UNWTO Students’ League Competition 2021

Tourism and Rural Development

Name of Challenge: Marketing campaign for a rural destination (village)
Category: Undergraduate Students’ Challenge
Participation format: Team of 5 students + possibility to include 1 extra Member per university

Corresponding SDG: 1 (No Poverty), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 15 (Life on Land), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

1. CONTEXT: TOURISM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020 due to the health, social and economic emergency caused by COVID-19. International arrivals dropped by 73% in 2020 due to an unprecedented fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions. This compares with the 4% decline recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis. Destinations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year, due to an unprecedented fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions.

According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, the collapse in international travel represents an estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues\(^1\) - more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis. The crisis has put between 100 and 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk, many of them in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Tourism fall has impacted on the economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities in all regions. Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic, many countries are now reintroducing stricter travel restrictions, all weighing on the resumption of international travel. At the same time, the gradual rollout of a COVID-19 vaccine is expected to help restore consumer confidence, contribute to the easing travel restrictions and slowly normalize travel during the year ahead.

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\(^1\) World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2020). World Tourism Barometer. [https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/WTBarometereng/19/1](https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/WTBarometereng/19/1)
Around the world, rural communities with significant tourism activity have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Jobs have been lost and small businesses placed at risk as restrictions on travel brought tourism to a standstill.

Tourism is a lifeline for many rural communities and has a unique capacity to provide new opportunities to generate jobs, promote and protect natural and cultural resources as well as empower women and youth. Yet its true force still needs to be fully deployed.

With almost 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals in 2019 and a contribution of almost 10% to global Gross Domestic Product tourism has positive effects in local and national economies.

This represents both a challenge and an opportunity to advance the role of the sector in rural communities. Travellers’ demand for new experiences around nature, open-air activities, local culture and products as well as community engagement in the post COVID-19 context, offer immense opportunities for supporting rural communities, both in the short-term as they recover from the impact of COVID-19, and in the long-term to promote sustainable and inclusive growth.

Tourism in rural areas can particularly benefit traditionally disadvantaged groups such as women - who make up 54% of the workforce in the tourism sector compared to 39% for the whole economy - youth and indigenous people. Tourism is also an easy access sector for micro and small enterprises and for the self-employed, who make up a significant part of the tourism sector and community level entrepreneurship in general.

While sustaining the livelihoods dependent on the sector must be a priority, rebuilding tourism is also an opportunity for transformation with a focus on leveraging its impact on destinations visited and building more resilient communities and businesses through innovation, digitalization, sustainability, and partnerships. This crisis further stresses the importance of building resilience among communities where tourism is an important share of their income through product and market diversification, fighting seasonality, social protection and building added value experiences.

UNWTO designated 2020 the Year of Tourism and Rural Development and, on the occasion of the 2020 World Tourism Day on this same theme it launched the ‘Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development – A Guide to Making Tourism an Effective Tool for Rural Development’. These aim to assist governments as well as the private sector and international community and outline the key steps necessary to fully harness the potential and resilience of tourism to drive inclusive and sustainable social and economic development in rural areas.

Also in 2020, under the Saudi Presidency of the G20, UNWTO and the G20 Tourism Working Group developed the ‘AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism’ aimed at promoting tourism as an effective tool of communities’ empowerment and sustainable future.

UNWTO also foresees that domestic tourism will return before international tourism. Managed well, this could benefit rural communities, most notably through protecting livelihoods and boosting local economies.

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5 Presentation of the Alula Framework of Inclusive Community Development through Tourism at the 113th UNWTO Executive Council (https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-01/Alula_EC.pdf?UfASxUHpGi.pvPFdEJVVzGCE6wHM)
This brings immense opportunities for rural tourism and for capturing its full social and cross-cutting potential in local economies. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of tourism in rural development is more relevant than ever. As travel restrictions begin to ease, nature-based and open-air activities are among the most demanded, creating countless opportunities for rural tourism, which emerges as one of the drivers for tourism recovery in many countries.

Finally, creating new opportunities for jobs and economic activities in rural areas through tourism requires a holistic approach that engages all other sectors and activities in the tourism value chain and promotes Public-Private-Community (PPC) partnerships.

The development of tourism in rural areas can thus contribute to:

- Reduce regional inequalities in income and development
- Fight migration and rural depopulation
- Promote gender and youth empowerment
- Improve connectivity, infrastructure & access to finance and investment
- Accelerate digitalization
- Innovate in product development and value chain integration
- Promote the relationship between food systems and tourism to preserve biodiversity, agrobiodiversity, cultural heritage and local gastronomy
- Preserve natural and cultural resources and traditional lifestyles
- Promote sustainable practices for a more efficient use of resources and a reduction of emissions and waste
- Enhance education and skills development through capacity building

### 2. Objectives

The objectives of the challenge are:

- To allow students work in a real case in a rural tourism destination and to expand their learning in marketing and promotion strategies from a practical perspective
- To be trained in the implementation of methodologies, instruments and hands-on training in the development and marketing of tourism products in tourism rural destinations
- To get familiar with the principles for a sustainable and inclusive community development through tourism
- To be able to identify target markets and segments and develop appropriate marketing tools, with special focus on digital marketing strategies
- To train analysis and diagnosis capacities to design competitive, innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism products and marketing strategies in rural tourism destinations
- Enhance team working and ability to adapt to collaborative environments in the tourism sector
- To gain experience and networking opportunities in the tourism sector
3. CHALLENGE

3.1. ASSIGNMENT:

Develop a Tourism Marketing campaign for a rural village of your choice in your country (please see NOTE below). The campaign shall contribute to untap the full potential of rural tourism in the village ensuring tourism contributes to its sustainable development and the well being of their population.

3.2. CHALLENGE

Many rural destinations with immense potential lack the necessary marketing tools that allow them to promote themselves as an attractive destination for visitors while making tourism a tool for their inclusive and sustainable development.

3.3. METHOD

To prepare your solution to the challenge please consider the following indications:

1. Get your Team together – remember that you can add 1 Team member to work on the solution with you (total 6) and you will have to present the whole Team in your solution
2. Select your village: the selected village should have a maximum of 15,000 inhabitants
3. Your campaign should include: situation analysis (diagnosis), strategic planning, implementation and tools for impact assessment.
4. Define clear objectives and how to measure and monitor them.
5. Set metrics for your campaign
6. Work out how to make the most of specific tourism products and experiences such as local food, gastronomy (what role can geographical indications play?), nature-based activities, cultural tourism, etc.
7. Think about market intelligence and segmentation: identify your key market segments and prioritize them; identify for each prioritized market segment their motivations, concerns, needs, priorities, etc. and explain what market research and analysis tools will be used (i.e., big data, active social listening, etc.)
8. Describe your offline and online activities
9. How do you plan to engage stakeholders in the village (e.g. public sector, business partners, associations, NGOs and residents)? Stakeholders should be involved from the outset in the formulation and implementation of your campaign.
10. Define an Action Plan, which includes, among others: detailed activities, budget, implementation timeline, responsible team or steering committee, etc.
11. Do not forget the most important aspect….be creative!

NOTE: Please revise, among others, UNWTO definition on Rural Tourism. When selecting the village in your country for which you will prepare your marketing campaign, please take into account that according to UNWTO definition on Rural Tourism, “rural tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics:

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6 World Tourism Organization (2019), UNWTO Tourism Definitions adopted as recommendations (A/RES/684(XXII)) by the 22 GA held on 11-16 September 2017 in Chengdu (China), UNWTO, Madrid.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420858
1. Low population density;
2. Landscape and land-use dominated by agriculture and forestry; and
3. Traditional social structure and lifestyle

4. SUBMISSION

✓ Your package of submission requires to include a marketing campaign for a rural village of your choice in your country.

✓ Your submission package will be a compressed ZIP file (the zip file name must contain the name of your Institution/University) that contains:

➢ a unique pdf document with a maximum of 16 pages in total including:
  - Cover (1 page)
  - Presentation of Team Members (1 page). Presentation of the names of five core Team members + name of optional 6th member
  - Executive Summary reflecting all the different elements of the solution (1 page)
  - Development of Solution (8 pages with the complete development of the solution including assessment, strategy and actions proposed):
    o Description of the solution
    o How to implement the solution
    o Contribution to the SDGs (how and to which SDG)
    o Outcomes of the solution in the short, mid and long-term
  - Bibliography and/or additional information (5 optional pages)

*In case you use less that 5 optional pages for bibliography and/or additional information you can use more than 8 pages for the development of the solution but always keep in mind that the pdf document must not exceed 16 pages maximum in total.

✓ Please upload your package of submission through your access on the UNWTO Students’ League Platform. Only one solution can be uploaded through one of the personal member accesses.

✓ The Teams will have 6 weeks to answer the Challenge. THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS 27 JUNE 23'59 CEST.

✓ The language for the submission is English.

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Your submission will be evaluated by the Jury according to the following criteria:

- Innovation and originality
- Implementation model and its feasibility
- Accuracy and effective contribution to solve the challenge
- Contribution to the SDGs
Quality of the presentation

The judges evaluate these aspects individually from 1 to 10. The score given to the team is the sum of the scores of each jury member given for each aspect. The maximum score for this specific challenge (Undergraduates category) is 50 points per submission.

6. MENTORING

During the process to prepare the solution to each challenge UNWTO will organize a mentoring online session with a selected expert with the aim to provide the teams with relevant insights on the topics of the challenge.

NOTE: UNWTO will post the dates, schedule and logistics for the mentoring online sessions in advance in the Students’ League website, on your personal dashboard. Kindly note that the attendance of one member of each participating team is mandatory.

7. USEFUL READING AND SOURCES:


