opportunity for instructors both formal and informal to instruct in these two languages. Gaelic, especially, has a greater poignancy as it is Ireland's language. Gaelic is also attractive to tourist who want to familiarise themselves with traditional Irish culture and language including literature, history and art. Goidelic speakers who predominate in the rural west of Ireland could run classes on the Irish language for difference levels.

Academic and Vocational Organisations

Academic and vocational organisation be they mainstream or voluntary are positioned to provide various workshop projects and hackathon-style events such as exam resilience projects; restorative peer facilitator and mentor training; listening skills training; mentor training; supporting emotional resilience in the classroom; mindfulness in education; moving to university; sexual consent training, writing, public speaking and presentation skills 'bite-sized' short courses.

Outside Adventure

Rural inland and coastal Ireland is replete with wild scenery with impressive ragged coastal areas, beaches, ancient mist-coved landscapes, romantic castles, quaint rural villages with thatches houses and whale watching.

On the cultural side, you will be met with good Irish hospitality, traditional pubs, craft shops, cafes and other gastronomic venues and traditional music.

For the more energetic there are extreme sports and walks along country trails to soak up the atmosphere of the countryside.

However, there is also more that you can provide a youth visitor in the rural area. Think about courses in orienteering, survival shelter building, identifying edible bugs, basic survival training, foraging for food and herbal remedies, animal tracking and running treasure hunts in the local community.

As providers of itineraries for experiential tourism in rural areas for young resilience you must think constructively and creatively about how you can provide experiential activities that underpin your resilience opportunities.

We suggest conducting an audit of your local area to help you understand the resources available to you and consequently design an itinerary. This audit would also include human resources. Activities always involve an element of acceptable risk and many young people are not opposed to getting muddy, wet or being licked by a horse. These opportunities are excellent vehicles to young resilience and must be positively encouraged when planning an itinerary.

The audit should include:

- Local natural resources: fields, hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, bogs, coastline and caves;
- Infrastructure: parks, tracks, sports facilities, equestrian centres, cycles and car hire
- Current activities including low-risk 'soft' activities (walking, cycling, cultural events, fishing, etc.) and high-risk 'hard' activities (extreme sports, hunting, sailing etc.).
- People with skill sets conducive to your business aim (mindfulness coaches, teachers, sports coaches, mentors, farmers, local historians, skills artisans and tradespeople, etc.)

The audit should focus on:

- Value as a resilience learning resource
- Attraction for young people
- Accessibility

Once your audit has been completed you must also factor in the need to undertake any development to deliver the itinerary package. Things to consider will be:

- Accessibility
- Safety
- Availability of trained staff
- Equipment and resources needed
- Advertising
- Cross-selling
- Feedback and certification

Overall, when establishing itineraries for youth resilience identify your market, understand what resources are available to you and establish what kind of development is required within your business plan for you to deliver these opportunities to young people.

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Green transport for green hospitality

Green hospitality sector is making concerted efforts to reduce its carbon footprint by introducing room proximity sensors for lighting; installing LED lights, using bulk soap dispensers, rainwater captures the investment in recycled or naturally products, giving guests the option of not washing room and bathroom linen daily. As well as having a green hospitality sector, it is also important that travel also is green. Reducing the environmental impact of transport is a priority for Ireland, the EU and the UN. This chapter will look at ways the effects of modern transport can have on our environment and not just in terms of the fuels expended. It will take a holistic view of transportation and travel when considering Green Transport for Green Hospitality.

When considering Green Transport options for Green Hospitality, it is not an issue of solely what form of transport to take, where and for how long. As youth tourist organisations, it is important to consider a number of issues:

- How will your clients reach your location;
- Transport to and from their place of stay to tourist locations and
- something that is often not considered what to bring with them as this also affects the ecological outcome of their trip.
- It can also provide a guide to traveller.

In Ireland today, the car is still the most used form of transport accounting for three-quarters of the car journeys undertaken within the country. However, this option may not be available to all young travellers. (1) Active transport such as walking and cycling, and public transport account for the remaining one quarter with bus and train travel accounting for just 7 percent of the journeys undertaken within Ireland. Many people now agree that it is important to begin changing the way we think about transportation and its sustainability in a world which has been exploited to the point of destroying the very environment we need to live and survive in.

In the past, transport in the rural areas of Ireland was limited. Tourists could take advantage of a tourist bus if travelling in a group. However, independent travellers relied mostly on car hire to access and travel around rural Ireland. Over the last two decades public transport has improved and now accesses more of Ireland.

Making visitors aware of different travel options and purchasing choices with many discount options available that would suite the green-conscious youth traveller. Good bus services provide routes to most of rural Ireland.

So, how can this plan be built into Green Transport for Green Hospitality?

What is green or sustainable transport? It is basically any mode of transport that has a low negative impact on the environment. Green transport includes active travel such as walking and cycling, to mechanised or motor transport such as electric buses, hybrid cars, to initiatives like community cars or transport, carpooling or sharing or animal transportation. Green modes of transport also rely on vehicles being reliant on renewable energy sources which themselves are sustainable or have a limited negative effect on the environment such as solar energy, kinetic energy from wind turbines or wave turbines, hydroelectric, thermal or hydroelectric and the use of biomass to power transport. Biomass fuels originating from living or extinct organism such as plants, wood and other organics such as animal or household waste. However, the use of biomass-fuelled transportation is in its infancy in Ireland.

What is green hospitality? At a basic level green hospitality is the hospitality industry moving to and employing a more sustainable way to conduct business. Hospitality includes the supporting infrastructure including hotels, campsites, restaurants, transportation, recreation, site of special touristic interest, travel agents and operators and the supply chains that feed into those sectors including utilities, food, equipment etc. Furthermore, green hospitality supports the commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle products that minimise the negative impact on the environment not only locally but nationally and globally energy conservation, water conservation, the minimisation of waste and the conservation of resources and the environment.

This also means how the tourist decides to travel and what things they will bring with them. Being a green tourist is just a matter of how you travel and using recyclable water bottles. It is a state of mind. In order to mitigate the effects of travel on the environment, the green tourist mindset needs to be encouraged. A checklist will be provided below.

So, Green Transport for Green Hospitality requires the efforts of not only the transport industry, but also of the hospitality sector and tourists themselves.

GREEN TRAVEL

Before travelling, one must consider how the traveller will reach the tourist location.

Tourism within Ireland:

Ireland's Department of Transport's Sustainable Mobility Policy (2) sets out a national framework to 2030. The idea is that this policy will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a half over the next seven years until 2030. It is hoped that it will encourage people to reduce their reliance on petrol and diesel fuelled modes of transport and switch to more ecologically-friendly modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. To do this, the action plan suggests ways to develop and expand ecologically-friendly transportation around Ireland by changing the behaviour of travellers and providing access to alternative modes of transport. According to the plan set forth, there needs to be half a million additional active travel (travel by walking or cycling) and a 10% reduction in fossil-fuelled car travel by the end of the decade. By doing this, it aims to achieve a reduction of more than 50% in fossil fuel emissions by 2030.

In short, the plan calls for a number of measures to encourage people to use greener forms of transport. These include: an increase in accessibility for walkers, cyclists and those wanting to use public transport through an improvement in safety when using these methods of transport; the migration of public transport to low-to-zero carbon emissions' fleets; the improvement of Ireland's transport infrastructure; an improvement of services and the introduction of more accessible fares; the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport on Ireland's highways and byways; taking a transport-orientated approach when building houses and promoting an awareness of the benefits of green mobility.

So, the Green traveller should be encouraged to use public transport where possible to reach their tourist destination. Most younger travellers will, some intrepid travellers may even cycle or hitchhike.

Local transport

Whilst in the community, travellers should be encouraged to use greener forms of transport within the immediate vicinity of their place of stay such as walking extensively, cycling or horse draw transport if available. In rural Ireland there is a lack of public transport and a great advantage of being in a rural environment is that bicycle travel can be taken advantage of and it is a good way of moving around from village to village safely without the dangers of bike travel that are present in densely-populated towns and cities. In addition, for those brave enough horse and cart can be used if available.

THE GREEN TRAVELLER: A CHECKLIST OF THINGS

The traveller should also consider the things they bring in order to reduce the effects of modern life on the environment when travelling.

Preparing for green travel should be a part of your ethos as a Green tourist. Caring for the environment should be a life-long journey. So, when you buy a product be it footwear, clothing, sports or bags. Ask yourself how long will it last with for normal use. We must get out of the habit of purchasing items we don't really need because of peer-pressure, through fashion choices, convenience or because it looks nice and cool. For example, if buying clothing think about timeless looks; will your clothing age well.

- Consider your carbon footprint (Carbon offsetting).
- Think about how you will journey to your resort or holiday destination. Is it by train or non-stop flight. Journeys with connections will invariably use more fuel more fuel is used on take-off and landing. In addition, you are likely to use consumables in the transfer lounge.
- Consider the consumables you take use your own toiletries think about reusable razors (safety razors) reusable mental products, hotel room mini soaps, shower gel in tubes, don't get your bed linen changed every day.
- Take your own bags to buy at market.
- Support local shops and products, don't bring food from home, enjoy the local culture.
- Consider destination that are eco-friendly.
- Invest in clothing that has been recycled and is easy to dry preferable non-ironing clothing to reduce laundry load.
- Consider how you use lighting, the shower, heating and the air conditioning in your hotel room.
- In summer try to wear shorts and light clothing that can be rushed and dried quickly and easily.
- Disconnect appliances.
- Use public transportation, shared taxis, scooters and bikes.
- Bring your own knives forks and spoons, reusable water bottles and cups to reduce one-use-plastic waste. If you do buy bottles water buy a large littered bottle and decant.
- Think about solar rechargers for gadgetry.
- Guide books are useful, but isn't it better if you can get local recommendations and if you want to look up local culture do it electronically before you leave or support local guides?

- Observe local regulation and by-laws seek local advice and stay on designated walking and hiking trails and tell someone where you are going. Should you need help SAR can locate you rapidly and saves a huge expenditure on SAR helicopters and teams.
- Take your trash with you if you are walking.
- Do not molest the local fauna and leave flora intact.

GREEN HOSPITALITY

As a business, you should promote the above checklist for the Green traveller and make your Green values and credentials known to your prospective clients. Sustainability should be at the heart of your business philosophy.

Why fly to Majora or Florida when you can have a holiday in Ireland. It is important that as a tourist business you promote your green credential underpinning Green Hospitality in your community, in Ireland. This will help the local community to prosper both economically and socio-culturally.

- Source local products from local suppliers to reduce fuel and promotes good stewardship of the environment.
- Promote the cultivation of native Irish plants and wildflowers to help improve biodiversity. This could be converted it into a tourist endeavour rewilding having young tourists replant contributing to their resilience.
- Promote the phasing out of single-use plastics in your business by requiring tourists bring their own cutlery.
- Support local entrepreneurship to support youth resilience.
- Support Wonky veg by rejecting the waste of none standard vegetable shapes.
- Encourage composting for your business which intern could be used for gardens and rewilding.
- Install power sensors.
- Go "Okm cuisine" and source local jams, meat, eggs, cheese, fruit and vegetables for your shop or restaurant.
- Reduce water consumption by placing filled bottles in cisterns which could reduce the amount of water flushed or install pressure regulators.
- Support water recycling by installing rain collectors.
- In hotels or guest houses try to reduce single-use soaps, shampoos and conditioners in tubes and opt for more environmentally.
- Adopt paperless advertising and working practices.
- Promote reusing bedsheets and bathroom linen.

Offered here is not an exhaustible checklist of activities, but it can be used as a guide for your particular context. So, reduce, reuse, recycle.

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CHAPTER 5

DIGITAL TOOLS FOR EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM: DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND STORY-LIVING

What is Experiential Tourism

Experiential tourism is person-centered.

Experiential tourism is a type of tourism that focuses on the experience of the individual, rather than just the destination. Tourism aims to provide unique and meaningful experiences that allow travelers to fully immerse themselves in the local culture and create lasting memories.

It is characterized by immersion in the territory in a more intimate relationship with the local people. You become "temporary citizens" of a destination. It allows you to share the specific themes of a territory (Genius Loci) as art, craftsmanship, culture, history, nature, local food and wine, spirituality, etc.

In recent times, we hear a lot about digital storytelling, but can this discipline also be applied to tourism?

The story of an experience, especially in the tourism sector, can help in the decision-making choice, since it acts on the most emotional sphere of the user, unlike the information brochure that we find in the travel agency or on a website.

A true and authentic story can increase traffic and conversions on a website, even virally; remember experiences.

The storyteller who manages to tell a territory, a location, or an itinerary by transmitting an emotion is a new increasingly relevant figure.

He or She involves the user to the point of making his dream of experiencing those same sensations firsthand.

What does a "story specialist" do?

Born in the world of marketing, the figure of the storyteller is currently one of the most requested in the field of digital work.

After all, it is the tourists-travelers themselves who prefer digital storytelling, the narration of places and experiences.

The center of everything, however, is the very construction of the message.

The second step is to evaluate whether to prefer a narrative based on words or on images, or on both elements.

Then it is necessary to decide which communication channels to favor to disseminate the message and to select the most appropriate communication techniques.

Which shouldn't be simple communication of information, but storytelling. Even and especially in the post covid era.

It must, in essence, create a compelling story that appeals to the feelings of the reader.

Arousing amazement in him, the desire to live an experience, a sense of belonging, solidarity, and involvement.

In a nutshell, it must be able to give him a dream, a lost memory, and a satisfying atmosphere.

The more interesting the story that is told, the more the number of 'public' to which it is known increases.

Why is this figure so important today?

By leveraging the user's imagination, the storyteller creates a precise identity for the brand or product, making it unique and recognizable.

The brand positioning goes exactly in this direction.

In an era where everyone is online, and the web is super crowded with companies, services, and activities must be identifiable.

Being identifiable means having a greater chance of being known and differentiating yourself.

So, accordingly, preferred over the competition.

In a nutshell, you need to gain a good brand reputation.

And that's exactly what the storyteller is aiming for.

Ultimately, this type of marketing allows you to increase the perceived value of your business or product.

This translates into an increase in one's business thanks to the greater number of customers who are intercepted and 'conquered' by the 'story'.

And who are, moreover, loyal.

Storytelling and tourism: "inventing" the destination.

In a sector such as travel, where users are driven by the desire to experience emotions, being able to create the right atmosphere is more relevant than ever.

If this is true, it is even more so about the destination.

A good narrative, on this front, can make the difference: literary tourism proves it, for example.

What is story living?

Instead of telling the story, with story living you are allowing your audience to live in it. It is immersive and addictive. You are taking storytelling a step further by enhancing it with action. When people can live within the story, they are essentially seeing the world from your shoes. It feels more authentic and reliable to a disenchanted audience.

Brands can now place audiences within their specially designed worlds thanks to the power of technology. Technologies like augmented reality and virtual reality are changing the way we interact with the world.

The online world is transforming the way we work, socialize and live. Social media and games allow you to be a part of history or a cause for change. Brands use these platforms to connect, as friends, with their audience.

Creating valuable experiences with storyliving

A final and important element of storyliving is experiential marketing, which allows consumers to fully immerse themselves in a brand experience.

In order to create compelling experiences, however, brands are now recognizing that it's about how they make people feel rather than the message they convey. In other words, the drama or action is more important than the narrative.

Additionally, brands are recognizing that these experiences become more memorable when shaped by consumers themselves rather than the brand's agenda. Experiences must offer something of real value.

<https://www.tourismexperience.org/experiential-tourism>

An example of Experiential tourism in the Masseria Crocco farm in Basilicata:

A journey to be savoured and told The Crocco family, with a farm with a Mediterranean character and a refined cellar, contains a precious historical and cultural heritage capable of taking us back, with its timeless charm, to the exciting world of the ancient peasant civilization. "We satisfy the need for regeneration, we encourage change to rebuild, on a renewed basis, the relationship with nature and with ourselves", underlines Angelo Crocco. "2020 was undoubtedly an anomalous year, but we have not let go of the helm. Even more, we have understood how the environment and hospitality can improve the quality of life. Our goal - he underlines - is to promote the territory, its history, its culture, and its landscapes, narrating them through food and wine excellence. <https://www.masseriacrocco.it/>

CHAPTER 6

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY SUCH AS HOSTING COMMUNITY

Rural tourism is a type of tourism that takes place in rural or countryside areas, typically in smaller, less populated communities. It involves visitors seeking to experience local culture, heritage, and natural landscapes. Rural tourism often includes activities such as farm stays, outdoor recreation, cultural tours, and culinary experiences. Definitions of rural tourism are diverse in activities and emphasise the importance of rural communities.

Here are some definitions of rural tourism from reliable sources:

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines rural tourism as "a type of tourism that is located in rural areas, including activities related to agro-tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, and outdoor recreation" (UNWTO, 2016)[1].

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) defines rural tourism as "tourism activities that take place in rural areas and which provide visitors with opportunities to experience and learn about the local environment, culture, and way of life" (ENRD, 2016). [2]

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines rural tourism as "the travel of people to rural areas for the purpose of leisure, business, or other activities that are primarily related to the rural environment" (OECD, 2009).[3]

Importance of rural tourism in regard of economics

Rural tourism has great potential to boost local economies and bring about social change. It works well alongside other economic activities, contributes to the overall GDP, creates job opportunities, and helps spread out tourist demand over a wider area and throughout the year, reducing seasonal fluctuations.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), rural tourism refers to a type of tourism where visitors can enjoy a variety of experiences connected to nature, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, fishing, and sightseeing.

Rural tourism activities mainly take place in non-urban (rural) areas with specific characteristics: i) low population density, ii) landscapes dominated by farming and forestry, and iii) a traditional social structure and way of life.[1]

1.Importance of local rural community in rural tourism

One of the key advantages of involving local rural communities in rural tourism is the preservation and promotion of local culture and heritage. Rural areas often have unique cultural and natural resources that can attract tourists seeking an authentic and immersive experience. By involving local communities in the planning and development of rural tourism activities, the local culture and heritage can be preserved and showcased, while also generating economic benefits for the community. This can lead to a greater sense of pride and ownership among local residents, as well as a stronger connection between tourists and the local community.

Local community involvement in rural tourism can also bring significant economic benefits. Rural tourism can provide new employment opportunities and sources of income for local residents, particularly in areas where other economic opportunities may be limited. Additionally, it can stimulate local businesses, such as restaurants, souvenir shops, and transportation services, leading to increased revenue for the community.

For example, according to Schnabel[2], in 2014, the total, i.e., direct, indirect, and induced, gross value added generated by wine in Austria was estimated to be around € 3.6 billion. This accounted for 1.23% of the overall value added in Austria.

In terms of overnight stays, the WKO has published that there has also been an increase. In 2017, there were 144.5 million overnight stays by both foreign and domestic visitors. This represented a 2.6% increase compared to 2016. With 102.8 million overnight stays by international guests in 2016, Austria ranks fifth out of 29 European countries.[1]

[1] WKO (2018). Entwicklung und Analyse ausgewählter Weingüter in Niederösterreich in Bezug auf die Bedeutung und Abhängigkeit vom Tourismus. Retrieved from https://abstracts.boku.ac.at/download.php?dataset_id=21855&property_id=10

Wine and tourism are closely connected to the unique qualities of their specific regions. Wine is often known for its origin, like Champagne or Burgundy, which gives it its special character. Similarly, tourism benefits from promoting local or regional destinations. Highlighting regional aspects is important for branding products and promoting places, which ultimately contributes to economic growth.

An example of a successful implementation in Austria that demonstrates the involvement of local communities in rural areas through collaboration with stakeholders is the Wachau region. It is resulting in economic benefits in the form of new employment opportunities and sources of income.

The UNESCO World Heritage is rich in culture and history, including vineyards, mediaeval towns, and ancient monasteries. To leverage these assets and promote sustainable tourism, the local community, government, and businesses collaborated to develop a comprehensive tourism strategy.

One key aspect of this collaboration was the establishment of the Wachau World Heritage Trail, a scenic hiking route that showcases the region's natural and cultural highlights. The World Heritage Trail was created through the collaboration of 14 municipalities to the north and south of the Danube. Subsequently, the development of the trail involved forming partnerships with local landowners, farmers, and tourism operators, who provided access to their properties and contributed to the maintenance and promotion of the trail.



In addition to the trail, local stakeholders in the Wachau Valley worked together to create a network of small family-run accommodations, including guesthouses, farm stays, and wineries offering bed and breakfast services. These establishments provide visitors with an authentic experience of the region while also generating income for the local community. Moreover, collaboration with local winemakers resulted in the establishment of wine tastings, vineyard tours, and wine-related events, offering tourists an immersive experience in the renowned Wachau wine culture.[1]

The small family company Bergkirchner Weingut/Marillenhof, located in Mitterarnsdorf on the southern bank of the Wachau region, combines the unique elements of the area with its vineyards and Apricot Farm. With a focus on adopting biologically certified farming practices by the end of 2022, the company portrays itself as a forward-thinking, globally aware, and dynamic agricultural establishment in the Wachau.[2]



The collaborative efforts in the Wachau Valley have led to significant economic benefits. The region has seen an increase in tourism-related businesses, leading to the creation of new employment opportunities for local residents. Moreover, the revenue generated from tourism activities, such as accommodation, dining, and cultural experiences, has contributed to the overall economic growth of the region.

a. Community-Based Tourism Planning

The Salzkammergut region engages local communities in the planning and development of tourism initiatives. They organise regular public meetings and workshops where residents can provide input on tourism strategies, infrastructure development, and the preservation of local heritage.

On the website abtenbau-info.at, you can see all the initiatives offered by the city and its residents, such as informative walks, writing workshops, traditional music events, and more.

b. Preserve Cultural Heritage

In the Bregenzerwald region, local craftsmen and artisans actively promote their traditional skills and crafts through workshops, exhibitions, and cultural events. They work together to preserve the region's unique cultural heritage and attract tourists interested in experiencing the local traditions.

c. Support Local Entrepreneurship

The Tyrol region offers training and mentoring programs for aspiring local entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. These programs provide business development support, access to funding, and guidance on sustainable practices, enabling locals to establish and operate their own tourism businesses.

d. Create Authentic Experiences

The village of Hallstatt in Upper Austria is known for offering authentic experiences to visitors. They provide opportunities to participate in traditional activities, such as salt mining, wood carving, and local festivals, allowing tourists to engage with the community and experience its unique culture. Also the skywalk is known to attract many tourists.

e. Develop Community-Based Tourism Products

The Grossglockner High Alpine Road region has developed a range of community-based tourism products, including guided nature walks led by local experts, interactive workshops on traditional alpine farming practices, and cultural performances showcasing local music and dance.

f. Encourage Volunteerism and Homestays

In some rural communities in the Zillertal Alps, visitors have the opportunity to participate in local environmental conservation projects, such as tree planting and trail maintenance. Additionally, homestays are encouraged, allowing tourists to stay with local families and immerse themselves in the daily life of the community.

g. Invest in Infrastructure

The Stubai Valley region has made significant investments in infrastructure, including well-maintained hiking trails, visitor centers with interactive exhibits on local flora and fauna, and sustainable transportation options such as electric buses, ensuring a high-quality tourism experience.

h. Promote Local Products

The Styria region actively promotes its local wine and culinary products through wine festivals, farmer's markets, and wine tasting events. Visitors are encouraged to purchase local wines, cheeses, and other regional specialties, directly benefiting local producers.

i. Develop Partnerships

The Austrian National Tourist Office collaborates with regional tourism associations, local communities, and non-profit organisations to develop and implement sustainable tourism practices across the country. These partnerships help ensure a coordinated approach and provide support for long-term tourism growth.

These examples demonstrate how various regions in Austria have successfully implemented practices to involve the local community in rural tourism, leading to economic benefits while preserving the local culture and environment.

Furthermore, the involvement of local communities in rural tourism can lead to greater environmental sustainability. Rural areas often have fragile ecosystems and natural resources that need to be protected. By involving local residents in the planning and management of rural tourism activities, sustainable tourism practices can be developed and implemented that minimise negative impacts on the environment. This can also lead to a greater appreciation and understanding of the natural environment among tourists and locals alike.

However, local rural communities may face challenges in their involvement in rural tourism. Limited access to funding, lack of tourism expertise, and inadequate infrastructure can all hinder the development of rural tourism activities. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide training and support to local communities, as well as to establish partnerships and collaborations with tourism organisations and government agencies.

Characteristics of a Local Rural Community

Tourism growth can lead to urbanisation and the loss of rural charm, potentially triggering negative effects known as the Resort Cycle in the tourism industry (Butler, 1980).[1] Local rural communities have unique characteristics that distinguish them from urban and suburban areas. Understanding the characteristics of a local rural community, including population, economic activities, culture, and environment, is essential for effective community development and sustainable rural tourism.

1. Population

The population of a local rural community is typically smaller than that of an urban area, and residents often have strong social connections and a shared sense of community. Rural communities are characterised by a mix of ages, with older residents often making up a significant proportion of the population. Younger residents may leave to seek educational or employment opportunities elsewhere, leading to a declining population in some areas. Additionally, rural communities may have a higher percentage of residents who are involved in agriculture and natural resource management.

In a paper, the significance of community engagement was highlighted by RIA, emphasising its crucial role in:

- **Ongoing Dialogue:**

The development of the tourism strategy is seen as an opportunity to foster continuous communication and engagement among government, tourism businesses, communities, and other stakeholders. This emphasises the importance of involving the community in discussions about the future of the area and the role of tourism within that future.

- **Inclusion of Nature Conservation, Arts, and Cultural Activities:**

The strategy-making process aims to involve and recognize nature conservation, arts, and cultural activities as integral parts of the tourism strategy. By including these elements, the community's input and expertise are valued, and their involvement can contribute to the overall success of the strategy.

- **Preservation of Heritage:**

The strategy aims to protect the special scenic, historic, and cultural heritage of the area, recognizing it as an essential aspect of the region's tourism potential. By preserving the area's heritage, the strategy ensures the sustainability and long-term viability of tourism, which benefits the community as a whole.

Farming

Agriculture plays a crucial role in Austria's economy beyond just producing food. Although the agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP[1] is less than 1.5%, Austrian farmers provide valuable services that benefit other industries. They contribute significantly to the country's high share of renewable energy, accounting for over 30%. They also play a role in environmental conservation and landscape management, particularly in the alpine regions. Austrian farmers are considered exemplary in demonstrating the multifunctional nature of agriculture. [2]

Italy's Agritourism Farms: Italy has successfully developed a network of agritourism farms that offer tourists the chance to experience rural life while providing accommodation, food, and activities. These farms are a result of investment in rural infrastructure and facilities, such as restored farmhouses, swimming pools, and hiking trails.

Forestry

Austria's extensive forest coverage of around 48% of the national territory, combined with diverse forest stands, has resulted in the accumulation of valuable knowledge on sustainable forest management. This knowledge, varying across regions, is an essential part of Austria's forest culture. For countless years, forest owners and managers have carried a great responsibility to maximise the benefits of forests. Austria's multifunctional forest management is widely admired worldwide. Sustainable forest management has played a vital role in preserving forests for centuries. It is crucial to raise awareness and enhance the relationship between forestry and culture in Austria. Due to historical factors, small-scale ownership is common in our country, with around 50% of forests being managed by farm owners. This ownership structure, along with forestry practices, has been pivotal in shaping the growth of rural areas over the years.

Many important sites related to forest history can be found in rural areas of Austria, mainly due to historical reasons. Austria, along with the European Union, considers the development of these sites as a top priority. Funding programs, such as Leader +, are specifically designed to support and strengthen authentic cultural initiatives in a strategic manner. These initiatives aim to make a meaningful impact and also provide income opportunities. This financial support helps cover the costs involved in preserving the valuable cultural heritage associated with these sites.

1. Culture

Local rural communities have a distinct cultural identity that is often tied to the land and natural resources. Traditional rural values, such as self-reliance, hard work, and a sense of community, are often prevalent in rural areas. Also you may find unique cultural practices and traditions that are tied to their history and natural surroundings. Rural areas also have a connection to outdoor recreational activities, like hunting, fishing, and hiking.

For example, hunting has a long-standing tradition as a recreational activity in British Columbia and is considered one of the original tourism offerings in the province. While some individuals opt for self-guided hunting, the pursuit of certain species requires the hiring of a guide outfitter. Guide outfitters often offer commercial hunting services to non-residents. This sector directly employs over 2,000 residents of BC and contributes approximately \$116 million to the economy each year. These outfitters, often small family-run businesses, play a crucial role in generating economic activity in rural areas with limited resources and contribute to rural tourism (GOABC, n.d.).[1]

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that many destinations have similar things to offer in terms of resources and attractions.

For example, just being a wine region is not always enough to attract visitors, especially for smaller and lesser-known wine regions. In order to attract people, it is important to study and analyse the resources and attractions of a region and find out what makes it special. Then, these unique features should be connected together to create a complete tourism experience. By combining resources, a region can create its own identity and stand out from other destinations. This process requires cooperation between public and private organisations.[2]

Additional activities will be mentioned in Chapter III and discussed in relation to the role of the local rural community in rural tourism.

Role of Local Rural Community in Rural Tourism

Rural tourism has become increasingly popular in recent years, with many travellers seeking out authentic experiences in rural areas. Local rural communities play an important role in rural tourism, as they provide unique and authentic experiences that cannot be found in urban areas. Two of the most important contributions that local rural communities make to rural tourism are providing accommodation and offering local food and beverage experiences.

1. Accommodation

One of the key ways that local rural communities contribute to rural tourism is, as mentioned in the chapters above, providing accommodation in the form of homestays or guesthouses, where travellers can stay with local families and experience their way of life firsthand. This type of accommodation allows them to immerse themselves in the local culture and learn about the community's history, traditions, and way of life. Additionally, local rural communities often have a deep connection to the land and the environment, and they are able to offer travellers a more sustainable and environmentally friendly form of accommodation.

Many rural communities offer eco-friendly accommodation options, such as straw-bale houses or yurts, which minimise the impact on the environment. There are also eco-friendly online platforms such as strawbuilding.eu, glampinghub.com and ecobnb.com, which make it easier for tourists to look for those specific accommodation options.

1. Culinary tradition

Rural communities often have a rich culinary tradition, with dishes and recipes that have been passed down through generations. Local food and beverage experiences allow travellers to sample these traditional dishes and drinks, and to learn about the local ingredients and cooking techniques. This not only provides a unique and authentic experience for travellers, but it also supports the local economy by promoting local agriculture and food production. Additionally, local food and beverage experiences can help to preserve traditional culinary practices and prevent them from being lost over time.

Oaxaca, a town in Mexico is famous for its cuisine, which has been designated as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Local restaurants and markets offer traditional dishes such as tlayudas, mole, and mezcal, providing travellers with a unique and authentic culinary experience. The town has also developed a culinary tourism industry, with cooking classes and food tours that allow travellers to learn about the local cuisine and ingredients.[1]

1. Cultural and recreational activities

The environment is a significant characteristic of a local rural community. The landscape and natural surroundings can provide inspiration for cultural and recreational activities. Therefore it is crucial to analyse the region. A community with a nearby lake can organise a fishing competition or a water sports event. Similarly, a community located in a mountainous area can organise hiking or mountain biking events.

Organising cultural and recreational activities in a local rural community requires careful planning and execution. It is essential to consider the community's resources and interests when planning events. Engaging with local businesses and organisations can help promote events and attract visitors. Also, social media and online platforms can help to market events to a broader audience.

Other cultural practices and traditions that are deeply rooted in history and natural surroundings, can include festivals, crafts, music, folklore and storytelling. Preserving and promoting these cultural practices can be achieved through community-led initiatives, cultural events, heritage museums, local arts and crafts markets, and cultural exchange programs. Collaborating with local artisans, cultural experts, and historians can help ensure the authenticity and continuity of these traditions.

The annual Almbtrieb Festival in Austria: it celebrates the return of cows from the high alpine pastures to the valley in autumn. The cows are decorated with floral headdresses and bells and paraded through the streets of towns and villages. The festival includes live music, traditional food and drink, and local arts and crafts. The festival attracts both locals and tourists to experience this unique rural tradition.[1]



The Cheese Rolling Festival in Gloucestershire, England: The Cheese Rolling Festival is an annual event that takes place in the Cotswolds, a rural area of England. The festival involves rolling a wheel of cheese down a hill, with participants chasing after it. The winner is the person who catches the cheese. The festival also includes traditional Morris dancing, live music, and local food and drink. The festival has been a popular rural tradition for over 200 years and attracts both locals and visitors from around the world.

The annual Yilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festival in Taiwan. The festival includes traditional performances, interactive exhibits, and games that attract both local and international visitors.

1.Guiding tourists on local tours and activities

Local rural communities play a crucial role in providing guided tours and activities to visitors. One of the key characteristics that make them exceptional guides is their deep local knowledge. They possess an intimate understanding of the local history, culture, and natural environment, which is invaluable in showcasing the best of what the area has to offer. According to the European Commission, local communities' involvement in tourism can result in the development of unique and authentic tourist experiences, which are often cited as one of the main reasons for visiting rural areas (European Commission, 2014).[1]

In addition to their knowledge, local rural communities' passion and enthusiasm are essential in creating a memorable tour or activity. When locals are passionate about sharing their heritage and way of life with visitors, their enthusiasm can be contagious and inspire visitors to engage more deeply with the local culture. This is especially true for rural areas, where visitors are often seeking an authentic and immersive experience. A study by the Journal of Travel Research found that visitors are more likely to engage in activities that are led by locals who are passionate and knowledgeable about their community

Guided tours and activities require careful planning and attention to detail, and local rural communities that are skilled at organising them can provide visitors with a seamless and enjoyable experience. Their attention to detail ensures that visitors have access to the best experiences that the area has to offer. According to a report by the World Tourism Organization, rural tourism can provide economic opportunities for rural communities and promote sustainable development (World Tourism Organization, 2014).[1] Local communities that are skilled at organising tours and activities can leverage this opportunity to create employment and promote sustainable development in their area.

In Paris, France, the company 'Paris Walks' provides walking tours led by expert local guides who are passionate about their city's history and culture. These tours range from exploring the hidden alleys of Montmartre to experiencing the vibrant food scene of the Marais district. These tours are an excellent way for tourists to immerse themselves in the local culture and learn from experts in the field.

Another way to share local knowledge with tourists is through local markets, which provide an opportunity for tourists to experience the local food, culture, and traditions firsthand.

In Barcelona, Spain, the La Boqueria market is a vibrant hub for local food and culture. The market's vendors offer a range of fresh produce, seafood, meats, and cheese, all sourced locally. The market also provides an opportunity for tourists to try traditional Spanish dishes, such as paella and tapas, and to interact with locals to learn about their culture and traditions.

In Austria, a great way to share local knowledge with tourists is through the "Heuriger." Heuriger is a term used for a wine tavern in Austria, where locals gather to drink wine and enjoy traditional Austrian food. Heurigers are usually located in the countryside and are run by local winegrowers who grow and produce their wine.

In Vienna, Austria's capital city, the "Grinzing" district is known for its Heurigers, where tourists can taste local wines and traditional Austrian dishes, such as schnitzel and potato salad. These taverns provide an opportunity for tourists to interact with locals and learn about their traditions and way of life.

Challenges Faced by Local Rural Communities in Hosting Rural Tourism

A. Lack of infrastructure and facilities

Hosting rural tourism can be challenging for local rural communities, mainly due to a lack of infrastructure and facilities. Rural areas often lack basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water, and sanitation facilities, which can negatively impact the tourism experience.

In rural Italy, many communities struggle with poor infrastructure, making it challenging to attract tourists. In some cases, even basic amenities such as clean water and sanitation facilities are not available, which can deter tourists from visiting the area. Sicily can be mentioned as an example here.

Another challenge faced by local rural communities in hosting rural tourism is a lack of accommodation options. Many rural areas lack quality accommodation facilities, such as hotels, bed, and breakfasts, and other options. This can make it challenging for tourists to find suitable and comfortable accommodation, and can lead to a lack of repeat visitors.

In rural Ireland, many communities struggle to provide adequate accommodation options for tourists, leading to a decrease in tourism revenue.

B. Seasonality and unpredictability of tourism demand

Another challenge faced by local rural communities in hosting rural tourism is seasonality and unpredictability of tourism demand. Rural tourism destinations often experience significant fluctuations in tourism demand, with peak seasons followed by periods of low or no demand. This can make it difficult for local businesses to plan and manage their operations effectively.

In Austria, a challenge faced by local rural communities in hosting rural tourism is the seasonality of tourism. Many rural areas in Austria experience a high influx of tourists during the peak season, which can put a strain on local infrastructure and facilities.

For example, in the Tyrolean Alps, local communities face challenges in accommodating the high number of tourists during the winter ski season. The region struggles with a lack of accommodation options, overburdened roads, and other infrastructure issues during peak season.

C. Limited marketing and promotion

Rural tourism destinations often lack the marketing and promotional resources required to reach a wide audience, leading to a lack of awareness of the destination's offerings. This can result in low visitor numbers, which can impact the local economy.

D. Balancing tourism with traditional way of life

Rural communities often have a strong cultural identity and a traditional way of life, which can conflict with the demands of tourism. This can lead to tension between locals and tourists and may result in negative impacts on the community's social fabric.

In rural Austria, many communities struggle with balancing tourism with their traditional way of life, leading to challenges in maintaining their cultural identity[1]

Strategies for Enhancing the Role of Local Rural Community in Rural Tourism

A. Investing in tourism infrastructure and facilities

Rural communities need to provide tourists with adequate and appropriate facilities, such as accommodation, transportation, and recreational amenities, to attract visitors and keep them coming back. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure and facilities, such as roads, airports, public transportation, and tourist attractions.

The Salzburg Lungau region in Austria has invested in tourism infrastructure and facilities, including ski lifts, hiking trails, and accommodation options, to attract tourists throughout the year.

B. Building partnerships with other stakeholders

Rural communities need to work with government agencies, tourism organisations, and private businesses to develop and promote tourism offerings. This can be achieved by building partnerships and collaborations to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise.

The European Union's LEADER program promotes rural development by encouraging partnerships between local communities, public and private organisations, and other stakeholders.[1]

C. Improving marketing and promotion efforts

To reach potential visitors and increase awareness of tourism offerings, rural communities must devise effective marketing and promotional strategies that involve investment in advertising campaigns, social media, and tourism websites.

VisitScotland, the national tourism organisation of Scotland, has implemented a marketing and promotion campaign called "Scotland is Now" to attract international visitors to the country's rural areas.

D. Diversifying tourism products and experiences

Diversifying tourism offerings, such as adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and eco-tourism, is necessary for rural communities to appeal to visitors with varied interests and preferences. This can be achieved by developing a range of tourism products and experiences.

The Kalkalpen National Park in Austria offers a range of eco-tourism experiences, including hiking, wildlife watching, and educational programs, to attract visitors interested in nature and sustainability.

E. Sustainable Rural Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism is a concept that emphasises the interconnectedness between human activities and the natural environment. It aims to promote rural development and rural tourism as a means to improve the living standards of local communities and ensure the well-being of present and future generations. The demand for sustainable tourism arises from the negative impacts of mass tourism, which often disregards the social, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions of tourist destinations.

Sustainable tourism is employed as a strategy to mitigate these negative effects and preserve the integrity of local destinations. Rural tourism development involves the implementation of appropriate policies and strategies to maximise the benefits and minimise the negative impacts of tourism in rural communities. The four dimensions of sustainable rural tourism development include social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. Each dimension plays a crucial role in ensuring the long-term viability and success of rural tourism initiatives.

Social sustainability in tourism is achieved when a destination successfully preserves its historical and cultural heritage. However, tourism can also bring about social issues such as traffic congestion, construction projects, crime, and changes in community identity. The monetary benefits of tourism can influence local communities' moral values. On the other hand, tourism has the potential to enhance social relationships among different stakeholders. To achieve positive social outcomes, it is important for local communities to actively participate in rural tourism. This participation can contribute to reducing issues like vandalism, gambling, drugs, and prostitution.

Cultural sustainability refers to the preservation of the shared traits and characteristics of human societies, which are transmitted through non-genetic means. Tourism can have both positive and negative effects on the lifestyle of local communities. On one hand, it can bring about changes that are viewed positively, while on the other hand, it may lead to acculturation and long-term changes in values, beliefs, and cultural practices. To preserve the traditional culture of a community, it is crucial to involve the local community in tourism activities. Their active participation plays a key role in maintaining and safeguarding their cultural heritage.

Rural tourism has been recognized as a solution for poverty alleviation in rural areas. It offers employment opportunities, enhances local prosperity, contributes to environmental conservation, and preserves cultural assets, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders involved in tourism. However, there are some tourism stakeholders who prioritise short-term profits over the long-term social and environmental aspects of tourism, resulting in a decline in tourist numbers. To ensure sustainability and improve the overall well-being of the community, active involvement and participation of the local community in the development of rural tourism are essential. This collaboration between the community and tourism stakeholders is crucial for achieving long-term success and maximising the benefits for all involved.

Environmental sustainability is a key aspect of rural tourism as it involves maintaining ecological processes, biodiversity, and biological resources to create an appealing environment for tourists. Rural tourism is considered an effective approach to preserving nature, landscapes, and the overall environment. However, it is important to note that tourism can also have negative impacts on the environment and the community. Therefore, community involvement in the development of rural tourism plays a critical role in safeguarding environmental sustainability in tourist destinations. By actively engaging the local community, steps can be taken to protect and conserve the natural environment, ensuring that tourism activities are conducted in a sustainable and responsible manner.

Recap of the importance of local rural community in rural tourism

Rural tourism can bring economic benefits to these communities, such as job creation, increased income, and improved infrastructure. However, rural communities face several challenges in hosting rural tourism, such as limited marketing and promotion, seasonality and unpredictability of tourism demand, and balancing tourism with traditional ways of life.

To address these challenges and enhance the role of local rural communities in rural tourism, several strategies can be implemented. Investing in tourism infrastructure and facilities, building partnerships with other stakeholders, improving marketing and promotion efforts, diversifying tourism products and experiences, and building capacity through training and education are essential strategies for enhancing the role of local rural communities in rural tourism.

Investing in tourism infrastructure and facilities can provide tourists with adequate and appropriate facilities, such as accommodation, transportation, and recreational amenities, to attract visitors and keep them coming back. Building partnerships with other stakeholders can help rural communities to work collaboratively and pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to develop and promote tourism offerings. Improving marketing and promotion efforts can help rural communities to reach potential visitors and raise awareness of their tourism offerings. Diversifying tourism products and experiences can attract visitors with different interests and preferences, such as adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and eco-tourism. Building capacity through training and education can help rural communities to develop skills and knowledge to manage and sustain tourism activities effectively.

Therefore, there is a need for policymakers, government agencies, tourism organisations, and private businesses to support local rural communities in hosting rural tourism. This can be achieved by providing funding and technical assistance to implement the strategies mentioned above. Additionally, supporting local rural communities in hosting rural tourism can contribute to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, such as reducing poverty, promoting sustainable economic growth, and protecting cultural and natural heritage.

Call to action for supporting local rural communities in hosting rural tourism

A "call to action" refers to a compelling appeal to individuals or organisations to take a particular action. In the context of supporting local rural communities in hosting rural tourism, a call to action aims to encourage people to take steps that can aid in promoting and supporting rural tourism in these communities.

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GLOSSARY

Wine route – A scenic driving or biking route that winds through wine-producing regions and takes visitors to different wineries where they can taste local wines and learn about the winemaking process. Wine routes often pass through picturesque vineyards and offer stunning views of the surrounding countryside. They are a popular destination for wine enthusiasts, tourists, and locals alike, and can be found in many wine-producing regions around the world. The Small Carpathian Wine Route, for example, is a popular wine route in the Bratislava region of Slovakia that winds through the Small Carpathian Mountains and takes visitors to many wineries where they can taste unique varieties of local wines.

Cultural heritage – material, intellectual, and spiritual artifacts that are inherited from past generations and preserved for future generations. It includes cultural resources such as buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, artworks, traditional practices, customs, beliefs, and languages.

Cultural heritage is important because it reflects the history, identity, and values of a society, and helps to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures and traditions. It can be tangible, such as historic buildings and monuments, or intangible, such as oral traditions and performing arts. Cultural heritage preservation is the process of protecting and conserving cultural heritage for future generations to enjoy and learn from. It involves a range of activities, from documentation and research to conservation and restoration.

Culinary experiences – food-related activities that provide visitors with a unique and authentic taste of a particular culture or region. It includes activities such as cooking classes, food tours, tastings, and farm-to-table experiences. Culinary experiences are designed to showcase local ingredients, traditional cooking methods, and unique flavor combinations, and can provide visitors with a deeper understanding and appreciation of a culture's culinary traditions. They are often popular among food enthusiasts and travelers who are interested in exploring local cuisine and discovering new flavors. Examples of culinary experiences include wine tastings, cheese-making classes, farm-to-table dinners, and street food tours.

Agritourism – a form of tourism that involves visiting and experiencing activities on a working farm or other agricultural operation. It offers visitors an opportunity to learn about farming practices, agricultural production, and rural lifestyles while enjoying recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, and animal interactions. Agritourism activities can include farm tours, pick-your-own produce, farm stays, farm-to-table dining, and agricultural festivals. Agritourism can provide farmers and ranchers with additional sources of income and help to promote and preserve rural culture and heritage.

Eco-tourism – a form of sustainable tourism that focuses on responsible travel to natural areas while minimizing the negative impact on the environment and local communities. It involves activities such as wildlife watching, bird watching, hiking, camping, and nature photography, among others. Eco-tourism is designed to promote conservation and environmental awareness, and can provide economic benefits to local communities by generating income from tourism activities.

Rural accommodation – lodging facilities located in rural or countryside areas often smaller in size and offer a more personalized experience, with owners or hosts that are knowledgeable about the local area and can provide information and recommendations on activities and attractions.

GLOSSARY

Ownership (noun)	Is the legal right to control or dispose of property, as well as the intangible feeling of possession or responsibility for ideas, emotions, or aspects of one's identity.
Revenue (noun)	Is the income generated by a business or entity from its operations and activities, typically from the sale of goods and services to customers.
Collaborate (verb)	To work jointly with others or together, especially in an intellectual endeavor or to achieve a shared goal.
Endeavor (noun)	A sincere effort or attempt to achieve a specific goal or task.
Aspiring (adj.)	Eager and ambitious to achieve something or to become a particular type of person.
Wood carving (noun)	The art or craft of shaping wood into decorative or functional forms using cutting tools, such as knives, chisels, and gouges.
Volunteerism (noun)	The practice or principle of offering one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community, without receiving monetary compensation.
Homestays (noun)	Homestays are accommodations where visitors stay in the homes of local residents, experiencing their lifestyle, traditions, and culture firsthand. It provides an immersive experience for tourists and contributes to the local economy by generating income for the host families
GDP (noun)	GDP stands for Gross Domestic Product. It is a measure of the total value of all goods and services produced within a country's borders during a specific period. GDP is used as an indicator of a country's economic performance and standard of living.
Preserve (verb)	To keep something in its original or existing state, protect from decay or harm, or prepare food to extend its shelf life.

RURAL RESILIENCE AND RURAL TOURISM TRAINING PATHS

Phrases	Meaning
1.Sense of pride	The sense of pride refers to the feeling of satisfaction, honor, and attachment that individuals have towards their local community. It is a deep appreciation for the accomplishments, culture, values, and history of the community they belong to
2.Preserve Cultural Heritage	Preserving cultural heritage involves protecting and safeguarding the traditions, customs, artifacts, historical sites, and intangible aspects of a community's culture. This is done to ensure that future generations can learn from and appreciate their rich cultural heritage
3.Significant proportion of the population	A considerable or noteworthy segment or percentage of the total number of people in a given community, region, or country. This phrase implies that the segment in question is large enough to be of consequence or importance in statistical analyses, decision-making, or observations.
4.Resort Cycle	The resort cycle refers to the different stages that a tourist destination goes through. These stages include the exploration and discovery phase, followed by development, consolidation, stagnation, and, finally, either rejuvenation or decline. Understanding this cycle helps in managing and sustaining tourism in a community
5.New Entrants	New entrants refer to individuals or businesses that enter a particular industry or market. In the context of a local community as a hosting community, new entrants can include entrepreneurs, investors, or organisations that offer tourism-related services and contribute to the local economy.
6.Tourism growth	The increase in the number of tourists visiting a particular destination or region over a specific period, or the expansion of the tourism industry in general, measured in terms of tourist arrivals, revenue generated, facilities and infrastructural development, and other related parameters.
7.Recreational activity	Recreational activities are leisure or enjoyable pursuits that individuals engage in during their free time. These activities can include sports, outdoor adventures, hobbies, entertainment, and other forms of relaxation and amusement.

<p>8.Poor infrastructure</p>	<p>Poor infrastructure refers to inadequate or substandard physical facilities and systems that support a community's needs. This can include roads, transportation, water supply, sanitation, electricity, communication networks, and other essential services that are crucial for the smooth functioning and development of a community.</p>
<p>9.Adequate accommodation</p>	<p>Adequate accommodation: Adequate accommodation refers to having sufficient and suitable lodging options available to cater to the needs of tourists or visitors. It includes a range of accommodations, such as hotels, guesthouses, homestays, resorts, and other types of lodging that meet the desired standards of comfort and convenience.</p>
<p>10.Call to action</p>	<p>A call to action is a specific request or directive aimed at motivating and prompting individuals to take a desired action. In the context of a local community as a hosting community, a call to action could be encouraging community members to actively participate in preserving their cultural heritage, supporting local businesses, improving infrastructure, or promoting sustainable tourism practices. It serves as an invitation for individuals to make a positive impact and contribute to the well-being and development of their community.</p>

Words	Meaning
1. Experiential (adj.)	Is related to or results from experience. It involves or it is based on experience and observation.
2. Equate (verb)	To consider that one thing is the same as or similar to something else.
3. Rewilding (gerund)	The process of protecting an environment and returning it to its natural state.
4. Resilience (noun)	The ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events.
5. Bulk (noun)	Something very large. The mass or size of something large.
6. Itinerary (noun)	A detailed plan or route of a journey. It can also be a travel document recording a route or journey.
7. Ethos (noun)	The distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature or guiding beliefs of a person, group or institution.
8. Molest (verb)	To disturb or annoy by malevolent interference.
9. Prosper (verb)	To thrive. To flourish. To be successful or fortunate.
10. Cutlery (noun)	Knives, forks and spoons for eating or serving food.

RURAL RESILIENCE AND RURAL TOURISM TRAINING PATHS

<p>1. Local entity</p>	<p>A local entity is a business structure that exists in a separate jurisdiction from its parent company.</p>
<p>2. Animal permaculture</p>	<p>Animal permaculture is about integrating the animals together with the plants and humans into a balanced and sustainable ecosystem.</p>
<p>3. Out-of-the-box creative thinking</p>	<p>Thinking outside the box is an idiom that refers to thinking in a creative and innovative way, often by looking at a problem from a different perspective. It is a metaphor for approaching problems and situations with an open mind and thinking unconventionally.</p>
<p>4. Hands-on activities</p>	<p>Hands-on activities involve doing by yourself, experiencing yourself rather than just talking about a subject or get someone else to do it.</p>
<p>5. Acting as an incubator</p>	<p>Incubator actors participate in service entities of various kinds: providing courses, social events, coworking spaces.</p>
<p>6. Natural resources</p>	<p>A natural resource refers to any biological, mineral, or aesthetic asset afforded by nature without human intervention that can be used for some form of benefit, whether material (economic) or immaterial.</p>
<p>7. A holistic approach</p>	<p>A holistic approach means to provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental health needs. The support should also consider their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing.</p>
<p>8. Thatched houses</p>	<p>Thatched houses have roofs that are made based on the special technique of "thatching". Thatching is the craft of building a roof with dry vegetation like straw, water reed, sedge, rushes or heather. The materials are layered, so any moisture is kept away from the inner roof. This method is very old and is still employed by some builders.</p>
<p>9. Carbon footprint</p>	<p>A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by our actions.</p>
<p>10. Solar charger</p>	<p>A solar charger is a charger that employs solar energy to supply electricity to devices or batteries.</p>

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this manual was to analyze the skills and competencies required for the development of rural tourism as a strategy for the future of Europe.

Rural tourism needs new ideas to be implemented. The partners worked with local groups of young tourism entrepreneurs to identify tourist itineraries based on storytelling and story-living experiences between travellers and the host community

This Rural Tourism Business Guide will be distributed to entrepreneurs, and VET providers in the agri-tourism sector and distributed by all project participants for further dissemination among tourism stakeholders from different sectors and also at trade fairs and public events. It has already been presented to tourism sector trainers during the thematic workshops and will be presented to VET providers by each partner during the Multiplier Events organized at the national level.

The Guide is available in digital format for use by all partners, associated partners, different stakeholders and a wide audience.

Open access to the Guide allows you to inform other policy makers and stakeholders at local, national and European levels about the project and its results which can be used as good practices inspiration to plan tourism in rural destinations.



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