Tourism for All our Tomorrows

Prototyping a new regenerative approach to tourism destination management that encourages the growth of Circular Economy behaviours

Introduction

Scotland's two Ecomuseum's, ███████████████████, and ███████████████, in collaboration with ███████████, ██████████████, ██████████ and ███████████ ██████████████ are planning to prototype a new **Circular Economy** approach to tourism destination management that is rooted in the concept of **Regenerative Tourism.** The principal aim will be to create a replicable model for other territories.

What is Regenerative Tourism?

In a nutshell, the idea of **Regenerative Tourism (RT)** is to 'leave things better'. Sustainable Tourism, the current mainstream concept, tends to focus on reducing the negative impacts of tourism. **Regenerative Tourism** practices on the other hand aim to replenish and restore what we have lost by helping to build communities that thrive, while allowing the planet to thrive too (See appendix 1 for more about this idea).

> *"The future of sustainability is regeneration: replenishing and restoring what we have lost and building economies and communities that thrive, while allowing the planet to thrive too."[7]*

What is the Circular Economy?

The idea of the **Circular Economy (CE)** recognises that current mainstream human behaviours are harming the planetary resources all life is dependent on too. Its principles for production and consumption are radically different from the linear 'take-make-dispose' regime prevailing in today's market economies, based on continuous economic growth and increasing resource throughput. The CE goes calls for radically alternative solutions over the entire life cycle of products and adoption of closing-the-loop production and consumption patterns within the entire economic system. The CE relies on value creation through restoration, regeneration and re-use of resources, enabled by new types of business models and forms of consumption that discard ownership and rely on active 'users' rather than passive 'consumers'. It proposes an agenda for radical change, which involves and integrates both the production and consumption sides of our societies.[8]

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[5] █████████████████
[6] ████████████████
[7] *The New Sustainability* report by ██████████████
[8] https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/cirtoinno-handbook_eng-rev.-4.pdf

A circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.[9]

What is Destination Management?

Destination management defines a process that involves coordinated actions aimed at managing the economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of a specific tourism territory. It is carried out by tourism stakeholders in partnership, following principles of good governance. **Destination Management** is central to the delivery of sustainable tourism as it allows a *territorial* approach to the multi-sector, multi-stakeholder, multi-thematic matrix of challenges and opportunities facing tourism development. It is also central to sustainable tourism implementation as actions taken within destinations at local and regional level are best able to influence the tourism impacts.[10]

How do we build a living tourism fit for a LIVING planet?[11]

Context

Mass international tourism, based on an industrial operating model, is now falling far short of its promise and, as it continues to grow, is at risk of doing more harm than good.

While this model has been successful and has supported amazing growth, it is now producing diminishing returns for providers and host communities; overcrowding destinations; placing excessive pressure on scarce resources of land, water and energy; failing to take sufficient responsibility for managing and minimizing its waste; or preserving the environmental and cultural resources on which it depends.

Its application of industrial practices has commoditized unique places into homogenised 'products' and viewed guests as targets to be exploited.

In Scotland, as in the rest of the world there are a growing number examples of the negative impacts of this industrial operating model – Skye being one of the locations that suffers most from over tourism.

What's needed is a form of tourism that delivers tangible and equitable benefit to host communities and enables both the planet and all those involved to flourish.

Change will not be led by centralized agencies (political, social, media) for as long as they remain entranced by the old materialist growth model and are distanced from the unique people and places that extend hospitality. Change will most likely come from "the bottom up," from, by definition, unique place-based communities where tourism hosts collaborate in ways suited to those places to develop a form of visitor economy works for all.

Real, pervasive change can only occur one community at a time when individual host providers wake up, to revere and protect the qualities of the place they represent;

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[9] https://ww ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ org/circular-economy/what-is-the-circular-economy
[10] https://destinet.eu/topics/destination-management-good-governance
[11] ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

grow up by taking responsibility for themselves and the whole; and step up and forward by becoming agents of change and regeneration

Given this context, RT and the CE have the potential to become timely, relevant drivers of the rapid transition that is needed.

An RT approach enables greater engagement and passion to be experienced by both guest and host; a commitment to stewarding the natural resources on which tourism depends; a closer match between what the community wants to share and what the visitor values; and greater involvement from across the community which leads to greater creativity, collaboration and resilience. In essence RT is based on a fresh understanding that tourism is about more than money and that the visitor economy in general and the destination in particular is not an industrial production line but a living, networked system embedded in and dependent on a natural system called Nature.

The CE promulgates a transition away from the dominant 'technological' – or 'socio-technical' systems of the linear economy and towards the creation of a more restorative economy based on renewable energy and non-toxic renewable resources. It offers practical business and solution oriented approaches to sustainability aimed at limiting waste by recycling used products, components and resources and by keeping products, components and resources in use longer.

Understood and enabled through both these frameworks – the practical business and solution oriented approach of CE rooted in the organic soil of RT - tourism can become a vital regenerative force for the planet on which we all depend and for the communities involved (guest, hosts, employees, business owner-managers, resident), creating conditions that allow us to thrive - not just in a material, financial sense but also emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

The Tourism Destinations

The two██████ will be the 'field study' sites for developing the prototype. Currently the only two █████ in Scotland, both share the same ethos in relation to their role in being vehicles for place-based community-led development and community powered tourism. Both have points of interest for visitors that involve people, places and landscapes and a community of tourism related businesses that are largely micro and or sole trader. Both, in the light of the climate crisis, have the ambition to develop a rapid transition to the kind of tourism offer that is congruent with the values of **Regenerative Tourism and the Circular Economy.** ████ is Eastern Perthshire's highly valued enterprise agency specialising in micro businesses and sole traders, ████ ███are leading the field in **Regenerative Tourism** globally and █████ have expertise in developing experiences which encompass the values of **Regenerative Tourism.**