Editorial

Success Stories in Training and Capacity Building in the Tourism Industry and its Positive Impacts

The Team of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is pleased to present, our Eleven Edition of ‘In the ZONE’, focusing on Success Stories in Training and Capacity Building in the Tourism Industry and its positive Impacts.

The competitiveness of a tourist destination is the sum of a wide range of concepts, including among others, the development of labour skills in the value chain of the tourism industry, as well as the actions taken to transmit the skills to the actors in the public sector and private companies.

Therefore, in this Edition the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism wishes to highlight some of the actions developed by the National Tourism Authorities and Regional Organizations to contribute to the education and capacity building at a sectorial level, as a mechanism to increase tourism competitiveness in the Greater Caribbean.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and that it enriches your knowledge about the actions implemented, the opportunities for partnerships and the positive impact on regional tourism management.

Julio Orozco
Director of Sustainable Tourism
In July 2015, the Grenada Tourism Authority (GTA) identified the tourist vending sector as a priority for training in an effort to build capacity and improve the quality of visitors’ experience, particularly on Grenada’s most visited tourist attraction, Grand Anse Beach.

A needs assessment was conducted among beach chair operators, hair braiders, bartenders and spice and craft vendors. It revealed concerns in areas such as, communication skills, work ethic, and customer care. GTA provided intervention by engaging vendors in a six week Life Skills Training programme. Grenada National Training Agency administered the training and certified eighty recipients.

The impact of the training was monitored and results indicated that there were improvements in customer relations, interpersonal skills and uniformity. “The training helped a lot in my personal development” said Ms. Vanessa Thomas, Hair Braider. Visitors’ satisfaction also increased. “At the Grand Anse Beach...we [were] always politely asked if we needed anything” a visitor stated on a destination review platform.
Target Group - Bus and taxi drivers plying the route to Moleson Creek - the Guyana-Suriname ferry terminal

Objective – Development of institutional identity

Background – The bus and taxi drivers plying the route to Moleson Creek had been a loose, disorganized and often fractious group of transportation providers. There was little sense of common purpose; little sense of belonging to an institution that was providing an important service to a key section of the travelling public. Uniformity in dress was absent, nor was there any badge of identification.

Intervention – The Ministry of Public Telecommunication with responsibility for Tourism, recognizing the importance of trans-border tourism and the importance of a cadre of uniformed and courteous drivers held 3 training sessions with the drivers, emphasizing politeness to arriving passengers and also distributed uniforms to the group who then formed themselves into a mini-bus and taxi drivers’ Association.

Article:

Donald Sinclair, Director General of the Ministry of Tourism
A tourism destination in the Colombian Caribbean, another one in the Amazon rainforest and the third one located in the most innovative city of the country. What do they have in common?

What these destinations have in common is that they have decided to promote tourism in a different way and believe in sustainability as a base for tourism development.

Since the historic center of Cartagena de Indias, the local government of Puerto Nariño in the department of Amazonas and the Arví Park in Medellin has decided to seek environmental, sociocultural and economic balance in the development of tourism, their history has been different. The communities of these three destinations agree that sustainability has allowed them to be involved in tourism activity and as a result, to recognize and appropriate the value of their culture and their traditions. Furthermore, tourism has generated an income that, thanks to its multiplier effect, has improved the quality of life of everyone and has allowed part of the income to be reinvested in the conservation of the environment.

For all of the above reasons, the three destinations identify themselves with the quotation that says: “Tourism favours the contact of man with nature and cultures, and promotes the enhancement of environmental resources and introduces the beauties of creation as a common heritage of the entire human race”.

*The historic center of Cartagena de Indias*
St. Martin Innovates with Teaching Tourism in Secondary Schools

Aware of the issues related to tourism development and the need to train the young population to welcome tourists, the Community of St. Martin has initiated a unique project of teaching tourism in secondary schools.

Thanks to a successful partnership between the Collectivité, National Education Board and the Tourism Office of St. Martin, this educational project was launched in 2013. Tourism classes are currently provided in the three secondary schools on the French Side. Courses are trilingual: French, English and Spanish.

Due to this success, 25 additional teachers will soon join the training staff.

Aline Hanson, President of the Collectivité of St. Martin, is particularly enthusiastic about this initiative that “offers Saint-Martin students the opportunity to become tourism ambassadors of their own territory”.

Photos and Article:
Cabinet of the Presidency of St. Martin, Department of Communication
The creation of ten clusters (touristic and eco-touristic) training programmes and the implementation of specific actions have made the country an important policy manager of sustainable tourism. Coordination between the clusters and the Ministry of Tourism has supported human resource training, thereby highlighting the creation of local ecotourism guides, workshops for products development and tourism culture. It is important to highlight the redesign of tourism careers for the member institutions of the Pan-American Confederation of Hospitality and Tourism Schools in the Dominican Republic by the introduction of specialized subjects in Sustainable Tourism, which contributes to the training of human resources demanded by the process.

Sixteen (16) schools are grouped in the Dominican Republic Chapter of CONPEHT, assuming important roles towards sustainable tourism through academic collaboration agreements with the Dominican Tourism Competitiveness Consortium (DTCC), having among its results, the Tourism Forum (FODATUR), the Sustainable Tourism Fair with the Eco-Tourism Cluster of Constanza, as well as the agreement for training with the Federation of Farmers - JACARAFE on the eco-tourist corridor of the Cordillera Septentrional, the Alliance with the Dominican Republic Flavors Foundations and Casabe for the Development of Sustainable Cuisine.

The emergence of provinces through laws that include the creation of Provincial Eco Touristic Development Councils with central government budget, is playing an important role in training, environmental education and entrepreneurship.

Photos and Article:
Bolivar Troncoso Morales, Founding Member of CONPEHT, ex-President and Member of the Council of Honor.
The OECS is implementing a revolutionary initiative aimed at building its human capital capacity to meet the demands of its leading economic sector – Tourism.

This initiative, funded under the European Union’s 10th EDF programme, seeks to ensure that the demands for a qualified workforce to effectively manage the industry’s investments are met, and that the region is equipped to offer the skill sets, high quality and diversified services, all in response to the ever-changing, dynamic tourism industry.

Tagged as the OECS Network of Excellence for Tourism and Hospitality Training and Education project, the network comprises nine community colleges that will work as a cohesive entity with digital co-presence under a new Eastern Caribbean Institute of Tourism (ECIT). Each institution operates as a Centre of Excellence to address the capacity building needs in a specialised area and will collaborate closely with the industry.

ECIT will offer virtual and blended learning programmes to build the capacity of a wide ranging clientele including owners and operators of hospitality enterprises, employees in ancillary services, school leavers and faculty and staff of partner institutions.

A Research Centre and a Scholarship Foundation will also form part of ECIT and the ICT, and coordination needed to support the network will be housed at a central hub location. Overall, it is expected by 2018, the OECS will benefit from upgraded facilities at hospitality training institutes and capacity building in:

- New specialised programmes that follow a competency-based framework.
- Information Communications Technology, Audio Visual Technology; and
- Learning Management Systems & E-Learning; Virtual Class Delivery; Curriculum and Digital Content Development; Accreditation; Online Research and Collaboration.

Photos and Article, provided by:
Dra. Lorraine Nicholas, Tourism Specialist
Peru is known for its rich geographical and cultural diversity which in turn lends to the creation of new experiences in the Tourism sector. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) has developed the Community-Based Rural Tourism Programme (TRC, for the Spanish acronym) as a strategy to encourage the economic and social integration of rural populations living in the main tourist destinations of Peru.

The TRC has three main courses of action:

1. Skill-building, geared towards improving entrepreneurial skills
2. Creation of commercial partnerships with the products of the rural populations
3. Strengthening of institutional policy

This strategy has been successfully implemented, giving rise to 76 ventures in 16 regions around the country, an 18% annual increase in flow of visitors and an annual economic growth of 13%, thereby securing Peru as the leader in Latin America of Community-Based Rural Tourism.
Seven Central American countries undertook the historic task of generating best practices for an evolving sector and in contribution to their tourism economies.

Coordinated by the Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) and with funding from the Spanish Cooperation, a process was initiated to create a Quality Program for Tourism Services that initially generated manuals for the sectors of housing, food and beverages, handicrafts, stores and trainers.

At the beginning, a path towards perfecting the quality of tourism services of MSMEs, an effort that advanced the years 2010-2014 created what is now known as the Central American Integrated System of Quality and Sustainable Tourism (SICCS, for the acronym in Spanish).

The Secretary of SITCA, Dr. Carla Maria Bush emphasized that the SICCS is a unique certification of its kind, allowing entrepreneurs to be part of a certification process, increasing the quality and respecting the particularities of MSMEs. Currently, in coordination with the National Tourism Authorities, the seal is proposed to be consolidated, thus creating a platform to enhance the competitiveness of Central American tourism businesses and as a result, improving the competitiveness of each country and the Region.

Caption: President Pro Tempore of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT, for the acronym in Spanish) and Minister of Tourism of Honduras, Emilio Silvestri, delivers the certification plaque to the Honduran Hotel ‘Casa del Arbol’ which attained its quality certification at a ceremony held during the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on April 8 in Roatan, Honduras.

Photos and Article: Dr. Carla Bush, Executive Director, SITCA
EVENTS HELD

- The 27th Special Committee Meeting on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-27) was held in the Republic of Nicaragua on July 8-9 2016 and incorporated a Workshop, “The Importance of linking Academia to the Tourism Sector to strengthen the Tourism Service Quality in the Greater Caribbean Region.

- Sixteen (16) Countries with representatives from ACS Member States and Associate Members participated in the SCST, as well as eight (8) Special Invited Guests including Regional and International Organizations that works with the Directorate on its initiatives.

GENERAL NOTES OF THE ACS

The New Secretary General of the ACS, Dr. June Soomer will commence her tenure at the ACS on August 01, 2016 as His Excellency Alfonso Múnera ends his tenure which began in 2012.

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism thanks His Excellency Alfonso Múnera for the vision and leadership, as well as his vast knowledge of the Greater Caribbean which greatly benefited the development of tourism in the Region during his tenure here at the ACS. His vision to the work of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism is greatly appreciated and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

THANK YOU

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States expresses its gratitude to all the contributors of this Newsletter and look forward to your continued support as we work together to develop sustainable tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region.

The DST thanks the Nicaraguan Tourism Board for the support provided during its SCST-27 and in particular, Mrs. Anasha Campbell, Co-Director of the Tourism Board.

CONTACTS

Mrs. Bevon Bernard-Henry, Secretary, Directorate of Sustainable Tourism: tourismdirect@acs-aec.org
Ms. Nathalie Perez Valencia, Research Assistant: kperez@acs-aec.org

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