IN THE ZONE: a publication of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) to increase interaction and cooperation among ACS countries, Observer Countries and International and Regional Organizations featuring destinations, projects and events in the Greater Caribbean.

Editorial The Team of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is pleased to present our 15th Edition of ‘IN THE ZONE’ focusing on “Tourism as a Development Strategy to Combat Poverty”.

Tourism, on its own, may not be the answer to the elimination of poverty, but it can make a significant contribution (UNCTAD, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative to create a balance between the pillars of sustainability and enhancing the linkages between tourism and the people of the Region in order to protect our heritage while accruing benefits contributing to poverty reduction.

In this edition, the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism wishes to showcase some of the initiatives headed by National Tourism Authorities and Regional Organizations which have been developed in their countries to alleviate poverty. Tourism development generates great impact in the tourism sector as a mechanism to increase the demand of tourists while at the same time is a driving force for human development through job creation, cultural inclusion and social harmony.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and that it enriches your knowledge as we stand together confident that the Greater Caribbean will be positioned among the leaders of Tourism development to combat poverty in the coming years.

Directorate of Sustainable Tourism

ARTICLES BY:
- Republic of Costa Rica
- Republic of Cuba
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- Kingdom of Spain
Costa Rican success in tourism, especially where it has been able to favour surrounding communities instead of excluding them, seems to be based on the following factors:

- Investment in formal education and training people in soft skills, in such manner that they can link to the touristic sector.
- Creation of natural parks and reservations all around the country, which developed employment and opportunities to provide services and attractions close to them.
- Development of infrastructure and connectivity (telephone and internet) in rural areas, which facilitated good conditions for local and foreign investment.
- Incentives and public support that include SMEs, so neighbouring communities could develop tours, restaurants and hostels.
- Territorial Planning with communities, to promote a type of tourism that does not affect the quality of life of local residents.

Photos:
Settlers in San Gerardo de Dota, a little town in a cloud forest, transformed their farms into touristic attractions with hotels, trout fishing and trails.
In the cattle area of San Carlos, Northern Costa Rica, several farmers save a part of the forest to exploit thermal waters.
In the South Pacific, efforts are being made so that the archaeological site of Finca 6, a former banana plantation area, is a new source of development.

References:

Article and Photos:
Her Excellency Lilly Edgerton; Ambassador of Costa Rica to Trinidad and Tobago
Old Habana contains the Historical Center of Havana of 2.14 km² with about 60,000 inhabitants, a valuable urban, historical and architectural heritage declared a National Monument in 1978 and UNESCO World Heritage in 1982.

The Special Plan for the Integral Development of Old Habana defines the purpose of enabling the Historic Center to reconcile cultural values with socio-economic development, preserving its residential character and its popularity, generating locally the resources for its recovery, balancing social projects and projects that produce economic funds for reinvestment.

Turning into the main touristic pole of Havana, with management model that considers history, heritage and culture as the axis of development, and its inhabitants as actors. They have generated 15,000 jobs and receive 97% of tourists who visit the capital and 55% of visitors to the country.

Article and Photos: Dr of Science and Principal Professor Fernando Vázquez Castro; Sub-Director of Research and Development of FORMATUR & Master and Principal Professor Marlene Fernández; Head of Department of Culture and Tourism
Employing 1 in 10 people globally, tourism has the potential to benefit a large number of people. By creating jobs, improving infrastructure, and promoting inclusive growth, it is a powerful tool to fight poverty and foster community development.

However, without proper planning, tourism growth may not necessarily result in positive impacts to local quality of life. To ensure that tourism enriches host communities, destination managers must consider community concerns and engage residents in development plans.

To gauge local attitudes toward tourism, the St. Kitts Ministry of Tourism administered a resident survey in July 2017. With over 320 resident respondents, the results examine how well tourism in St. Kitts is meeting local needs, creating opportunities for residents, and impacting their quality of life. The findings will be used by destination managers to identify and address local concerns through policy and program interventions, making it a valuable tool for community development.

Article and Photos:
St. Kitts Ministry of Tourism
Communities in Trinidad and Tobago are reaping the benefits of community based tourism including income distribution, the multiplier effect and poverty reduction. Some community groups are enthusiastically building experiences that stimulate visitors interest and participation and contribute to local advancement, for example:

- The Brasso Seco Paria community boasts of a coffee and cocoa cultural landscape where you can relive the traditional “pick, dry, shell, roast and grind” experience. Alternatively, to tantalise the chocolate aficionado, Mariposa Enterprises (Lopinot), offers the “Celebrating Cocoa Innovation - A Tasting Event.” This event unites the community through exquisite gastronomy.

- Traversing the island, locals also enchant the eco-enthusiast. Enjoy a fascinating, turtle watching experience, nature walks, a riveting Rio Seco tour, or a hike to the magical mermaid pools, all offered by the Matura community. At the end, purchase locally crafted jewellery made from recycled bottles.

- If you are in the sister-isle - Tobago, a unique turtle interaction experience awaits through Save Our Sea Turtles (SOS) in Courland Bay. Otherwise, in the serene village of Castara, the community provides rustic accommodation with seaside ambiance. Activities for guests include fishing and bread baking in traditional dirt ovens and much more!

MATURA COMMUNITY

“The employees are drawn from the community, mostly single mothers”. One employee attested that “the job has helped ...financially.” – Article: Quiet Trinidad Community Marries Conservation with Tourism by Laura Dowrich-Phillips
With more than 75 million visitors in 2016, 12% of GDP, and employing 2.5 million people, tourism is well known in Spain. It is the first service industry, above the automotive sector (9.5% of GDP). Spain fully shares the UNWTO declaration, "2017 as a year of sustainable tourism", in line with our full endorsement of the sustainable development goals.

For several years now, Spain has promoted this alternative to conventional tourism, supporting the idea of social "return", the importance of environmental impact and the integration of local communities.

Spain has 30 natural areas protected by the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, and also has the privilege of being the country that has the largest number (48) of biosphere reserves, declared by UNESCO.

Therefore the Spanish government applauds, this timely initiative of the ACS.

Article and Photos:
His Excellency Javier M. Carbajosa, Embajador of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago
WHAT’S NEW?

- We invite ACS Members and Associate Members to share information on official tourism events or news to be included in the ‘What’s New’ section.
- Look out for a new section that will feature an STZC destination in the upcoming 16th Edition of ‘In the Zone’.

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.

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