

Understanding the Sustainable Development of Tourism

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The Future of Sustainability

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

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The future of sustainability

Janne J. Liburd and Deborah Edwards

Introduction

Tourism constitutes exceptional opportunities as a phenomenon, industry, career and lifestyle. Sustaining the economic, social and environmental elements of tourism will be essential to maintaining a phenomenon that can support communities, provide employment and meet the experiential needs of customers. Thus, it is vital to provide the tourism managers of tomorrow with an explicit understanding of, and the capability to effect creative and innovative solutions for the sustainable development of tourism. Aiming to effectively enhance the understanding of sustainable tourism development through information sharing and social interaction, BEST EN has been producing educational modules since 2001.

BEST EN is guided by a strong belief that sustainable tourism principles should be practised in all aspects of tourism operations on a daily basis and that sustainability should be treated as a managerial philosophy rather than a subject matter, which is taught in one comprehensive course. This collection of chapters embodies the collective work of a group of volunteers composed of the academics of BEST EN and industry practitioners of the tourism industry worldwide. The conceptual point of origin reflected throughout the book is that tourism students, as future professionals, should be intimately aware of the values underpinning sustainability and be able to critically reflect upon desirable futures in order to pursue creative and sustainable vistas. Each of the chapters takes the view that sustainable tourism management needs to be seen as a dynamic process of change, rather than a static goal to be achieved, and therefore must be tackled with ever-evolving, flexible strategies.

Reporting on the opportunities and challenges for a transition towards more sustainable practices, relevant theories and concepts have been linked to practice through case studies or exercises. The chapters have also exposed how management strategies and leadership beyond narrow sectoral concerns are of pivotal importance to understanding the contribution tourism can make to sustainable development. Throughout this volume self-centred, short-term practices and linear thinking in causes and effects have been rejected in favour of a holistic understanding of stewardship, which should be exercised throughout the value-chain and in mutual collaboration with relevant stakeholders. These are practices that lead to a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism as a complex adaptive system where social, cultural, environmental and economic goals are at stake.

Chapter extract

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